Need to Counter Gendered Orientalism: The Case of Muslim Women Caricatures on E-Media

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ABSTRACT

In the previous century, the biggest Western stereotype about Muslim women was her view as a victim. It goes back to the medieval era when a white man is shown saving a harem girl. This concept continued feeding a white Christian supremacist hero complex for a long time. Around the turn of this century, this representation of Muslim women has changed from *odalisque to termagant.*[1] The new representation of Muslim women presents her as a threat to the global peace and harmony. The researchers are of the view that attaching any stereotypical notion to any segment of human society is a form of oppression which needs to be identified, analyzed and finally confronted. The significance of this research lies in the emancipatory agenda for uncovering the Islam phobic construction of the image of veiled Muslim woman. The caricatures disseminated on the World Wide Web, during the year 2017, are an integral part of the media war playing a vital role in spreading Islam phobia. Countering and demystifying the widespread lethal Islam phobic trends is among the responsibilities of Muslim scholars. The greatest damage of bigoted graphic imagery is that the biased stereotypes against Muslim woman are not only perpetuating and self-reinforcing across generation, they also pave way for Western colonial endeavors. The lens of critical discourse analysis helps us find that the past practice of the stereotypical representation of Muslim woman as a victim of oppression has recently been replaced by her identity construction as an agent of oppression. The research can aid in changing the prejudiced perception of broader world community about the Muslim woman.

Keywords: *Gendered Orientalism, Caricatures, Stereotypical Identity, Socio-cognitive Approach, Critical Discourse Analysis, Fabricated Identity, Religious Prejudice.*

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(1)   Mohja Kahf, *Western representations of the Muslim woman: From termagant to odalisque*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2010AD), 33,191.

Introduction

Representation of Muslim Women in the past typically maintained the cliché "seen one seen 'em all". [1] The representation of Muslim women in the 20th century was mainly limited to a monolithic oppressed entity. Gendered Orientalism exploited to justify colonialism for over two centuries by using this stereotype of Muslim woman as a victim of oppression. The current research aims to explore the identity constructed for the Muslim woman through the e-media caricatures by using the theoretical lens of critical discourse analysis. It also aims to find out whether there is any change in the stereotypical representation of the Muslim woman of the past as an oppressed and nonintellectual entity. Thus the research is guided by the following two questions.

1. What image of Muslim woman is constructed in the selected sample of E-Media caricature?
2. How far is this representation different from the biased stereotype of Muslim woman in the previous century as oppressed and ignorant?

The paper is structured as follows. The next section describes the literature related to the politics of veil and identity construction of Muslim woman through the lens of gendered Orientalism. The importance of caricatures as a genre and a powerful means of communication is discussed in the Prescriptive and Descriptive Nature of Constructed Graphic Imagery.This is followed by the theoretical underpinnings supporting this research and the methodological background provided by critical discourse analysis to examine the seven selected E-media caricatures. The socio-cognitive approach to CDA is briefly discussed for the clarity of the reader before its actual application on the selected sample of caricatures. The seven caricatures about Muslim women are individually analysed and the results of each cartoon are then discussed, noting whether Muslim women perception has shown any change.

Significance of the Research: Countering Islam phobic Narrative

The reported incidents of violence and harassment against Muslims are a visible confirmation of the baseless fears of the non-Muslim community. The increased public back lash against Muslims particularly in the Western societies is deeply rooted in the racist and Islam phobic propaganda against visible icons of Islam and Muslims practicing those icons. Many researches conducted in the domain of endorsing negative stereotypes through media and public figures, such as politicians and

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(1)   Driss Ridouani, "The representation of Arabs and Muslims in Western media", *Ruta: revista universitària de treballs acadèmics* 3,(RUTA Comunicación 2011AD 11.

writers, legitimize the prejudicial attitudes manifested in the form of violent discriminatory actions, as observed in the recent spate of attacks.[1]

One of the frequently recurring prejudiced Muslim images portrayed on the media was that of an oppressed Muslim woman caught in the shackles of a patriarchal society. This bigoted image provided an excuse to the military actions and Western colonial endeavors in the history. The immediacy and the scale of widespread Islam phobia are not only inherently problematic but also alarming. Muslim scholars need to realize the need for countering the prejudiced stereotypes highly augmented after the onset of war on terror where words like terrorism, radicalism and Islam are being made synonymous. To be able to create a counter narrative, there is a dire need to raise consciousness among Muslim scholars about the different modes of media including print media and E-media involved in resurfacing the biased image of Muslims. The current research investigates the socio-cognitive trends in the recent re-emergence of anti-Muslim rhetoric in public discourse by critically analyzing the Muslim woman caricatures disseminated on the World Wide Web. It helps to expose the discursive strategies being used in the creation of discourse of discrimination. The research is an effort to help the wider world community improve their understanding of icons of Islam and cardinal practices particularly focusing on the veil of a Muslim woman. Observing a Muslim community from a distance may not provide the true understanding of the whole picture. Therefore it is required that the Muslim community and particularly Muslim scholars engage themselves to elucidate and demystify the biased stereotypes in order to promote a better understanding of Islamic practices and beliefs.

