The Adaptation of the Western Perspective (Don DeLillo) on Terrorism in Fadia Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep*

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Abstract—**The study aims to identify how the American author, Don DeLillo presents Arab Muslims in his novel *Falling Man*, likewise explores how the Jordanian-British, Fadia Faqir, presents Arab Muslims by adopting the Western Perspective of them in her novel *Willow Trees Don't Weep*. To achieve the objectives of the study, the theory of Post-colonialism is used, and specifically the views of Edward Said on Orientalism are applied to both novels. The study concludes by presenting how both authors - Don DeLillo as a Westerner and Fadia Faqir as an Arab - present their Arab Muslim characters as terrorists in their respective works *Falling Man* and *Willow Trees Don't Weep*.**

Index Terms—**terrorism, Falling Man, Faqir, DeLillo, adoption**

I. INTRODUCTION

The current study attempts to show that Fadia Faqir adopts the stereotypical terroristic images of Islam and Muslims. It also attempts to show how Faqir represents Muslims as terrorists in her novel in much the same way that Western writers such as Don DeLillo present them. Some studies have been previously conducted on Faqir's and DeLillo's respective novels *Willow Trees Don't Weep* and *Falling Man*, both of which tackle terrorism individually. Thus, the contribution of the study lies in linking the two novels together and exploring how both a Western writer and a diasporic Arab writer share the same view when it comes to Arab Muslims.

The last several decades have seen an interesting surge in the number of literary works written by diasporic Arab writers in English and other foreign languages. Diasporic Arab writers are writers who have moved to the United Kingdom or the United States for whatever reason and have chosen to write in English. As a result of what these diasporic Arab Muslims writers have been exposed to, many diasporic Arab writers, and especially those who are Muslims, have focused on changing the image of Islam and have stood against the stereotypes that are used by many Westerners in their writings. Unfortunately, some Arab Muslim writers have not followed this trend; instead, they have defended these stereotypes of Islam and Muslims by highlighting them in their writings mostly to simply increase the number of Western readers and, thus, gain popularity. Such is the case in this research where it is posited that Fadia Faqir is one of these Arab diasporic writers who has adopted the Westerners' views on Islam and its followers.

Ever since their first contact with Muslim Arabs long ago, Westerners have formed opinions and created stereotypical images about them based on what was happening at the time. Indeed, certain stereotypes have only become more exaggerated after the events of 9/11 and 7/7 where Arabs have been painted as terrorists and Islam has been shown as a religion of war, violence, and terrorism. In fact, Harb (2012) posits that the attacks of 9/11 were "a turning point" in the lives of Westerners and how they started seeing Arab Muslims with many Westerners viewing Arabs being against modernity, violent, patriarchal, and terrorists. Until recently, Westerners took this image of Arab Muslims for granted.

Said (1978) discusses the relationship between the East and the West in his book titled "Orientalism". According to Said, Orientalism is an ideology that supports a "West-and-Islam" duality and the belief that "others are less human". Said also adds that it is a way of thinking based on a distinction between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident" – a point-of-view that only exists in the minds of Westerners (p. 10). Akram (2000) speaks of the aspects of Orientalism, saying that the first aspect is the Western attitude which revolves around the idea that there is a profound difference between the mindset of people from Arab Islamic cultures and those from the West. Indeed, it is this Western attitude that has led to the formation of the stereotypical images of the Arab Islamic world by Westerners.

In *Orientalism*, Said (1978) also explores the conventional views of Arabs and Muslims and how these stereotypical images were first generated by the West. He claims that the East, as it is also known in the West, only exists inside the ideology of the West. Westerners, according to Said (1978), create the Orient through their writing. In the process, they contribute to the creation of a series of stereotypical images in which Europe (the "self") is seen as essentially rational,

developed, humane, superior, virtuous, normal, and masculine, while at the same time, the Orient (the "other") is seen as "irrational, backward, despotic, inferior, depraved, aberrant, and feminine sexually" (Macfie, 2002, p. 8). Ahmad (2011) declares that the Westerners, according to Said, split the universe into two contradicting origins: our world (the West) and their world (the East).

