The Moroccan Diasporic and Transnational Experiences

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Space, Media, and Narratives

Edited by
Abdelaaziz El Bakkali
and Tayeb Ghourdou

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FOREWORD

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This book (the outcome of an international conference held in Fez, Morocco, in 2024) is proof that the periphery has much to say about the states of diaspora that have become the *sine qua non* condition of the human species in our age. The organizers of the conference, as well as the editors and contributors, are to be highly commended for their groundbreaking studies and analyses. They are giving new meaning to experiences of movement and uprooting that have become the lot of humanity in a high-tech capitalist world order.

Not so long ago, the world appeared in simple and predictable white and black hues, the notion of a diaspora implied defeat and forced exile into unhospitable territories, and all manner of indignities were inflicted on minorities. But now the West and its others are enduring unsettled lives akin to the classical diasporic condition. Obviously, such a notion was famously articulated by Karl Marx in *The Communist Manifesto*, when he summed up the state of impermanence that haunts us under capitalism: "All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify," he wrote in the nineteenth century. "All that is solid melts into air."

The diaspora today needs urgent academic attention because, in some cases, the pain of some has become the glory of others. Morocco's national team—its indisputable pride in recent years—is made up of a mix of local and mostly diasporic players, whom the coach, ironically, addresses in English, the *lingua franca* of our times. The smart devices connected to the Internet allow people to be in at least two places at once. These hyper connected consumers of technology are diasporic people, too, never fully in place, alternating between multiple selves, in a sort of fragmented existence. The subalterns seem to have found an ephemeral voice and are no are no longer being held incommunicado.

I suggest that since we are in a *post*-postcolonial world, the notion of Orientalism popularized by Edward Said must give way to Said's other,

primordial condition, that of his nagging sense of exile and homelessness. In a sort of second coming, Said could lead a new generation of scholars into making sense of cultural production in the decades ahead. In some ways, Svetlana Boym, a Soviet emigré who became a prominent Harvard professor, reminds me of Said. They are both from places that are nearly impossible to return to. In her début du siècle book, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Boym describes "modern nostalgia" as "a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values," that it is "a defense mechanism in a time of accelerated rhythms of life and historical upheavals." Boym, who had reached the pinnacle of academic success in the West, finally realized that she couldn't theorize herself out of the diasporic pain. "Is Harvard killing me?" she asked ominously before she died in 2015.

We may all be asking ourselves the same question, in one form or another, which is why reading this book is a step in the right direction.

PART I

THE MOROCCAN DIASPORIC AND TRANSNATIONAL EXPERIENCES: SPACE, MEDIA, AND NARRATIVES

CHAPTER 1

DISENGAGING RELIGIOUS MYTH IN WESTERN NARRATIVES: REVIVING TALES OF ISLAMIC FEAR IN THE TRANSNATIONAL

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Abstract

In the mainstream transnational media, the perception of Muslim individuals forms a large part of the most stereotypically prevailing pictures, which aim to disengage demeaning complex imageries. Muslims, in old literary narratives, were turned into subjects and doomed to live outside the circle of civilization, mostly posing problems to Christian Europe. In many visuals, they are seen in a discursive Western panoptical trance. These visuals introduce some ideologies to clue the audience with images of hatred and religious antagonism through more repeated negative lights to show them (Muslims) as "Others" (Kamalipour, 1997). To deconstruct literary and screen images of Muslims in the West, this paper discusses the circulation of such images, explaining why they exist and analyzing their possible impact on the public. Given the damaging misperceptions that exist as a result of their circulation and consumption, this paper fills a much-needed research gap by asking the following research questions. How does the circulation of these images in the transnational space reproduce issues of Islamic identity and culture? How do visuals reinvent the literary tradition to depict the Muslim character as the new "foe" in the orientalist discourse? By answering these questions, the paper attempts to examine the issue of representation by adopting a cultural studies approach, relying specifically on qualitative content analysis to reveal alternative possibilities of some of the Western perceptions.

Keywords: discourse, literary/visual texts, media, representation

Introduction

Along with the history of the encounters between Islam and the West, the relationship between the two cultures was systematically structured in ideological portraits. In most old narratives, Kincheloe and Steinberg (2004) assert, the Western agenda represented Islam in an Orientalist prism and consistently positioned Muslims "as the irrational, fanatic, sexually enticing, and despotic others" which, according to them, clearly showed "Western anxieties, fears and self-doubts as about Islam" (p.1). Islam, for the West, introduces the "danger" that could threaten American and European stability and able to develop chaos in their societies. To this, Aslam Syed (2003) argues that Islam poses fear to Western interests, mainly during the Cold War. To him, Islam was discovered to be an effective weapon against the atheistic Soviet Union and was frequently used not only against Moscow but also against secular and socialist Muslim societies.