Women Empowerment and Politics of Veil

While discussing the politics of veil many researchers have debated that 'the Muslim woman' is produced as a social policy in discourses in the West. The change in the representation of Muslim woman over time and proposes that Muslim woman are neither empowered nor oppressed by the presence or absence of the veil.[2] The presence or absence of economic, political and family rights both on national and international levels is what actually determines her empowerment[3]. She argues that the trope of 'the Muslim woman' must be deconstructed and differences between Muslim women all over the world should be attended to achieve harmony on this issue. She suggests that the racist rhetoric against Muslims and particularly Muslim

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(1)   Sami Zubayda, "Islam in Europe." *Critical Quarterly* 45, no. 1-2 (2003AD), 88-98.
(2)   Samory Rashid, *Black Muslims in the US: History, Politics, and the Struggle of a Community*. (Palgrave Macmillan, Springer, 2013AD), 68.
(3)   Ibid

woman reduce the chances of National and International peace. The practice of giving stereotyped roles to the veiled Muslim woman has resulted in silencing the marginalized minorities. Veil is interpreted as a symbol of Islam's oppression of Muslim woman in the west.[1] The most crude and unsophisticated view of the veil is held by the group who are an unconscious adherents of liberalism and modernization theory but they lack any actual detailed account of Muslim woman's real lives. People belonging to this group hold a comparatively convoluted view that Islam is a patriarchal religion and like any patriarchal religion it subordinates woman. In contrast to this group, there are other factions of society who are usually more knowledgeable about Islamic history.[2] These factions are aware that majority of the Muslim women using hijab and veil are using it out of their own will but the problem arises when their majority does not listen attentively to the voices of the veiled women. Either because they do not have access to the real life conditions of covered Muslim women or they do not find Muslim women's arguments persuasive. As a result, this knowledgeable faction of society continues to believe that even a satisfying life in the veil is an oppressed life. Consequently the stereotype persisted in the last century that a veiled woman is either oppressed or brain washed but never an empowered women. Politics of the veil has been used for its concealed colonial purposes as well. History has witnessed that Western countries used Muslim women's liberation as a rationale to intervene in the Muslim countries. The ethics of the current war on terror justifies itself by purporting to liberate, or save, Afghan women. [3] This stereotype of Muslim women as a victim of oppression gave way to her identity as an agent of oppression. Around the turn of the century the Muslim women was depicted as a nagging way word women and this idea makes the title of a book *Western Representations of the Muslim woman; From Termagant to Odalisque.*[4]

The Hijab in Qur'an

Before discussing the importance of dress code for woman in Quran, it is emphasized that the Quran is the primary source of authorized law created by Allah for the whole of humanity. This fully detailed form of divine guidance calls on the true believers to sincerely follow the rules set in it. These rules are to be implemented in the personal/private/public life. The command to follow the rules set by Quran is spelt out recurrently in

(1) Katherine Bullock, *Rethinking Muslim women and the veil: Challenging historical & modern stereotypes*. (The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) Herndon, USA. 2010AD), 26,67.
(2) Ibid
(3) Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Do Muslim women need saving?* (Harvard University Press, 2013AD), 58.
(4) Mohja Kahf, *Western representations of the Muslim woman*, 1.

the Quran. The concept of decency and modesty has strongly been emphasized in Islam. Dress code for both Muslim men and Muslim women is a cardinal part of the overall Quranic teachings. To elucidate the matter further and to reinforce the importance of veil and hijab in Islam, two verses are quoted here in which Allah Almighty has ordained the Muslim woman to cover themselves modestly whenever they leave their homes. The first verses are from chapter 24 of the Quran titled An-Nur (the Light), in which Allah gives a general command to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and does not specify the concept of modesty to Muslim women only.

﴿قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَ يَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ, ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ﴾. (1)

Say to the believing men that: they should cast down their glances and guard their private parts (by being chaste). This is better for them.

This command prohibits the Muslim men to look lustfully at women with the exception of their own wives. Islam has done this to ensure prevention of any possible temptations and asks them to cast down their glances. This may be called as "*hijab* of the eyes". In the very next verse, Allah ordained the Muslim women a similar command forbidding them from looking at the men.

﴿قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَ يَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ﴾. (2)

Say to the believing women that: they should cast down their glances and guard their private parts (by being chaste)...