In his book, *Covering Islam*, Said (1997) continues his investigation of Islamic cultural iconography which he began in his more general *Orientalism* (1978) and more specific in his *The Question of Palestine* (1979). He analyzes how the media shapes common perceptions of Islam, and argues about how Western colonialism has been helped by a centuries-old, academically manufactured image of Islam. Furthermore, he explains how such negative imagery is used to support US control over Arab lands, as seen in its news, film, and advertising. He also shows how to learn more about the motivations behind the media's coverage of Islam in Western society, notably in the United States.

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, many Western writers used these attacks to enhance the stereotypical images of Islam and Muslims and relate them to terrorism in the Western mind. In 2007, Don DeLillo, an American writer, published a novel called *Falling Man*. It is a novel about the aftermath of 9/11 and its impact on Westerners and especially Americans. The author presents Arab Muslims through the negative stereotypical images that had already existed in Westerners' minds prior to 9/11, leaving his audience to conclude that all Arabs, and especially the Muslim ones, are terrorists. At the same time, instead of challenging these stereotypical Western views of Arabs, some diasporic Arab writers chose to adopt the same Western clichés about Arab Muslims in their writings. The Jordanian British writer Fadia Faqir is one such writer, exemplified by her novel *Willow Trees Don't Weep* (2014), where Faqir adopts the stereotypical images of Arabs and Muslims created by the West. The story is told from two points of view. The first perspective is that of Nadia, an Arab girl who searches for her father after the death of her mother. The second perspective is that of Nadia's father, Omar Rahman, who has been convinced by his friend Hani to go and fight in Afghanistan where he is brainwashed and trained as a suicide bomber using a belt of explosives.

Faqir's most recent novel has left a mark on the writings of Arabs who write in English and, indeed, international writing as well, by writing about an imagined voyage that is considered a threat to the Western world. Writing a novel about a man who leaves his home and family to join al Qaeda may be one of the riskiest literary acts ever undertaken by an Arab Muslim female author writing in English for a predominantly Western audience. Faqir adopts the views of Westerners on Islam and Muslims.

Don DeLillo is one of these Western writers who perceive Arabs and Muslims as terrorists. As such, this thesis explores how Faqir has adopted the same views as DeLillo showing little respect for her heritage as an Arab and a Muslim because she is finds Western culture impressive. In fact, Majed (2012) comments on this by saying that Faqir negatively represents Islam in her writing. Thus, she proves that she is impressed by the Westerners and considers herself part of the Western secular feminists who claim that Islam is the reason behind the low status of Arab Muslim females in Islamic societies. Other Arab Muslim writers who also present Arabs and Muslims in much the same way as Faqir were also affected by the culture of their new Western homes. Allani (2017) states that these Arab American women are considered "the product" of a bicultural heritage: "the original homeland culture and their new home culture" (p. 33). Bhabha (1994), much like Allani, refers to them as "hybrids," meaning they mix both their Eastern culture and Western culture together. Allani (2017) adds that after living a while in the West, some Arab Muslims will have merged, or even lost their identities. Nonetheless, diasporic Arab Muslim writers portray features of current Islamic culture in their literary works in a variety of ways, with diasporic Arab Muslim women writers portraying Islam even more variably. Some Arab Muslim writers represent Islam as it is - a religion of love, equality, and justice, as well as the proper portrayal of it, which creates a conflict for the Western audience who constantly write to conform to and promote the conventional, yet incorrect, picture of Arabs and Muslims.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Representation of Islam and Terrorism by Fadia Faqir and Don DeLillo in Their Literary Works

To start with, Whelan (2011) states that DeLillo considers terrorism as the primary cultural issue. Further, Hantke (2003) asserts that there has been a shift from conspiracy to horror, not just in DeLillo's books, but also in politics. As a result, the primary focus of conspiracy theories has turned to internal rather than foreign security concerns. Marandi and Tari (2012) states that DeLillo uses a narrative style to pursue the same approach; he talks authoritatively and harshly about the Orient in essentialist terms. He also presents Muslim "Oriental" women, including their mindsets, goals, aspirations, and worries using an approach which allows him to portray Muslims' ideas, values, and ideological orientations, as well as their attitudes toward people, events, and things, in whatever way he wants. Thus, the story's narrative is built upon the writer's tastes and within the prevailing discourse, rather than transmitting a set of facts about the characters' true reality. Pöhlmann (2010) declares that *Falling Man* employs dichotomies that are "laced with cross-links and inversions" to the point where readers are unable to fully recognize "the problematic construction of American victim versus Islamist terrorist" that they have come to recognize from "mainstream media reports" since 9/11 (p. 53). DeLillo deals with binary oppositions, and *Falling Man*'s depiction of terrorists ultimately follows Orientalist patterns.