The production and circulation of such Western constructs about other identities grows bigger with the spread of developed lush visuals that easily access the human mind creating, thus, the persistence of vision. Thus, new visual tools and ideological literary grounds are fused to cater for the media's role in representing other people's cultures and identities. Media effect, Amy Petersen (2006) argues, evokes the understanding of how identities are constructed and contested through engagements with culture; an understanding of how disability, class, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexuality, and other social divisions play key roles in terms of both access to the media and modes of representation in media texts. In representing these identities, media arts evoke the existing factual modes and put forth ideological elements to forge stories. Through this act of representation, media centres on national concerns in the same way it, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (2003) argue, starts "to explore in greater depth the issue of the national in the cinema, opening up a set of questions about national identity and representation" (p.1). By doing so, media ranges significant issues and themes to introduce particular layouts for the portrayal of these cultural identities in different art forms. Representing Islam, thus, is a point of departure for many visual and literary to reproduce a major part of the culture of the East.

1 Historicizing Islam in the Western Agenda

a. Reviving Narratives about Islam and the West

In Western ideological discourse, Islam and Muslims are stereotyped in many narratives and mostly used as tools to establish constructs of Western concerns about the East. To this, Kincheloe and Steinberg (2004) argue that Western media arts have developed propaganda that intended to "stir up crusade-like sentiments in the minds of Western nations and encourages them to adopt policies projecting Western domination over Islam, incites prejudices and racial discrimination against Muslim communities and minorities and promote the clash of civilization theory" (p. 1). Accordingly, Kim Deep (2002) contends that Western media have created images through which "Muslims are uniformly represented as evil, violent and above all, eminently killable" (p.6). This projection, Kincheloe and Steinberg assert, has reduced Islam and Muslims into "backwardness, terrorism, and polygamy" (153).

According to Gholam Khiabany (2003), although there are fifty-five Islamic states with such a variety of languages, histories, levels of economic development, and cultural practices, many Western narratives do not depict many of these aspects with enough positive light. Bryan Turner (2002) asserts that "in common sense terms the 'Orient' embraces an ill-defined geographical zone extending from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to Southeast Asia, Islam and the Islamic heartlands played a peculiarly significant part in the formation of Western attitudes to the East" (p.38). These Islamic states and communities, Khiabany argues, "are similar simply because of their Islamic essence" (p. 417). In this regard, Yahya Kamalipour (1997) contends that over one billion people who have the same religious beliefs are depicted as unlawful by Orientalists.

i. Framing Islam in Orientalism

Bill Ashcroft et al. (1998), in *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, define Orientalism as a "term popularised by Edward Said's *Orientalism*, in which he examines the processes by which the 'Orient' was, and continues to be, constructed in European thinking" (p.167). For Edward Said (1978), Orientalism "expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles" (p.19). Said's *Orientalism* shows how the Orientalist discourse is formed and how it functions. He insists that "the relationship

between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of complex hegemony" (p.5). Said's work foregrounds the basis for the discussion of themes which reflect the Other and/or the Orient which, as Karl Marx argues, "cannot represent themselves, thus they must be represented" (Carl Marx quoted in Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, 2014). For this, Said considers the social and political dimensions of texts and examines the relationship between knowledge and power, by reading them as integral parts of the social processes of differentiation, and exclusion. In using the Foucauldian theory of discourse and power/knowledge relations, Said examines the way Western discourse constructs and represents a stereotypical Orient. This Orientalist representation introduces different forms of representation to establish the links of equivalence, which creates an index of related events that are staged, interpreted, and continually repeated.

In Said's view of Orientalism, Childs and Williams (2014) argue that controversial dichotomies contribute to the rise of the actual representation of the Orient. This questions the credibility of the existence of the Orient and the extent to which the art of representation renders it either true or false in the Orientalist discourse. To this, Childs and Williams discuss the scope of Said's critique of Orientalism in projecting the Orient: "The real ground of Said's criticism is the relation of Orientalists to systems of domination and exploitation, the negative effects that their representations have in the real world, and the fact that they are betraying what Said in his somewhat more prescriptive mood would identify as the proper function of the intellectual" (p.107). The analysis of projecting the Other is translated through the significance of representation. Identifying the convention of representation is determined by the convention of bringing meanings and contexts of the Other to the fore. Representing the Other, thus, is inventing mythical pictures about the others' cultures and identities.

ii. Projecting the Muslim Other as "Native" in the Western Project

The act of constructing the Other is not innocently set. It is a process of exerting power and knowledge. In so doing, the dominant group introduces various portraits that show the other dominated social groups as inferior. The representation of other societies and peoples, Lina Khatib (2006) maintains, involved an act of power by which their images were in a sense created by the Western observer who constructed them as peoples and societies to be ruled and dominated, not as objects to be understood passively, objectively or academically. The representation of Others implies the creation of social constructs for these groups which highlight relations of power and knowledge. To this, Peter Kareithei (2001) asserts that

colonized people are subjected to ideological constructs that draw an inextricable binary opposition between the people of the West and those of the East. Accordingly, these opposites, Kareithei contends, are introduced to look neutral, in which "One pole of the binary is usually the dominant one," where "the one that includes the other within its field of operations." "There is," he continues, "a relation of power between the poles of a binary opposition" (p.35). He argues that stereotyping tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power which are usually directed against the subordinate or excluded group. Otherising Eastern people offers various constructs together with their Oriental images and cultures. Neil Lazarus (1999) contends that the Western system of thought is prone to Otherising the construction of non-Western societies. The act of representation determines how the colonizer dominates the colonized by means of culture and power. In this regard, Sara Mills (2004) argues that the colonized culture was also differentiated from the colonizing culture by being represented as existing on a different time scale to the colonizers.