This command is similar to the one given to Muslim men in the previous verse but the orders for Muslim women are not complete here and Quran continues telling the believers:

﴿وَلاَ يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلاَّ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَ لْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوْبِهِنَّ﴾. (3)

...and not display their beauty except what is apparent, and they should place their khumur over their bosoms...

The dress code for a Muslim women has been set by Allah and mentioned recurrently in Quran. In sūrah al-Aḥzāb, verse 59, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is asked to convey the following message from Allah and believing Muslims are asked to implement it in their lives.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ, قُلْ لأَزْوَاجِكَ وَ بَنَاتِكَ وَ نِسَآءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ: يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلاَبِيْبِهِنَّ﴾ (4)

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(1)   Sūrah Al-Nūr:30
(2)   Sūrah Al-Nūr:31
(3)   Ibid
(4)   Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb:59

O Prophet! Say to your wives, your daughters, and the women of the believers that: they should let down upon themselves their jalābīb.

It is to be noted that the purpose of quoting these verses here is not to give their detailed explanation or explain the conflict between different interpretations. The purpose is just to highlight that the hijab or veil is a cardinal order of Islam explicitly mentioned not only in the Quran but also in hadith. Ridiculing such a cardinal command of Islam and using veiled woman as a scape goat for the newly revived gendered orientalism needs to be identified and challenged

Gendered Orientalism

After the publication of Orientalism, the construction of Islam as Europe's 'Other' has been discussed extensively.[1] The phenomenon is still present in the discourse of modern media.[2] Orientalism is the west's perspective of Islam as a static and backward doctrine that both shapes and reflects the western attitude towards Muslims. It is a reductionist view and a fabricated construction of Muslims in which the 'Orient' is seen as irreconcilably different from and inferior to the 'Occident' [3] An interesting study based on the interviews of the female converts and their relatives concludes that most of the family members had expressed trouble reconciling to the idea of conversion to Islam. They suggest that it would have been easier had it been any other religion. [4]

Their perception of Muslim women as sensual but oppressed and religiously motivated to commit violence both on state and individual levels was problematic for them. Most of them confessed that the original oriental perspective was directed towards the Arab/Muslims outside Europe but the Muslim converts were also evaluated in the same light. The same idea is reflected in an earlier research reporting that the title of "White Pakis" was frequently used for the convert women.[5] A yet earlier research on Islam phobic prejudices explains that most of the people

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(1)   Edward Said, "W. 1978. Orientalism." *New York: Pantheon* (1995AD), 14.

(2)   Sean McLoughlin, "Islam (s) in context: Orientalism and the anthropology of Muslim societies and cultures". *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 28, no. 3 (2007AD), 273-296, Sophie Gilliat-Ray, *Muslims in Britain.* (Cambridge University Press, 2010AD), 36, Kate Zebiri, "Orientalist themes in contemporary British Islamophobia". *Islamophobia: The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century: The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century* (2011AD), 173-190.

(3)   Dorothea A Ramahi, and Yasir Suleiman. "Intimate strangers: perspectives on female converts to Islam in Britain", *Contemporary Islam* 11, no. 1 (2017AD), 21-39.

(4)   Ibid

(5)   Mohamed Sulayman, and Omar Khalid Bhatti. "Workplace deviance and spirituality in Muslim organizations", *Asian Social Science* 9, no. 10 (2013AD), 237.

associated with converts believed that their relatives converted to Islam because they had married Muslim husbands.[1] Even the persistent correction by the converts that they would still keep the faith even if they are divorced, could not change this perception. The common assumption behind this idea was that Islam in itself does not seem to have anything of value for the converts to embrace it and the only reason for embracing Islam was to save their marriage. Closely related to the status of women is the violence which has been a part of Oriental scholarship from its very beginning. Muslim man as blood thirsty, violent and aggressive was the identity constructed for him in the last century. Nevertheless, the recent perceptions of Islam are fuelled by associating Islam with extremism and terrorism both inside and outside the 'West'. It is to be noted that this time Muslim man is not alone in this depiction. The collected sample of Muslim women cartoons tell us that the iconic representation of Muslim women as a global threat is used in contemporary media.[2]

Theoretical Underpinning and Methodological Framework

Owing to the interdisciplinary nature of this research a merged theoretical framework has been established. Socio-cognitive representations of ethnic prejudices, communicating biases in ideological discourses and reproduction of racism are used to explore the content in the caricature.[3] The decoding of messages in visual imagery demands application of certain techniques of interpretation from the field of comic studies. Thus the sample, which belongs to the genera of E-media caricatures, is analyzed in the light of:

1. Socio-cognitive Dimensions of Prejudiced Social Attitudes[4]
2. Techniques and Tools to trace prejudice in constructed Graphic Imagery[5]

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(1)   Dorothea A. Ramahi, & Yasir Suayman. *"Intimate strangers: perspectives on female converts to Islam in Britain*, 21-39.