Moreover, Scanlan (2010) declares that, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, violent revolutionaries have produced a public panic that politicians, the press, and literary authors may use and exaggerate to their benefit. He claims that

phrases like "Islamic terrorism" and "Islamic fascism" were purposefully coined and widely used in the mainstream media to legitimize a wide range of prejudices against Muslims. This violent image of Islam is perpetuated not just by popular films and television shows, but also by post-9/11 books produced by well-known American authors.

Moving to the studies that show how Muslims are represented by Faqir, Bouteraa (2002) demonstrates how the Arab World has long struggled for freedom from foreign conquerors, civil tyrants, and tyrannical hands. This battle is exacerbated for Arab women who face additional societal and cultural obstacles. This influence has pervaded the brains of many Arab female authors, and Faqir's work exemplifies the breadth of this impact. Each novel's political and historical circumstances are immensely telling. Faqir presents Muslim men as terrorists instead of the English troops because of the way they treat women. For the ladies in these novels (and most likely their authors), the tragic and continuous bloodshed in the Middle East is inextricably linked to personal experience. Moreover, we cannot claim to have done a thorough examination of the literature if we ignore the unstable political environment. Sarnou (2017) discusses how Faqir's works have seen a boost in popularity in the West, owing to a growing interest in comprehending the "Others" who are seen as a danger to the West. In addition, Majed (2015) states that Faqir tries to integrate new themes into her work that have affected diasporic writing such as terrorism and Islam.

B. The Representation of Islam and Terrorism in Faqir's Willow Trees Don't Weep and DeLillo's Falling Man

Marandi and Tari (2012) show how DeLillo presents most of his characters from various ethnic and religious backgrounds as Americans, yet separates Arab Muslim characters from among them, presenting them as violent terrorists. This view indicates that Americans are innocent receivers of people from all nations except for Arab countries because Arab Muslims are disrupters of peace and humanity, not only for Americans, but also for the whole white world. With this approach, DeLillo draws a clear line between the Muslim and non-Muslim characters in the novel, implying that Americans are capable of accepting people of all races and nationalities as members of their society with the exception of Arab Muslims. This strangeness and otherness of Muslims has reached the point that it is impossible to come up with a fitting term for them.

Aldalala'a (2013) states that Faqir represents Muslims in Hammad's life, mission, and death as a type of signature to the assaults on America on September 11, 2001. It also reinforces the traditional propensity of Muslim terrorists to welcome death. However, he does not limit the examination of Hammad to the issue of terrorism and its topicality in fiction after 9/11; rather, he is interested in how the plot of death and the terrorist's readiness to die impact the form and creation of post-9/11 literature. Stamenkovi (2020) discusses how *Falling Man* is all about terrorism. The terrorist group here is in stark contrast to American unity as a nation. Hardack (2004) writes that even xenophobia in *Falling Man* represents "a foreign threat to American individuality" (p. 375). Asatryan (2012) discusses how DeLillo transforms all temporal and spatial visions, breaking down all frontiers and bringing time and space together. Terrorism is defined by this oneness. Terrorism appears to be on the same level as time and space. As a result, literature becomes a tool for demonstrating how 9/11 has become a dividing line between life before the events of that day and life after that tragic day. Moving to the studies that tackle terrorism in Faqir's novel, *Djafri* (2021) discusses how Faqir portrays her characters' lives as intricate journeys towards self-discovery via other Muslim nations such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, where Islam's image has been damaged by wars and terrorism, before eventually arriving in Western secular England and settling there for good.

In reviewing previous literature, although there have been various studies done on both novels separately, there are no studies that link Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep* and DeLillo's *Falling Man* together in terms of presenting Arab Muslims and their relationship to terrorism, Here lies the study's contribution in connecting the two novels and investigating how they both share the same image of Arab Muslims, despite the fact that the first writer is a Westerner and the second is a diasporic Arab writer. With that said, the researcher approaches both novels using Postcolonial theory and draws on Said's opinions on Orientalism and how he examines stereotypical notions of the Orient and the East in particular.