Oriental natives are Orientalized and, as in Western narratives, are relegated to inferior positions. "Of course," Yahya Kamalipour (1997) asserts, "there is nothing new to the historic practice of stigmatizing, demonizing, or ridiculing large groups of people with whom the West had long colonial and post-colonial but still imperial relations" (p.xix). Natives are presented as threats to the West and are doomed to vague civilization. In Neil Lazarus' accounts (1999), the native appears as a malevolent creation that introduces malicious frauds to humanity and nature. He explains:

> The native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is … the enemy of values, and in this sense he is the absolute evil. He is the corrosive element, destroying all that comes near him; he is the deforming element, disfiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality; he is the depository of maleficent powers, the unconscious and irretrievable instrument of blind forces (p.87).

Accordingly, the native, for Rana Kabbani (quoted in Sara Mills (2003)), is framed within a purely fragmented portrait that shows ingratitude. She also shows how this representational practice was in stark contrast, and perhaps even made sense in terms of its opposition. The native is maligned as a subject or an object that needs improvements and developments. To this, Sara Mills (2004) states: "One had to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework" (p.35).

b. Introducing Islamized Troubles in the West

i. The West and the Troubled Religion

The reception of Islamic culture has not been perceived innocently just as, Kamalipour argues, it "presents concepts that not only are foreign to Western modes of thinking but often are viewed by Westerners as non-legitimate as well" (p.201). This construct, which some visual narratives use, establishes an influential curriculum as entertainment for Western consumption. This leads to a generalization that defines the Islamic culture as "illogical," through which the West constructs the reality about this culture. Kamalipour asserts, "[a]ssumptions easily lead to bias, misunderstanding, stereotyping, and sometimes hostility towards Islamic culture, extending from an ethnocentric approach. Once a negative image of a culture is formed, it becomes rigid, enduring, and difficult to rectify" (p.202). Such fallacies stalk the screen and fix them as realities by means of repetition. Now, every undesired attack on Western interests seems to be attributed to Muslims. By continuously projecting such images, their reception as a reality becomes real.

In the circulated culture in the West, Islam is regarded as the real menace to the social and cultural stability of American and European religious orders. It is projected, as Said (1978) argues, with a "fraudulent new version of some previous experience" that positioned it as a foe to Christianity (p.59). For Said, Islam is judged to be a fraudulent new version of some previous experience. Along with these biased images, Turner (1994) contends that Islam is consumed as a negative "system" through Orientalist stereotypes that become fixed in the imagination of the Western public.

Islam, however, Said argues, is not guilty as described by the Western discourse. Rather, it is "a gentle, honourable culture and not savage and barbaric as Western scholars, who invented their brand of the Orient, have implied in the past." He continues, "Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma" (p.59). Orientalism, though, for Said, has turned the picture of Islam into a malicious one. And, by comparison, Turner asserts, Islam has long been relegated to a malicious system that is meant to pose difficulties to the West. Unlike Hinduism or Confucianism, Islam, Turner asserts, has major religious ties with Judaism and Christianity; thus, the fact of categorizing Islam as an oriental religion "raises major difficulties for an Orientalist discourse" (p.22). Together with these imageries of anxieties, the picturing of Islam in the Orientalist imagination is often confronted with the realities of the Western discourse which tend to introduce the absence of civil society in Islamic states.

ii. Re-inventing Islamophobia in the West

Islam and the West represent a record of historical encounters that often report the religion as a fanatic system that threatens the stability of the West. Islam has been described as the green foe that has replaced the "communist red" foe. Many narratives have drawn various pictures of Islam, where everyone is meant to be afraid of Islam and consider it a threatening religion. "Islamophobia," thus, is a term that has been coined to describe Islam as a terrifying religious system. Hassan Azzouzi (2008) argues that this term refers to the stereotypical images of Islam and, on the other hand, to the threat it presents to the West because of the so-called tremendous spread and influence of Islam. Islamophobia implies a particular hostility towards Islam. As Ibrahim Farajaje (2004) argues, Islamophobia "refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in an unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals (or those perceived to be Muslim) and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from political and social affairs" (p.1). In Amine Alaoui Sussi's "The Making of Islamophobia" (2008), a set of Orientalist ideologies determines the Western imagination about Islam and Muslims. Islamophobia, Alaoui Sossi contends, is the creation of "the enemy" by the Western social and political propaganda through Western texts, mainly films and writing. Various terrorist acts that happened in the West turned the gaze onto Islam as being responsible for such acts. Thus, visual narratives have reported news about Islam and Muslims to their audiences with malicious portrayals of the religion. "During the past few years," Abdalla and Rane (2008) argue, "the media have therefore covered Islam: they have portrayed it, characterized it, analyzed it, given instant courses on it, and consequently they have made it 'known'" (p.5). To the Orientalist conception, Said argues, Islam is meant to be the number one enemy of many people in the Western world. These images keep circulating in society, creating a mass hatred against Islam and Muslims.