(2)   Amira Jarmakani, *Imagining Arab womanhood: the cultural mythology of veils, harems, and belly dancers in the US*, (Palgrave Macmillan, Springer, 2008AD) 34, Rochona Majumdar, *Marriage and modernity: Family values in colonial Bengal*. (Duke University Press, 2009), 56, Evelyn Alsultany, "Arabs and Muslims in the media after 9/11: Representational strategies for a" postrace" era", *American Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2013AD), 161-169.

(3)   Teun A Van Dijk, ed. *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction*, (Sage Publications, 2011AD), 121.

(4)   Ibid

(5)   Karin Kukkonen, *Studying comics and graphic novels*. (John Wiley & Sons, 2013AD), 87.

Socio-cognitive Dimension of Prejudiced Social Attitudes

Ethnic prejudices are a result of biased social attitudes of the in-group about the out-group. In the current research the veiled Muslim woman who is a target of ridicule in the selected caricatures belongs to the out-group. Expression of ethnic prejudices involves "schematically organized, shared cognitions about social objects" [1] These social objects are other social groups and their actions. This theory helps us identify the way the "Out-group" is treated in the caricatures under discussion. Before starting the analysis of the prejudice expressed in the Muslim women caricatures, it would be befitting to understand that Van Djik based his theory on the view that prejudice is something more than "negative ethnic attitudes of in-group members."[2] Communicating prejudiced ideas cannot be simply explained as a mental state; rather it involves flexible strategies. These strategies operate at different cognitive levels which are called social information processing. He explains that a prejudiced attitude is not only what people think about ethnic out-groups, but it also involves how they do so.[3]

An important feature of ethnic biases is that they are held by group (not individuals) for people (in-group) for another other group of people (out-group). This common feature can be observed in all the caricatures selected for the current research in which veil and hijab is not only an object of ridicule but also an icon of Muslim identity. These biased attitudes may have their roots in interpersonal perceptions but their social nature goes beyond it. It is important to understand three basic strategic steps taken by the caricaturists for the expression of bigoted image of Muslim woman in the caricatures. These strategic steps are taken to establish and disseminate three personal beliefs as facts about the out-group in the following order. It is befitting to explain again that the deictic *they* has been used to convey the meaning of *Us vs Them* introduced originally by Said[4]

i. Social Categorization: *They* are Different

Social Categorization, the first step in the expression of hatred, is the process of perceiving real or imagined differences of the in-group (non-Muslims) and the out-group (Muslim woman). The "Others", which in the case of current research is a Muslim woman, is assumed to be different in

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(1)   Van Dijk, Teun A. *Discourse and Knowledge: A Socio-cognitive Approach*. (Cambridge University Press, 2014AD), 95.
(2)   Ibid
(3)   Ibid
(4)   Edward Said, "Orientalism: Western representations of the Orient" (New York: Pantheon 1978AD),16.

many social or physical respects. The differences between groups may range from differences of origin, nationality, ethnicity, race, language, gender, class, occupation, status, education, or appearance.[1] So the prejudiced discourse of these caricatures is based on the categorization of out-group members i.e., a Muslim woman as different. This concept of socially categorizing the out-group became the basis for social categorization of Muslims as different in the research under hand. The first group of caricatures includes features that emphasize the difference of the *Others*. This may be called the first strategic step in the discourse expressing new racism. Since the *Other* is different from *Us*, it is also distant, obscure and foreign. In the sample caricatures the difference of appearance is highlighted between women from west and Muslim women by their different way of dressing. In all of these caricatures *Ḥijāb* and *'abāyā* is used as an icon of Muslim woman as woman of no other religion dress up in this way. The apparel of Christian nuns also resembles a long robe but it is recognizable due to the peculiar for of head gear.

ii.   Negative Evaluation: *They* are Deviant

The out group (Muslim woman) thus created is evaluated negatively and this is a logical result of social categorization. If the in-group (non-Muslims) assumes that a particular out-group possesses properties which are incompatible with those of their own, they will be evaluated negatively. In other words, prejudiced attitudes result in "fundamental ("principled") negativization of differentiation and categorization."[2] Thus the negative evaluation of out-group is expressed by associating deviant attitudes to the out group. In the selected sample, after establishing that the Muslim women are different, the second step is to attach a stereotypical image with them. Muslim women are portrayed as violent, blood thirsty and hostile to the west just like their male counterparts. The second step takes this polarization between *Us and Them* one step forward and emphasizes that not only the *Other* is different but it is also deviant from the social norm established by the dominant group. This deviation is a result of breaking the norms and social rules set by colonizers of the past and the West of today.