III. ANALYSIS

A. Don DeLillo's Representation of Islam and Arab Muslims in His Novel Falling Man.

Falling Man revolves around four characters, namely, Hammad, Amir, Elena, and Omar. All of them, except Omar, are considered terrorists in the novel. The novel depicts the September 11 attacks in America, a day which has shaped and disrupted the reconstruction of the identity of Arabs and Muslims in the West. Identity is the most contentious question in postcolonial literature and history, and it is also the most pressing because of the crisis that exists in all postcolonial cultures. The crisis arose as a result of the post-colonial era's circumstances and the difficult conditions that newly liberated nations and countries encountered in their search for and construction of self-identity (Dizayi, 2015, p. 43). According to Meccar, "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent, and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (p. 4).

Hammad suffers from an identity crisis due to his accommodation in a Western liberated country, which is completely different from Eastern Islamic countries. In this regard, Abu-Samara (2016) has defined an identity crisis as a dissatisfaction and bewilderment created by not knowing what sort of person one is or what the genuine purpose of

one's life is. It is a psychological state or condition, as well as role confusion, which occurs mostly during adolescence as a result of contradictory internal and external experiences, demands, and expectations, frequently resulting in extreme anxiety. We can see here, how DeLillo from the beginning shows the characters' conflict with Islam and how it oppresses their desires. Islam is represented as an oppressive religion. In this respect, Shadid and Koningsveld (2002) point out that the negative attitudes of Westerners towards Easterners are primarily relied on stereotypes and prejudice which intensify the differentiation between the Westerners and the Easterners leading to a vicious cycle in the relationship between them. Therefore, he struggles with a religious identity crisis. This also shows how the author represents Islam as strict when it comes to appearance and looks.

The identity crisis of Hammad is manifested in his desire to stop sinning and his desire to be responsible for his own actions as well. Amir succeeds in strengthening his faith by reading the verses of the Quran that boost his sense of belonging by focusing on the purpose that he seeks to achieve - that of *jihad*. He does not trim his beard because he wants to follow Islam's rules. He changes his ideas because he feels remorse for his actions. Therefore, he decides to follow Islamic conventions and orders. Amir here is portrayed as religious and a practitioner of Islam by DeLillo. This is to lead the reader to believe that anyone who practices Islam is also one practices terrorism.

In respect to the second section of the novel, entitled "In Nokomis", it shows how Hammad changes and Amir becomes a terrorist by planning and pledging to fulfill the Muslim's duty (as presented in the novel) by destroying America. "They sat around a table on day one and pledged to accept their duty, which was for each of them, in blood trust, to kill Americans" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 76). Both Amir and Hammad carry out terrorist attacks against America in order to get closer to God. The terrorist preparation is determined with the act only affecting Amir: "Only Amir burned now. Amir was electric, dripping fire from the eyes" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 77). More importantly, Hammad feels that he is getting closer to God after participating in terrorism operations. To clarify, he starts to feel that he is more satisfied with himself when he wears a suicide vest and feels that he has become a man: "There was no feeling like this ever in his life. He wore a bomb vest and knew he was a man now, finally, ready to close the distance to God" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 77).

The author attempts to distort the image of Arab Muslims by conveying foreigners' misconceptions about Islam by accusing Muslims of being terrorist who are inclined to use violence and intimidation against others. To clarify, the author describes Hammad's reaction when he sees inappropriate behavior which contradicts Islamic beliefs. Hammad sees a group of girls and boys hanging out with each other in a car, smoking and drinking. He gets annoyed. Therefore, he plans to kill them by getting into their car and then attacking them. His intention for killing them is, again, for him to get closer to God. In this respect, Shadid and Koningsveld (2002) indicate that "warning against the threat of the Muslim enemy is not new in the Western world" (p. 1).

The author reflects the misrepresentation of Eastern people that is created by the West. This finding lends tremendous support to the study of Marandi and Tari (2012) that talks authoritatively and harshly about the Orient in essentialist terms. The author depicts how both Hammad and Amir feel satisfied by killing innocent people. He deliberately has written this novel in order to distort the image of Islam and alienate people from embracing it. "They fired weapons and set off explosives. They received instruction in the highest *jihad*, which is to make blood flow, their blood and that of others" (DeLillo, 2012, p. 77). Both Hammad and Amir are depicted as terrorists who seek to set off explosives in order to make the blood of the disbelievers flow. Moreover, it depicts *jihad* in Islam as war. According to Kretsch (2016), the concept of *jihad* has been twisted in America, due to poor public awareness of the topic and the September 11 attacks. As a result, these misconceptions have changed how the world views Arab Muslims and how these views will possibly continue for centuries to come.