To the West, Islam remains a trauma not only for non-Muslims but also to its believers due to the restrictions this religion is supposed to cause. As these restrictions grow, their access to freedom is restricted. Whatever may have been the respective contributions of Islam and local custom, Donna Debowen (2002) asserts, it is clear that most social restrictions on the Middle East had some direct link to Islam. Islam is more equated with Christianity here, while people draw a band between Christianity and Islam in a way that the second is doomed to be a malicious system. Said contends that "Islam", "the West", and even "Christianity" function in at least two different ways, and produce at least two meanings, each time they are used" (p.9). The hostility grows bigger eventually with the main-

stream media mostly pointing out Islam as a terrorist act happening somewhere in the West.

c. Drawing Stations of Contacts between Islam and the West

Although it is difficult to fix the historical key stations of the encounter between the Christian West and Islam, it is indispensable to pause at some of these stations. Throughout some historical readings, the relationship between Islam and the Christian West fluctuated greatly between strong conflict and instant peace. Yet, what is remarkable is that little has been written about the positive contacts between the two poles. Most writings shed light on the arguing aspects of the relations. In this vein, these stages are highlighted in history as the Crusades, Orientalism, and Colonialism.

The Crusade War represents altogether an image of devastating conflicts that have occurred between Islam and the Christian West, which resulted, El Bakkali (2021) asserts, into battlegrounds for numerous clashes that led to what was known as Muslim conquests for the ensuing centuries. This kind of conflict is seen by the Moroccan thinker, Abdelkrim Ghallab (1992), as a continuance of revenge against the Islamic civilization which had won over the Roman/Christian Civilization for centuries. Spreading over the Mediterranean was something that had shaken the pillars of the Christian civilization and, by implication, the Western religious identity has been put into question. He argues that "This religious and civilizational clash which has undoubtedly left its military effects on the East/West relationships seems more dangerous" (p.147). These effects are still widespread despite the recent intellectual developments.

Another aspect of the contact between Islam and the West is seen in Orientalism. Despite direct contact with Islam and Muslims, most Orientalists who have tried to talk about Islam could not go beyond the dark image that had been drawn by their predecessors. These Orientalists have made huge efforts in translating the Quran as well as other Arabic books into different Western languages, making encyclopedias (e.g. The Encyclopedia of Islam, Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, etc.) and in producing journals dealing with Islamic issues (e.g. The Muslim World). Yet, many Muslim thinkers, among whom is Abou El Hassan Naddaoui, believe that most Orientalist writings about Islam are imbued with religious hostility against Muslims. He believes that "many Orientalists make large efforts in highlighting the weaknesses of the Islamic history and society. Even what they see as a weakness is approached microscopically to an extent that the reader views any meticulous item as a mountain" (p.25).

The Orientalists' study of Islam together with their encounter with Muslims rarely changed their hostile attitudes towards the phenomena under study. Tim Jacoby (2023) contends that some of them made many respectful, scientific studies, but they remain very rare and unable to change the historical mistakes that have been committed against Islam and Muslims.

Abdelkrim Ghallab contends that the hostile image that is found today in the West against Islam is not due to the so-called scientific study, but instead the colonialist, racist, and political hostility that fears what is called "the return of Islam" (p.155). This Western attitude towards Islam has now turned into a religious hostility just as the Islamic religion is perceived as a system that poses a threat to the stability of the West. This Western fear of Islam which is termed "Islamophobia," describes the past crusades and today's devastating wars on so-called terrorism as main social and cultural concerns. The way Islam is approached by Westerners tends to reflect the ambivalent antagonism that persists as a lasting trauma, and a translation to the hidden story of Islam/Christianity realities.

Today, in literature, the clash between Islam and the West continues to be a point of departure for writing literary texts within new styles of rhetoric. In raising the question of Islamophobia in literature, Morey (2018) contends that this phenomenon has reemerged as the dominant mode of prejudice in contemporary Western societies, referring to the "Muslim problem" as central to political debates and policies. He contends that the literary responses to Islamophobia have traced the relationship of narrative to power as manifest in the content and form of texts, which enable the "Muslim writing" to be published, circulated, and reviewed. "What the novel can say about Islamophobia," he continues, "is inherently limited by its vaunted qualities as a liberal medium tied to the individualist perspective. It becomes necessary for us to examine the cultural work that formal and generic features are doing in promoting or rejecting particular types of worldviews" (p.3). Therefore, one of the remarkable features about many of the Muslim literary narratives that have garnered praise and attention over the past few years, Morey interrogates, is the degree to which they are deemed to offer direct, seemingly unmediated insights into hitherto hidden aspects of Muslim life and experience. To this, writing novels in an era of Islamophobia is to accept the fact that Muslim cultural values are contrasted with Western, "more enlightened, liberal ones, even if one's project is to explode this myth" (p.7). Thus, for him, it seems indisputable that the critical success of a literary text such as Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2006), for instance, is tied to its central aim of illustrating the "Muslim problem" of honor killing.