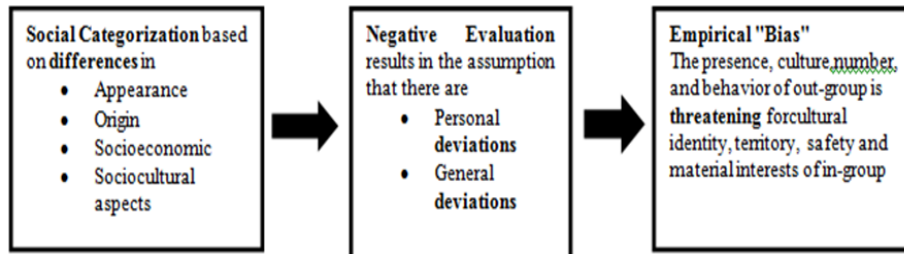### iii.   Empirical Bias: They are a Threat

The third step in drawing generalizations about the out group (Muslim woman) is development and expression of empirical bias. It may have its roots in individual experiences but ends in generalized models and attitudes towards the out-group (Muslim woman). Surprisingly these generalizations

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(1)   Teun A Van Dijk, "Critical discourse studies: A sociocognitive approach", (*2015AD*). *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*(2015AD), 63-74.

(2)   Ibid

are applied only for negative instances and never for positive traits. This empirical bias leads to threatening portrayal of the out group. This empirical bias has often been exaggerated and hyperbolized to make grounds for colonial endeavors against Muslim in history.

To sum up the whole idea, the differences perceived as *social categorization* lead to *negative evaluation* of the in-group, which results in *empirical bias*. This relationship is presented in the form of a model as follows.

| Social Categorization based on differences in
• Appearance
• Origin
• Socioeconomic
• Sociocultural aspects | → | Negative Evaluation results in the assumption that there are
• Personal deviations
• General deviations | → | Empirical "Bias"
The presence, culture, number, and behavior of out-group is **threatening** for cultural identity, territory, safety and material interests of in-group |

Graphic Representation of Three Strategic Steps in any Discourse of Discrimination

Therefore, the third strategic step involves demonization of the *deviant Other*. Due to these strategic steps the consumer of prejudiced discourse is ready to accept the *Other* as a potential threat.[1] In today's world, the most challenging and threatening theme is coercion and terrorism which is recurrently associated with Islam. The present research shows these three strategies used to portray the Muslim women, particularly Muslim mother, *as different, then as deviant and eventually as a potential threat.*

1. Prejudice in Constructed Graphic Imagery

Political cartoons are a type of contextualized activity that facilitates understanding the extremely complex interactions working in the socio-political system of a society.[2] Use of satire, engaging humor and creating ridicule helps the cartoonist conceptualize meanings. The exaggerated forms of commonly understood metaphors, symbols of social significance and illusions to stereotypes play a vital role in reification of abstract ideas. Apparently a cartoon may appear naïve and simple but it always targets to shape the perception of a reader. Political cartoons are neither objective nor

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(1)   Van Dijk, Teun A. *Discourse and Knowledge: A Socio-cognitive Approach*. (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 99

(2)   Senem Oz, "The construction of" the Turk" and the entextualization of historical stereotypes in political cartoons in French", PhD diss., Arts & Social Sciences: Department of French, (2014AD), 79.

always true but still acceptable to the reader and this makes them a dangerous weapon to shape the public opinion. They are not supported by any factual evidence. Political cartoons may be included in the category of the opinion news and that is why it is considered a useful medium not only in studying the past but also in finding out the opposing viewpoints about the past events.[1] The depiction of the past events through cartoons provides an insight into the mindset of the artist as well as the general public. The message is understood by focusing on the interplay of image and the accompanying caption. A short analysis results in a smile after the reader perceives the thoughts, mood, feelings, humour and criticism of the caricaturist. Cartoonists use exaggerated incongruities and distortions to create humour and ridicule to mock the intended target by communicating the desired message. Appropriate setting, humorous characters, suitable costumes and witty situations are chosen to convey a lot with less material. The complex thoughts that may require extended written material can be concentrated and expressed through a single metaphor in satirical cartoons.