To continue, the author portrays how other Muslims train Hammad on the method of using force against enemies. In the camp, he is trained to slaughter a camel. The author shows the excitement and happiness that Hammad feels when all the blood is drained from the camel: "Hammad, arms spread wide, kissed the bloody knife and raised it to the ones who were watching, the robed and turbaned men, showing his respect and gratitude" (DeLillo, 2012, p. 77). In this regard, Sultan (2016) indicates that "anti-Muslim prejudice is extensive in the West" (p. 5). Obviously, the author attempts to convey the misconception about Muslims being terrorists. According to Yusof et al. (2014), Islam is linked with terrorism and Muslims are depicted in Western media as terrorists.

However, Hammad sometimes doubts the aim of *jihad*, for example, when he says "But does a man have to kill himself in order to count for something, be someone, find the way?" (DeLillo, 2012, p. 78). It is clear that Hammad does not like to be engaged in disruptive activities. Amir replies, "There is no sacred law against what we are going to do. This is not suicide in any sense or interpretation of the word. It is only something long-written. We are finding the way already chosen for us" (DeLillo 2012, p. 78). The author negatively portrays how Muslims, like Amir in the novel, encourage each other to destroy America and Western people to convey that Arab Muslims tend to carry out subversive activities. Such a negative image is an illusion created by Westerners in order to distort Islam. It is in line with Halliday (1995) who indicates that the Islamic threat to the West is an illusion created by Westerners.

Obviously, Amir's response denotes his desire to assassinate and destroy the world because he incited Hammad to perform these acts of violence. Such misconceptions that are reflected in this novel about Arab Muslims seek to convey to the entire world that Muslims are terrorists because they justify the use of suicide as a legitimate act of martyrdom in the name of faith. These misconceptions imply that Arab Muslims promote terrorism and violence; however, these misconceptions are erroneous. The author manipulates the image of Islam to yield particularistic purposes. According to

bin Othman et al. (2021), Muslims are "misconceived, deliberately manipulated to serve particularistic purposes, especially power and material" (p. 119). In this regard, El-Aswad (2013) submits that the image of Muslims as being threatening to others has been fabricated by the Western community. He adds that the misconception of Arabs by Western people reflects the attitudes of anti-Muslims that are adopted and accepted by Westerners who regard themselves as open-minded.

The author shifts to describing the planned terrorist plot by indicating that "men spent years organizing secretly this work" (DeLillo, 2012, p. 78). A terrorist plan that has been organized years ago undergoes through three processes: thinking, talking, and doing. When the terrorists talk with each other, Hammad imagines the feeling of intense pleasure because of his intention to blow up the disbelievers (DeLillo, 2012). The author depicts Hammad as a terrorist who not only destroys the world, but also feels intense happiness when thinking of destroying others in general and disbelievers in particular. Obviously, the author seeks to create a misleading image of Eastern culture. According to Said (1978), knowledge is a form of power, i.e., anybody who creates or publishes knowledge about the "orient" has the power to rule it. From the perspective of Westerners, the production of Western writers and scholars is the only valid one, which always portrays Westerners as "rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, and capable of holding real values," while the Easterners are the exact opposite (p. 49). According to Said (1978), this form of knowledge is a weapon of imperialism because it is created to justify the political policies of Western governments against the Orient.

Hammad only thinks of shock and death (DeLillo, 2012). Hammad feels satisfied because he will finally reach his calling. Therefore, he is only thinking of the consequences that might happen after such a terrorist operation. As shown by the aforementioned above, Western writers construct images of Easterners according to their own conventions and perspectives by depicting that Muslims are willing to die and destroy others in order to die as martyrs for the sake of Islam. This finding of the present study lends support to the study of Aldalala'a (2013) that *Falling Man* represents Muslims in Hammad's life, mission, and death as a type of signature to the attacks on America on September 11, 2001. It further enhances the traditional propensity of Muslim terrorists to welcome death. In this respect, Elayan (2005) points out that "... when one perceives an individual as a member of a particular stereotyped group, the perceiver's mind activates the group-relevant cognitive structure and processes judgments and attitudes within the framework of that particular stereotype" (p.8). Generally speaking, creating misleading images of Islam by generalizing that all Muslims are terrorists is deeply ingrained and might influence other people to believe these negative views that all Muslims are terrorists. According to Noureen et al. (2020), Arab Muslims are perceived as "either a terrorist or simply a villain of another kind" (p. 687). In this respect, Said (1978) points out that Americans and Europeans have been receiving information about Islam from the media and not by studying the religion itself.