2 Media Framing of Islam and Muslims

a. Media Projecting the "Guilty" Religion

Western narratives have historically reported Islam and Muslims with prejudices and stereotypes. Recently, visuals have reported the inherited portraits of earlier literary narratives about Islam, which served in the representational forms of an enemy. Mehdi Semati (2010) argues that today's imagery, narratives, and ideas about the Middle East and Islam find their roots in Orientalist visions and narratives that the West produced for centuries. The Muslim Orient has been introduced as threatening within the same pictures that have been reiterated in earlier accounts. For Mehdi Semati, Edward Said contends that in today's media, narratives are still involved in the reproduction of the Orient as knowledge at the service of power. Western visuals, again, have portrayed Islam and Muslims with negative connotations, drawing, thus, a distorted picture about them. According to Said (2008), such visuals try to draw misconceptions and ideologies about Islam: "Malicious generalizations about Islam have become the last acceptable form of denigration of foreign culture in the West; what is said about the Muslim mind, or character, or religion, or culture as a whole cannot now be said in a mainstream discussion about Africans, Jews, other Orientals, or Asians" (p. xii). Islam has been associated with demeaning acts taking place in many areas. Through repeated images, Islam has been turned into a bloc of religious fundamentalism that threatens the existence of the West. Hippler and Lueg (1995) argue that "Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, and often directly or indirectly equated with Islamic fundamentalism" (p.26). Islam has long been considered the rival not only of the West but also of Christianity. "For a long time," they argue, "the Islamic Middle East was seen as the polar opposite of the West and as the enemy of Christianity. Even today the region remains alien to the average citizen, making it difficult to place news reports on the area in their proper context" (p.26). Islam is perceived as a major foe of the West and Western ideas, a portrait that entices image-makers who continue to construct negative imageries about Islam.

The Islamic doctrine has been attributed fallacious portrayals in the same way the Prophet has been vilified and described beyond his real character. And, because Muslims feel they are the "victims" of negative media portrayal in the West, Mohamed Javed (2010) argues, "there have been strong emotional responses in an attempt to counteract this victimization" (p.7). Islam, in Western media, is translated as inferior and as a weak doctrine that needs exploitation and cultivation. Such forms of media construct new definitions of Islam under the doctrine of the so-called

Western equality and justice principles. In doing so, Islam appears far from righteousness and logic. In *The Next Threat*, Hippler and Lueg (1995) assert that the Western media often make Islam out to be the main evil, and they love to divert our attention to the belief of "Islamic zealots," namely that "human rights are an imported Western body of thought" and are therefore to be rejected" (p.22). Be they male or female, Muslims are maligned to be introduced as a threat of evil to others.

b. Western Cinematic Portrayals of Islamic Religion

i. Projecting Cinematic Ideologies about Islam

In cinema, the act of representation is loaded with false images that are attributed to the "subject" that is being looked at. Many films use a representation that holds an indirect style to monitor the public either by naming the subject or leaving it unnamed depending on the correlation between the represented subject and its persisting associate. This, Gill Branston (2006) asserts, "effects the possibility of making realist images of groups, experiences, since, for one thing, in structuralist theory, nothing can be directly named, or made visible. It always has to be defined by its difference from something else: man-woman, east-west; gay-straight, and so on" (p.159). The degree of this association opens up a range of thoughts for a hyper representation where "the mythic" fuses with "the real" in the sense that some feature films, Jack Shaheen (1978) argues, introduce a "factual presentation while others (concentrate) on fantasy" (p.xiv). The feature film, thus, creates imaginary stories out of real narratives and events to retell the story. By doing so, an act of disciplining or even instructing crops up with the filmmaker's fervent whim to show the course of his/her thoughts through lush visuals. To this, Shaheen contends, "Beyond the significance of teaching, the films reflect an important era of film history. Screened as part of a collective study, with discussions afterward, the films themselves may become a means of instruction. Films receiving detailed discussions are readily available in 16-mm prints for rental and viewing" (xviii).