Rationale for the Selection of Sample

Recently the trends of research in the fields of social sciences and humanities have changed drastically owing to the advent of advanced computer technology. The search engine Google has emerged as dynamic corpora and is found extremely helpful in exploring the various characteristics of E-Media[2]. Google search engine is being used as an aid not only in the data collection in many international researches but also as a search-engine-based corpus.[3] Owing to the hybrid nature of the sample for this research, it was decided to use the World Wide Web as a corpus of caricatures. The websites on which the selected caricatures are disseminated have been given for reference in the appendix. This practice is not being adopted for the first time and is a customary way of making researches in the field of language, sociology and anthropology etc.[4] This allowed the researchers to view all the caricatures available on the

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(1)   Josh Greenberg, "Framing and temporality in political cartoons: A critical analysis of visual news discourse". *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 39, no. 2 (2002AD), 181-198.

(2)   Lee S Sproull, "Using electronic mail for data collection in organizational research", *Academy of management journal* 29, no. 1 (1986AD), 159-169.

(3)   Guoquan Sha, "Using Google as a super corpus to drive written language learning: a comparison with the British National Corpus", *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 23, no. 5 (2010AD), 377-393.

(4)   Parnian, Pirooz, Franklin Dee Martin, and William E. Conrad Sr. "Multi-media data collection tool kit having an electronic multi-media "case" file and method of use", U.S. Patent 6,538,623, issued March 25, 2003AD, 15.

Internet as one large corpus. This was a huge amount of data and needed to be filtered out by narrowing down the searches. The caricatures selected for this article are a result of carrying out a narrowed down search on the Google search engine by using the following phrases.

"Muslim Women images, Muslim women caricatures, Pardah Images, veil images".

This way we were able to retrieve the caricatures in which the image of Muslim women is presented. The resulting data is again filtered and only those caricatures are selected which are disseminated on the World Wide Web in the year 2017. Since the visual and graphic imagery available on the internet is an important source of shaping the human perceptions about any segment of human society, the purpose of the research is served by adopting this method of data retrieval and the data retrieved is analyzed for the biased stereotypes of Muslim women created in the wider international community which has an easy access to such images.

Analyzing the Caricatures

The seven caricatures selected for this research are retrieved on 25 May 2017 from the web links provided in the references. The caricatures are divided into three sections on the basis of their thematic similarity.

1.   **Militarizing the Burqa**
       This part includes two caricatures in which the burqa is used as an icon of Muslim woman and creates her identity as a Muslim terrorist.

2.   **Agents or Victims of Oppression**
       This section consists of two caricatures in which the Muslim woman, shown as a lover, is persuading her lover / husband to perform violent activities disrupting the world peace.

3.   **Equalizing Muslim Mother with Islamic Bomb**
       The third part of analysis consists of three caricatures in which the Muslim mother is shown as a harbinger of future terrorists. The Muslim mother is not only considered responsible for giving birth to future terrorists but also answerable for their childhood training as blood thirsty terrorists.

1. Militarizing the Burqa

All over the world, ḥijāb, niqāb and burqa, are considered the icons of Islamic way of life. No other religion is associated with these symbols. If a woman is shown wearing any one of these three, she is perceived as a Muslim woman. The first caricature selected for this research shows a row of five dummy women in burqa with a caption "burqa squad" written on the chest of

each dummy.[1] The dummies are completely covered in blue burqa and only their eyes are visible. The word squad means a small group of soldiers assigned to a particular activity. The skimmers mind wonders about the meaning of the caricature. What kind of activity is in the mind of the artist when this image is created? The dummies shown in the images are broader than the real woman and they appear to be women of heavy stature. The military connotation of the word squad drifts the mind of the viewer towards the terrorists' activity. The burqas are similar to each other just like the uniforms of soldiers. The technique used here is called condensation which merges the stereotypical representation of Muslims as terrorists with the symbol of burqa to create the allusion of Muslim women terrorists.

The empirical bias towards Muslim women is reduced to a single graphic imagery which creates a negative impression of the Muslim women and serves the purpose of lining them to the terrorist activities. The caricature is just a static image which does not show any type of activity. Neither any speech bubbles are used nor are any thought balloons visible. The fixed gaze pattern of these dummies gives them a robot like appearance. They are reduced to a robotic existence and their individuality as intellectual human beings is denied.

The next caricature also belongs to the category in which an iconic representation of clash of civilizations is visible.[2] The caricature shows two images side by side, one representing the western civilization while the other as a symbol of Islamic civilization. The Statue of Liberty shown on the right side of the image was gifted to the United States by France as a symbol of their friendship. This Statue symbolizes freedom and democracy ever since 1886. It not only commemorates the alliance between France and the U.S. but also retraces the roots of western civilization in the Greek civilization as the classic stature, face, and attire of Lady Liberty comes from the Roman goddess *Libertas*. This Roman goddess also represents freedom from tyranny and oppression. The crown shown on the head is reminiscent of a halo and its spikes show similarities to those of the Greek sun gods. The second image shown in the caricature is a statue of a woman clad in burqa. Her face is covered with a veil. The torch in the hand of the statue of liberty is replaced by a black, spherical bomb which has a wick slowly burning at its end. The parallel drawn between the two statues is not only farcical but also assaultive. The robed Roman goddess holds an ever-lit torch representing freedom and enlightenment whereas the statue

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(1)   http://freethoughtblogs.com/taslima/2012/06/03/we-have-enough-muhammad-cartoons-why-not-some-burqa-cartoons/

(2)   Ibid

representing Muslim civilization is a threat to the whole world and must be dealt accordingly. The caricature is an insulting epithet on the differences between the two civilizations equating one with enlightenment and the other with bloodshed and terrorism.