According to Said's book (1997), *Covering Islam*, Islam and its followers are known to be supporters of terrorism. This book creates an unwillingness to look beyond the theaters, as people lose interest in seeking the truth. They are rather satisfied with what they gain from the book itself and take it as it is. It has also limited the ability to establish knowledge about Islam and Muslim societies (Porter 2016). The misconception between Arabs and Muslims has placed both Arabs and Muslims in the same boat. The West believes, and portrays, "all Arabs as Muslims and all Muslims as Arabs" (Elayan, 2005, p. 16).

The novel then moves on to describe how Hammad gets confused as the day of suicide bombing approached (DeLillo, 2007). DeLillo shows that Arab Muslims are torn between the feelings of happiness with the approach of the suicide bombing and the feelings of confusion with the consequences of the suicide attack. In *The Hudson Corridor*, DeLillo portrays the suicide attack and describes how Hammad's blood is draining "through the cuff of his long-sleeved shirt" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 104). The aircraft is heading towards the Hudson Corridor. Hammad starts to feel that his life would be over now and his wish to die with his brothers would come true. When Hammad is accidentally cut in the struggle by one of his brothers, he is unable to handle the pain. More importantly, the author describes Hammad as content to watch his blood flow out of him (DeLillo, 2007). The author seeks to convey that Muslims are terrorists and incite violence. In this regard, Said (1997) points out that the misrepresentations of Arabs exist through the "contributions from pro-Israeli journals and books in the hope that more Americans and Europeans will see Israel as a victim of Islamic violence" (p. xxi). On the contrary, Islam rejects every form of terrorism.

When the time draws near, Hammad convinces himself that his sins will be erased, and his eternal life and his wish to die with his brothers will come true. When the aircraft hits the tower, Hammad hears sounds from everywhere in the cabin; voices and excited cries. While the items on the aircraft are moving; Hammad sees a bottle of empty water rolling backwards, spinning more quickly and slipping on the floor before the aircraft struck the tower, and then a blast wave, heat, fire, and fuel penetrates the structure. DeLillo misrepresents the image of Islam by conveying that Muslims only seek to fulfill one objective to destroy America and Westerners. Such misleading images of Islam only intensified after the terrorist attack on September 11. In this respect, Kretsch (2016) maintains that "There has been a rise in hate crime toward Muslims in America since the terrorist attacks" (p. 7). According to Shaheen (1980), DeLillo attempts to portray how the September 11 attacks are related to Arab Muslims who have, in Western eyes, become synonymous with the words "terrorism, hijack, intractability, sullenness, perverseness, cruelty, oil, sand, embargo, boycott, greed, bungling, comedic disunity, primitive torture, family feuds, and white slavery'' (n.p).

B. Fadia Faqir's Representation of Islam and Arab Muslims in Her Novel Willow Trees Don't Weep

In *Willow Trees Don't Weep*, Faqir adopts the stereotypical images of Islam and Muslims created by the West. This novel misrepresents Arab Muslims and Eastern society depicting a secularist view of the erroneous image of Islam with the loss of identity owing to the absence of patriarchal power in Eastern society. The story begins with Najwa's mother, Raneen, who rejects Islam and becomes a secular woman after her husband, Omar Rahman, leaves her (Faqir, 2014). Here, Faqir portrays Islam as a strict religion; thus, Muslims become secular to find their freedom. Ismail and Tekke (2016) define secularism as the individual's freedom to choose his/her religion according to their choice and will.

Raneen pretends that she does not care that Omar has left, but one day she inspects her husband's belongings such as his prayer beads, his cologne, and more importantly his religious books with titles like "*The Islamic Caliphate*, *The Glorious Othman Empire*, *Overcoming the Fear of Death*, *Islamic Jihad*, *The Ideal Muslim Father* and *Soldiers of God*: *With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan*" (Faqir, 2014, p. 9). As a result, she burns his books.