In the course of representation, cultural institutions play a significant role in directing the film toward the projection of cultural modes as ideological driving forces. Donal Carbaugh (2007) argues that the film uses cultural loads with the mode of representation, just as a comparative understanding of the roles that a film and cultural institutions play in different societies, which fosters the understanding of the dynamics of public and everyday discourses in the shaping of culture and society. By

the same token, the film draws cultural values, ethics, and norms by means of representing various cultural modes. David Spurr (1993) argues that these cultural modes are represented by an ideological system of other cultures: "The very process by which one culture subordinates another begins in the act of naming and leaving unnamed, of making on unknown territory the lines of division and uniformity, of boundary and continuity…In the broader sense, it includes the entire system by which one culture comes to interpret, to represent, and finally to dominate another" (p.4). The interaction between the individual and society shapes the body of representation in cinema as it gives way to the important circulation of meaning and systems of particular cultural modes in a society. Through the film representation, such cultural modes, Bill Ashcroft (2006) contends, turns the represented culture into "a historically muted subject," sometimes a "voiceless other" (p.37).

Christian Metz subverts the role of film in using the representation operation to deal with the relationship between the catalyzing elements of both the medium and the subject. Metz argues that the act of viewing involves a particular stance whereby the audience is framed to look at the oppressed with a particular scope of representation in the screens (Christian Metz quoted in John Ellis). The vision surrounding this kind of representation seems to invoke psychoanalytic discourse which again determines the relationship between the viewer and the viewed subject with particular regard to the psyche of the viewer as being the centre of the image reception stage. At the heart of this process, John Ellis asserts that psychoanalysis appeals to voyeurism which "tends to shade into particular variant, or blockage, of its activity; the fetishistic activity of looking" (p.47). It describes the reception stage which varies according to the type of constructive background of the viewer. Accordingly, fetishistic looking implies the direct acknowledgment and the participation of the object viewed. The relation between the viewer and the viewed is a relation of power whereby the former exerts discursive practices on the latter by an act of ideological representation. In short, this abundance of representations in film texts justifies the spread of Orientalist discourse. Today, the Western film is believed to reverberate Orientalist imageries or Orientalism which had been found in literature.

ii. Reeling Islam and Muslims in the Western Film

In many American and European films, the Muslim is introduced with clichés of evil and portrayed as a villain. He is seen as a monster Bedouin, or at best "the bearded," living in pernicious places almost like an animal menacing the Westerner in his home. Sometimes, El Bakkali (2022) ar-

gues, the Muslim Other is associated with Western violent captivity in the East as mostly projected as dressing in Islamic garments while violently getting their blond captives. The Muslim is portrayed also as a sexual deviant living in an ancient world. Sophia Rose Shafi (2011) states, that in the film *300*, for example, the Muslim appears as a menace to the high civilization of the ancient Persians, where Muslim believers are transformed into crowds of sexual deviants, filthy animals, and monsters featuring Black Persians. To this, the Muslim is introduced as a menacing evil to the Westerners who are conversely reported to be innocent. Imaginary Barbary monsters are an example of the dehumanized caricatures of ancient Persia. In films such as *The Sheik* and *Son of the Sheik* Muslims are disguised as ancient Persians. Muslims, in many Hollywood films, are dehumanized and appear as savages behind terrorist acts designed to kill Westerners. The Muslim portrayal in Hollywood has inherited various layouts from earlier colonial films where the Muslim Orient is hardly reported positively. Now, almost every film genre has adopted this heritage where the Arab Muslim is, at best, reported as a villain. "In war films," Mohamed Javed (2010) argues, "they were the Germans and Japanese. Generally, Muslims were absent in the early days of Hollywood. There were the occasional Arab and Muslim villains but a Muslim hero was unheard of. This may be due in part to the history of past conflicts [between Christians and Muslims] going back to the Crusades" (p.9).

As a response to these portrayals, scholars such as Jack Sheehan, John Eisele, and Ella Shohat have documented Muslims portrayed in cinema as kidnappers, rapists, and murderers, often by utilizing the "rescue plot," where, Sophia Rose Shafi (2011) argues, a White man, or men, would rescue some women -- mostly white from the clutches of the menacing, evil Muslims. Such narratives, Shafi Rose continues, function as cultural polemics about West vs. East, Whiteness vs. Otherness, and Christianity vs. Islam. On his part, Shaheen finds out that these films report the Muslim as a brutal religious fanatic. According to him, these films repeatedly dehumanize Arabs and Muslims and portray them as heartless, brutal, uncivilized, religious fanatics who are violent terrorists.

The Hollywood film, for example, introduces new perceptions about Islam by framing it as an "inferior system." Islam, according to Daniel Mandel (2001), is conceived as the only religion that poses threats to Westerners to the extent that "there are simply no Jewish versions of Usama Bin Laden, or Black version of Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman" (28). Hollywood introduces many humiliating images that show negative behaviours of Muslims. In *Not Without My Daughter*, Kim Deep (2002) argues that an Arab husband forces his American wife to wear the traditional veil of

Muslim women once they move to the East after living in America: Muslims, here, are seen as fundamentalists who are determined to restore the subordination of women. With such stereotypes, Brian Edwards argues, Hollywood filmmakers intend to influence American opinion by introducing images of Islamic leaders such as Khomeini and Gaddafi as Muslim fundamentalists. These images have been developed in Hollywood and quickly turn everybody with an Islamic background into a terrorist.