Agents or Victims of Oppression

The succeeding image is an extremely insolent one[1]. It is openly expressing hatred and prejudice for all the Muslims. The freedom provided by internet is fully availed by the cartoonist and the need to cover the bias towards Muslims is not felt. A male figure is shown holding a severed head in his hand and presenting it as a gift to his beloved. The iconic signifiers like turban, waistcoat and beard have been used to confirm the identity of male figure as a Muslim man. The pointed nose of the male figure is making him appear shrewd and mean. Drops of blood are dripping from the severed neck. The linguistic items written in the speech bubbles are enough to make the meaning clear. The speech bubble says, "Oh! A severed cartoonist's head, how thoughtful". The speech bubble has its tail pointing towards the woman clad in black burqa. Her eyes are wide open as she is full of joy and excitement. The artist thought it necessary to add an unashamed caption at the bottom. "ABDUL ALWAYS KNEW HOW TO IMPRESS THE GIRLS". The name Abdul serves the purpose of a generalized name which can be used for all the Muslims. In this image the technique condensation is used which combines the stereotypes of Muslims as terrorists and bloodthirsty with the loving relationship of this Muslim couple.

This image not only demonizes the Muslim man but also the Muslim woman who is encouraging her lover to perform such acts. The caricature captured in its *pregnant moment* because it tells about the past (murder of the cartoonist) and present (presenting the head as a gift to the Muslim women) of the characters in the image. Thus it belongs to the fourth category of pictorial objects that is *implied temporality picture*. The Muslim woman shown in the image is clad in burqa from head to toe. Her eyes are widened because of the *precious* gift of the cartoonist's severed head. The small pink flying hearts show appreciation from the Muslim woman for this sanguinary act. The image builds the identity of a Muslim woman as equally involved and encouraging in the cruel acts of terrorism. The message conveyed through the figure is that the Muslim women encourage their spouses on the violent acts and ferocious deeds. The same offensive idea is depicted in the next image [2]. In this figure, presumably a husband and wife are shown as suicide bombers. They are

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(1)   http://www.mfs-theothernews.com/2012_10_03_archive.html
(2)   https://dr1.com/forums/showthread.php/133560-Car-for-Muslim-women

pledging to each other for dying together. It is not clear as if who has uttered the words written in the caption. Both of them seem to take a vow of loyalty and blow up themselves if the other partner does so. Presence of burqa confirms that the couple is recognized as a Muslim couple.

Equalizing Muslim Mother with Islamic Bomb

The role of Muslim woman as a mother is demonized in the next caricature. [1] It is representing Muslim women as not only promoting but also advocating terrorists' activities. Vilification of the Muslim mother on the blogosphere has threatened a return to the familiar kind of crude neo-racism against Muslims. This image of a Muslim mother is raising new questions and speculations about the representation of Muslim woman. The fabricated views and false identifications are being reinforced by the E-Media through caricaturing the Muslim mother who is portrayed as a future threat towards the whole of humanity. Sensationalist language items are added to reinforce the images disseminated on internet such as "The Other Islamic Bomb".

The point worth noting here is that till the previous century, in the west the veil had become the epitome of oppression of Muslim women. Unlike the stereotypical representation of Muslim women as veiled, oppressed and consequently ignorant, this century has shown a change in her biased representation. This new image of Muslim mother is neither subservient of her husband nor abjectly submissive. She is supposed to be a 'responsible' citizen' but failed to be one. It is suggested that the created biased image of Muslim mother faces two allegations. She is the reproducer of *would-be terrorists* and secondly because of close association, she herself is portrayed *as-if-terrorist.*

The concept of 'neo racism' is based upon cultural differences and not on the biological difference[2] . Muslim communities all over the world have been impersonated as culturally incompatible with the dominant secular cultures. Muslims are also increasingly considered dangerous and disloyal citizens and their depiction in these caricatures is related to the series of events in this context. Keeping all this in mind, the cartoon depiction of Muslim mother (fig 05) captioned as *'The Other Islamic Bomb'* is highly offensive. The distorted representation consists of an image of a heavily pregnant woman. Her face is not visible due to the face covering. The distended uterus of this female image is depicted as a bomb with a burning fuse at its end. Her hands are resting on her abundant, bomb shaped belly. The hands are shown without flesh and the appearance of the bare bones of a skeleton adds to the overall effect of horror. This depiction of the Muslim mother particularly the boney hand and protruded