Omar Rahman, leaves his family to fight for God's sake, that is, to fight disbelievers. When Raneen falls increasingly ill and hears the Qur'anic verses, she thinks of Omar (Faqir, 2014). Faqir depicts how Omar turns into a terrorist and his conversion affects his beloved people. In other words, Omar becomes a terrorist, while Raneen becomes a secular. The image that is portrayed of Arab Muslims by the author does not necessarily reflect her attitudes towards Arab Muslims, but rather it reflects Western attitudes and misperceptions of Arab Muslims. Faqir here fabricates and misrepresents the image of Arab Muslims by adapting the perspective of the West towards Arab Muslims and Muslims in general (Akram, 2000).

As mentioned previously, though she tries to show otherwise, Raneen is, in fact, affected by Omar's leaving his family behind and wants her daughter to be secular like her. Therefore, she wants Najwa to study French because it is considered the language of the most secular country in the world. She also wants her to be able to work in one of the Dead Sea hotels in Jordan, which is considered "the most cosmopolitan and secular of environments" (Faqir, 2014, p. 10). Possibly, for Raneen, the absence of her husband i.e. patriarchal power, drives her to find her freedom. Faqir tries to show that Arab Muslims become secular in order to violate the boundaries that restrict them from finding their freedom. Accordingly, Faqir reflects the stereotypical image of Arab Muslim women among the West, who are restricted by patriarchal power, unlike Westerners. In this regard, Mohanty (1998) considers Western women independent and without any patriarchal violent restrictions, neither in their rights, nor in their freedom because of Islam. According to Bamia (1991), "Muslim women argue that Islam guaranteed women's rights of which they have been deprived because of customs and traditions that are imposed in the name of religion" (p. xvi).

Omar leaves them to Afghanistan to join Al-Qaeda (Faqir, 2014). They train him to fire at the target "photos of an American G.I. armed" (Faqir, 2014, p. 96). He is further trained to make explosions and use machine guns. The majority of the topics in their training camp revolve around killing, *kafir*, and the honor of the woman. To give an example, Omar and his Muslim friends in the training camp gathered one day and watched a video that contains the following statement "Muslims, wherever they are in the world are targeted by *kafirs*" (Faqir, 2014, p. 97). Another video is about Muslim women and children being attacked and abused by Westerners. By the end of the video, a serene voice of an imam calls all Muslims and encourages them to safeguard women and vulnerable people because they need their assistance (Faqir, 2014). Once again, Faqir depicts the negative stereotypical image of Muslims by portraying them as terrorists. According to Said (1997), Westerners misrepresent the image of Arab Muslims by creating an unfair, hateful, and negative image of Muslims by depicting them as terrorists and fundamentalists. Said (1997) adds that terrorism is presented within the misconceptions of Westerners that Arab Muslims are perceived as "absolutist", "patriarchal", "unreasoning", and "punitive" (p. 34).

Faqir articulates the differences between Islamic culture and Western culture by showing women's rights and freedom as restricted in Arab countries unlike Western countries where women aren't restricted. Thus, the reason behind Najwa going after her father is that she is not able to live in a society that does not accept her not having a father. Mohanty (1988) considers Western women independent and no patriarchal violence restricts neither their rights nor their freedom. Mohanty (1988) argues that the "'third-world woman', an image…arbitrarily constructed, but nevertheless carries with it the authorizing signature of Western humanist discourse" (pp. 334-335). Najwa lives in a world that does not give a woman the liberty to live alone because she needs a man to support and protect her. Here, it is clear, as Harb (2012) indicates, that patriarchal power is considered one of the stereotypes of Arab Muslims in the West.

Therefore, Najwa is afraid of ending up living alone in this conservative society that does not give the woman her freedom and considers her as a harlot without a man or a family. Furthermore, she has experienced a situation in which she feels that she is easy prey. To counteract this misconception of Arab Muslims and Islam, Ahmed (1992) states that the stereotypical image of Islam by Western feminists that Arabs are ignorant, irrational, backward, uncivilized is clear with their imposition of wearing the *hijab* or "veil".