Many images about Muslims are produced to maintain, create, and reinforce the idea that they are real "terrorists" through misrepresenting their culture. Kamalipour (1997) argues that Muslims are seen as "selfish" "sheikhs" and "revolutionaries." As an example, Iranians, he asserts, are depicted as irrational, terrorist and cruel. They are never reported as innocent or appear in any compassionate role. Shaheen, in studying the pictures of Muslims and Arabs in mainstream US cinema, argues that these groups never appear innocent and Hollywood film always projects these people as "fanatical, homicidal terrorists." These images highlight the American mainstream ideologies after the 9/11 attacks. These events are reported through fictitious Hollywood images of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, Libya's Moammar Gadhafi, or Iraq's Saddam Hussein, to introduce the ones behind "terrorism."

For most Westerners, Muslims are put in one box and often are classified within one entity of similarity. *True Lies* introduces a so-called Palestinian terrorist organization group known as the "Crimson Jihad," led by Abu Aziz who envisions bombarding some places in the United States. As Aziz is meant to reveal his possession of small nuclear warheads hidden inside antique statues, the American characters are frightened. While Aziz is seen fighting Americans, Harry Tasker, an agent of the Omega Sector to the US Department of State, appears in explosions, close to death because Aziz and his men misuse developed weapons in their confrontations. As Helen, Harry's wife, is held hostage by Aziz's group, Harry appears perplexed because the "terrorists" escape the island before the nuclear warhead is set to detonate and sweep the camp. As Aziz kidnaps Harry's daughter, it is understood that Aziz's men take the floor and prepare to kill the remaining Americans and bomb a part of Miami. *True Lies* introduces various scenes that show pre-9/11 Muslims in charge of terrorist acts in America. These acts are attributed to Muslims who are portrayed by later Hollywood movies as forerunners of post-9/11 "terrorist actors."

Conclusion

The religious issue is one among other issues engaging "the Muslim problem" in both visuals and literature with the rise of new concepts, constructs, and ideologies, which makes demands on both the message sender (writer/filmmaker) and the reader/viewer, in which reading these texts necessitates drawing new ways of criticism into today's discussions. The various cultural misconceptions between Islam and the West can be brought into engagement with cultural traditions operating through individualist and religious orientations. Accordingly, this form of reading reinforces the secular/religious binary by showing the relations through relativizing value judgments. "The tone of reductive, moralistic separatism characteristic of modern discourse about Muslims and the West and its attendant fetishization of 'our culture,'" Morey (2018) argues, "becomes the main way to instrumentalize this sense of difference and exceptionality." With few hints of positive lights, the Western film is believed to inherit the tradition of literary projection, sometimes, through the Western tourist whose accounts about Islam have long stood as historical documents for today's accounts. Drawing such a binary opposition between Muslims and the West, Morey argues, many claims are made on a deeply felt sense of identity and tradition, mainly in the face of the negotiated, fitful, and often violent history by which identification with state projects has been enforced.

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CHAPTER 2

THE MOROCCAN AND MUSLIM DIASPORA IN EUROPE: SHIFTING FROM THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION TO THE CONTEXT OF CITIZENSHIP

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Abstract

The Moroccan diaspora in Europe in general, and Western Europe in particular, has undergone various profound historical, political, demographic, socio-cultural, and identity transformations since the era of labor migration or so-called "guest workers" in the 1960s up until today. This new situation has drastically altered the landscape of the Islamic and Moroccan presence in Europe. It is not just about the numerical and quantitative expansion, which researchers often emphasize, but also about the qualitative presence reflected in the various cultural, social, political, and institutional achievements made by European Moroccans from different generations of immigrants. This research paper discusses the main shift from the context of migration to that of citizenship, focusing on the conceptual transformation from being seen as "guest workers," "immigrants," and "foreigners" to being recognized as European "citizens."

The research paper is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, we argued that there is a need today to adopt a new approach to the Islamic presence in Europe and the West. In the second chapter, we discussed the evolving European epistemological and sociological context, in which Muslims and Moroccans have become a significant element, highlighting the key determinants and features of this context. In the third and fourth chapters, we explored the main hypothesis of this study: the shifting from the context

of migration to the context of citizenship focusing on the conceptual transformation experienced by the Islamic diaspora in general, and the Moroccan diaspora in particular, especially in the West-European context.

Keywords: Moroccan Diaspora; Migration, Context of Citizenship; Western Europe; Transformation.

Introduction

This research paper deals with the Islamic presence in general and the Moroccan presence in particular in the contemporary European context. The focus is basically on the transformations that this presence has witnessed since the beginning of the first labor migrations in the 1960s from some Islamic countries (Morocco, Turkey, etc.) to Western Europe (Nielsen, 2005). Studying this historical, and at the same time socio-cultural theme, requires adopting an approach that takes into account a set of new circumstances and elements, if we want to understand the contemporary situation of Muslims in Europe objectively and realistically. Moreover, this "new" context is subject to several factors that affect the nature of the Islamic presence in the West, such as the rise in the level of knowledge among last Muslim generations, converting Islam, academic interest in Islam, Arab political tensions, and others.