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(1)   http://www.mfs-theothernews.com/2012_10_03_archive.html

(2)   Étienne Balibar, *Strangers as enemies: Further reflections on the aporias of transnational citizenship*, (MCRI Globalization and Autonomy, 2006AD), 05.

belly suggest an eerie doubling of threat. The message being conveyed is that the Muslim mother is a reproducer of future terrorists and by doing so she herself becomes a potential terrorist.

Up till the previous century, the media representations of Islamic extremism had focused its attention almost exclusively to men. The Muslim women were featured only in concerns about women's rights, the wearing of the hijab by compulsion and forced marriage. The newly recurring image of terrorist Muslim mother in this incarnation is an emerging figure in the blogosphere as well as a new version of mother-blaming. The image of the Muslim mother in some media representations is distorted even further. Such representations insinuate that the cause of Islamic terrorism is actually home grown, may be within a mother's womb. Muslim mothers are demonized as the up bringers of terrorists.

Domestication of Terrorism

The next caricature shows a friendly conversation between two Muslim mothers over coffee. [1] One mother says to the other, "I am so proud of my young son. He wants to be a doctor when he blows up" Here the sting is deeper than apparently realized. The artist is suggesting, between the lines, that not only the rural or tribal areas are involved in the acts of terrorism but the educated classes of urban areas are also a part of it. Even the educated Muslim mother is playing the role of demon by encouraging such activities. Such caricatures not only make use of exaggeration but also intensification.

This succeeding cartoon titled as "Islamic Time Bomb," illustrates two happy and cheerful women pushing strollers. [2] They are talking happily to each other. Both of them are wearing 'abāyā and hijab as visual markers of Muslim identity. Their children are shown as time bombs strapped in their strollers and are equally happy. All the human faces shown in the image are gleaming with happiness. The glad sons represent the countdown to detonation of a future time bomb.

The intended message of these anti-Muslim racist caricatures is painfully clear: Muslim mothers are responsible for raising and encouraging future generation of terrorists. The best interpretation could be that they are more than happy to kill themselves too. Blowing up themselves or their children to harm others is a gratifying activity of Muslim mothers. The above mentioned three pictures are intended to illustrate the dangers of Muslim demographics. It suggests that Muslims plan to take over the whole world through a population explosion. The

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(1)   https://photobucket.com/gallery/user/Jamin_01/media/bWVkaWFJZDoyO
        Dc4OTYw /?ref=
(2)   Ibid

term "population bomb" was coined in the 1960s and after that it has been frequently used on print media as well as electronic media. Increase in Muslim population has frequently been characterized as near "exploding".

Conclusion

The stigmatization of Muslim woman as 'could-be terrorists' has produced a toxic social order. [1] The media should realize that

> *"Muslim women want what all the women around the world want: to be protected under the law, to have access to education, to have reasonable expectations of safety".* [2]

Only one noticeable exception in case of Muslim women is that they want to practice their religion however they see fit — a right which has already been infringed upon in France. Despite an incredible amount of evidence to the contrary, Western media continues to promote women's rights in a narrow and often bigoted manner. They fail to understand that the Muslim women neither need saving nor demonizing. Firstly they need to be recognized as intellectual human beings who are capable of making their own decisions and secondly they want to have the freedom to practice the religion of their own choice without facing discrimination for doing so.

Critical Discourse analysis of the caricatures exhibit that the Muslim women are being portrayed as completely different from the Western women owing to her hijab and burqa. The new prejudiced representation of Muslim woman is different from her representation in the past. Previously it was believed by the west that veil did not allow a Muslim woman to play any constructive role in her society. She led a secluded and oppressed life[3]. This oppression led to her ignorant and unknowledgeable personality. Burqa was often ridiculed as a sign of aberrancy and was presented as a stooge in the previous century. The change in the representation of a Muslim woman from Odalisque to termagant as suggested by Kahf (2010) is confirmed during this research work as these caricatures portrayed the Muslim woman as a threat to the whole of humanity. On the whole, the analysis of the caricatures depicting Muslim woman confirmed the biased stereotypical construction of a Muslim woman identity.

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(1)   Randa Abdel-Fattah, "'Lebanese Muslim': A Bourdieuian 'Capital'Offense in an Australian Coastal Town", *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37, no.4 (2016AD), 323-338.

(2)   Ibid

(3)   Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses", *Feminist review* 30 (JSTOR 1988AD), 61-88.