Omar Rahman and his friend Hani are shown as converted to Islam, that is, they were non-religious before turning into religious men. To clarify, they used to drink when they go out, but they tend to be out of sight from their neighborhood because they do not want to be seen by their community as "pariahs" (Faqir, 2014, p. 30). Hani gives Omar Rahman a beer; "gave me a brown bag. It had a beer bottle in it" (Faqir, 2014, p. 30). However, Omar Rahman tells him "we can't drink here in our neighborhood. If we got spotted, we will become pariahs" (Faqir, 2014, p. 30).

Hani admits that he has a nice feeling when he starts drinking; however, Omar feels paranoid, like he is always being watched. Another situation that reflects their non-compliance with Islamic conventions is manifested when Hani confessed to Omar about his desire to get married to American women because they are "lean, toasted like whole meal bread, legs long, and up to their ears" (Faqir, 2014, p. 30). Faqir reflects how Hani follows his desires and whims, whereas Omar Rahman is always hesitated to follow his desires. Faqir reflects such contradiction to distort the image of Arab Muslims and Islam. As Hamada (2001) puts it, it is the "image as a 'mental package' in which a collection of stereotypes or characteristics are combined to identify a nation, a group or a member of that group without reference to particular differences or complexities" (p. 12). Moreover, Hani indicates that Western women can be easily found in nightclubs. Omar does not hang out with girls and has not listened to the loud music in the club, but rather he sits on the sofa and a girl has asked him to dance with her. However, he is hesitant because he does want to do anything that contradicts with Islamic conventions. Possibly, his marriage and the Islamic rules restrict him from doing matters that violate Islamic conventions. Regardless of his hesitation, he dances with her.

Faqir misrepresents the image of Arab Muslims by indicating that Muslims claim that they fear God, but they do things that contradict with Islamic rules and teachings. Faqir reflects the hatred of Westerners towards Muslims and their common negative image of Muslims are manifested in "presenting Islam as a threat to the Western World" (Shadid & Koningsveld, 2002, p. 177). In other words, they wrongly misrepresent the image of Arab Muslims by indicating that they only think of committing terrorist acts to harm the Western world. In other words, Faqir seeks to convey that Muslims' terrorist acts are not related to *jihad* and the teachings of the Qur'an, but rather due to their hatred of the Westerners.

As a consequence, Faqir shows that Hani does not comply with Islamic rules and Eastern conventions, but rather he is more inclined towards the Western life by drinking, flirting with girls, and going to nightclubs. Therefore, he reflects the typical stereotype of Islamic youth who rebels against the common beliefs in Islamic and conservative communities. As for Omar Rahman, the novel shows that he listens to Hani and follows him by going to the nightclub and dancing with a girl, but Omar Rahman blames himself by saying, "I wanted to say no, that I was married" (Faqir, 2014, p.30).

The absence of Najwa's father has led people to intervene in her life because he is not with her to protect her: "people thought that I belonged to everybody because my father was not around to protect me" (Faqir, 2014, p. 26). Faqir portrays the common beliefs in Eastern communities that a Muslim woman in Eastern community needs a patriarchal power to protect her. In their analysis of Faqir's work, Paul and Rai (2020) say that to "raise a voice under one's roof against patriarchal Islam authenticates subjugation in a roundabout way. They added that a woman has to get out of the limitations that primarily define her body" (p. 12).

Faqir misrepresents the image of Islam by indicating that all Arab Muslims are terrorists. In this regard, Ridouani (2011) adds that "Muslim women are thus equated to masqueraded terrorists and evil-doers". She adds that Arabs "are portrayed as being terrorists, fanatics, dirty, irrational, violent and above all disposable" (p. 10). Faqir's distortion of the image of Islam reflects the hatred and the conflict between the East and the West. In this respect, Islamic negative stereotypes of the West are positively predicted by the perceived conflict between Islam and the West, and this perceived intergroup conflict in turn mediated the role of Islamic fundamentalism in predicting the negative stereotypes (Mashur & Zaduqisti, 2019).

IV. CONCLUSION

Both DeLillo and Faqir are similar in their misrepresentation of Islam. To clarify, both novels depict Muslims as terrorists. As for *Falling Man*, it shows how four terrorist Arab Muslims planned to make a suicide bombing in America to kill the Westerners. Similarly, *Willow Trees Don't Weep* shows how an Arab Muslim father leaves his family and goes to Afghanistan to fight for *jihad*, assuming that it is for God's sake.

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