In analyzing the conditions of Muslims in Western Europe, it is crucial to consider some determinants that span from challenges to opportunities. This comprehensive approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the Muslim experience in countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Germany. There, the reality of the Muslim group is governed by a set of determinants, ranging between two opposite poles: challenges and opportunities. For example, historically, Muslim immigrants were often viewed as second- or lower-class citizens. However, the contemporary concept of citizenship has evolved, providing Muslims and other foreigners with equal rights and opportunities. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the experiences of all Muslims in Europe are smooth and without challenges. Despite the rights afforded to them, there has been a significant increase in racism and discrimination, as highlighted by various official reports (FRA, 2024).

In addition, while the "civilized West" offers various opportunities, such as freedom of religion and expression, these coexist with the rising challenges, most notably political discrimination, posed by political populism and the extreme right. "Discrimination is considered a significant contributor to alienation and disaffection among Muslims, a

barrier to integration and a risk factor for radicalisation" (Choudhury 2007, 77-106). Navigating this dichotomy is crucial for understanding the Muslim experience in Western Europe. By considering these determinants, we can develop a more comprehensive and balanced perspective on the conditions of Muslims in Western Europe, recognizing both the challenges they face and the opportunities available to them.

With this foundation, we can now address the main hypothesis of the research paper, focusing on the Moroccan diaspora in Europe, that has undergone various transformations -historical, cognitive, identity-related, socio-cultural, and conceptual. In this paper, we focus exclusively on the conceptual transformation, as the history of Moroccan and Muslim labor migration to Europe has gone through several stages. At each stage, this group was identified by a different term, reflecting a gradual transition from "guest workers" to "immigrants" to "foreigners," and finally to European "citizens."

The research paper is divided into four chapters. The first chapter highlights the need for a new approach to understanding the Islamic presence in Europe and the West today. The second chapter explores the evolving European epistemological and sociological context, emphasizing the growing significance of Muslims and Moroccans within this landscape. Key factors and characteristics of this context are thoroughly illustrated. The third and fourth chapters delve into the study's central hypothesis: the transition from a migration-based context to one of citizenship. These chapters focus on the conceptual transformation experienced by the Muslim diaspora in general, and the Moroccan diaspora in particular, especially within the Western European context.

Finally, the historical and social dynamic in the context of Moroccan immigration can actually be effectively analyzed through sociological research and specialized cultural field studies. While our academic specialization may not directly align with these fields of knowledge, it is imperative to contribute from our position and within the framework of our intellectual and academic work to explore aspects of this reality using our methodological and epistemological tools. Additionally, our involvement in this reality and our experience with its various fluctuations for more than a quarter of a century can help in deconstructing some of its historical, cultural, social, and legal structures.

Muslims in the West and the Need For a New Approach

Although the presence of Muslims in European and Western countries has undergone profound transformations, affecting various social, cultural,

educational, and economic aspects, it is noted that Arabic research on this issue remains dependent on the traditional vision that has prevailed since the 1970s and 1980s. This vision views Arabic and Muslim minorities in Europe and the West as merely groups that migrated to work or study for a certain period, intending to eventually return to their original homelands. This does not apply at all to our contemporary times, because Muslims in the West are, or "should be," intellectually, politically and financially independent (Ramadan 2005, 20). This indicates a lack of academic and media engagement with the various transformations that have impacted the reality of Muslims in the West.

As a result, a significant part of contemporary Arabic intellectual discourse still relies on outdated and confrontational ideas, such as conspiracy theories, the clash of civilizations, and the duality of the house of peace and the house of disbelief. These old ideas have become alien to the field of academic research and objective studies of Islam in Europe and the West today.

This means that the time has come to present a new approach to the Islamic presence in Europe and the West. This approach should not be imported literally from outside the Western context or formulated in a way disconnected from the reality of Muslims in the West. Instead, it should emerge from the depth of this reality and its diverse challenges, developed by Muslim experts and researchers who reside in or originate from the West (Boulaouali 2021, 9-20).

This does not mean excluding the role that the original homelands may play as background bases from which the spirit of Islam spreads globally. Moreover, in this new approach, Muslim minorities must not be viewed as "a fifth column" belonging to their countries of origin, but rather as an integral part of Western society. This idea is still unfortunately present in contemporary Arabic intellectual discourse that addresses the Islamic presence in Europe and the West from a distance, without engaging directly with that reality or at least studying it closely. Some even go so far as to write, warning Muslims, that "we must prepare to confront the dangers that Islam and Muslims will be exposed to" in the West (Al-Ramahi 2023, 15).

Muslims in the West nowadays have come to see their host countries as their true homeland, to the extent that some Muslim countries were once the original homelands of the first generations of immigrants. Especially for the latest generations of Muslims, this involves a kind of reconciliation between their original Islamic faith and the Western reality in which they are a part. Ramadan assumes that a new Western environment can lead to a rereading of Islamic sources, to retrieve a