Image of Muslim /Arab Woman on the Front Covers of Literary Works

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Abstract

In several literary works the images of Muslim/Arab women have increasedsince the second half of the twentieth century, particularly in art. While exploring the front covers of literary books, this paper introduces how the 'saving Muslim women' motif is extremely common. A broad range of sources was examined to critically explore the images of these women on the front covers of literary works, and to understand how stereotyped images have been used to represent them.An analysis is made of how popular fiction and non-fictionfront covers, showing Muslim/Arab women's bodies hidden behind veils, mostly focus ona common theme — the social identityof these women. Hence, this paper demonstrateshow the representation of these women covered with veils has become a common trend that is used as a stigmatisation toolto present what is assumed to be the true image of Muslim/Arab women. In fact, it proves how that image continues to be stagnated or stereotyped in both Arab and Western literature.
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1.1.INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, the image of Muslim/Arab women is distorted in art and the media, both as written andas performed. In a recent study entitled *Electronic Media and Shaping the Mental image of Arab Women in Public Opinio*n the authors explain how "the mental images that individuals form about the surrounding world come from the media", while their results proved that the contents published which are related to women's affairs reflect a high percentage of negative images of Arab women (2022, p.

1277). In severalWestern and Eastern works of literature relating to the Muslim/Arab world, it is common to see images of Muslim/Arab women. The representation of these women in both types of literary texthas raised controversies for decades. This includes the images of these women wearing a headscarfwhich are then used as stigmatisation toolson the front covers of these works. Badry (2018)has argued that these covers use stereotyped and distorted imagesof these women. He claims that these clichéd images on the front covers of books depict Muslim/Arab women as the victims of patriarchal oppression in the name of Islam (p. 101). Such depictions are intended to reflect and shed light on the indiscriminate treatment that the book cover-makers perceive these women to sufferin society. This includes the image of veiling as an outdated practice that stigmatises all women and makes them appear like oppressed subordinates. When compared with Westernised unveiled women, it is evident that the latter are portrayed as fashionable regardless of their location, social status, or education levels.Coming from highly conservative and authoritarian nations, Muslim/Arabwomen have been portrayed in a particular way. They are shown as helpless victims who have been confined to their society and need to be rescued. This includes contemporary literary works, in which the representation of women on covers seems to lack any evolution or change.

Based on the above arguments and perspectives, it is essential to examine how the images of these women affect the marketing and purchase behaviours of these books in different markets. Hence the primary purpose of the paper is to explore the image of Muslim/Arab women on the front covers of literary works and to understand how their representation has been stereotyped, and how such stereotypical images have been, as Akabli and Chahdi claim, “an object for decades(and hardly a subject) of imperial orientalist discourse” (2022, p. 17). To gain an in-depth insight into the representation of Muslim/Arab women, the Orientalist perspective has been adopted. The term ‘Orientalism’ has been defined by Edward Said, a well-known cultural critic, as“the discipline by which the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery and practice”(1978, p. 73).[1] It has been characterised as the pervasive Western tradition of biased or prejudiced outsider interpretations relating to the Eastern world.Said’s writing illustrateshow the representation of ‘others’ in Europe has been institutionalised since the eighteenth century(Alghamdi, 2020).However, before going

[1] Edward Said, (born November 1, 1935, Jerusalem—died September 25, 2003, New York, U.S.) isrecognised as one of the world's leading cultural critics. He wrote numerous books and articles in support of Arab causes including *Orientalism*, one of his celebrated works. His main concern in this book was to delineate the sources of Western knowledge about non-Western societies.

into detail about the Oriental perspective, it is important to clarify the meaning of the 'other' discussed in this paper and its relation to Said's Orientalism. This term is related to social identity which signifies an established social order in which specific groups are regarded as superior whileothers are inferior. As Andrew Okolie (2003) puts it:

> Social identities are relational; groups typically define themselves in relation to others. This is because identity has little meaning without the 'other'. So, by defining itself, a group defines others. Identity is rarely claimed or assigned for its own sake.These definitions of 'self' and 'other' have purposes and consequences. They are tied to reward and punishment, which may be material or symbolic.There is usually an expectation of gain or loss as a consequence of identity claims.This is why identities are contested. Power is implicated here, and because groups do not have equal powers to define both 'self' and 'other', theconsequences reflect these power differentials. Often notions of superiority and inferiority are embedded in particular identities.(p. 2)

Thus, Said sought to explore the representation of Europe's 'other' and the link that existed between power and knowledge.The Orientalist perspective takes into account the diverse range of disciplines, processes of investigation and institutions that Europeans used to familiarise themselves with the 'Orients' over past centuries. In this paper, Said's Orientalism perspective has been adopted to explore how the image of Muslim/Arab women is used on the front covers of literary works and how they are represented.By applying this framework, it will be possible to understand whether cultural attitude comes into play and influences the images of thosewomen that are used on book covers.It will also evaluate this from a book marketing perspective and how this affects the audience's attitudes towards the books and other print media.

Moreover, such images have also been transferred tothe front covers of translated works originally written by an Arab author in order to enhance the supposed freedom of the individual.This application of a liberal perspective takes into account the value of freedom, the liberty of the individual, and the necessity to protect that individual, particularly when she is female.Through a liberal lens, it will be possible to understand whether such images have helped in increasing or decreasing the stereotypical representation of Muslim/Arab women.

Representation of Muslim/Arab Women on Front Covers

Use of the 'Saving Muslim/ArabWomen'Image on the FrontCover

Women with Muslim/Arab backgrounds have been stereotyped in diverse settings in art for many centuries. The situation is not only a matter of social relations, but is also applicable on the front covers of literary works of fiction and non-fiction, where Muslim/Arab women are portrayed. For decades, a broad range of books has used the 'Saving Muslim/Arabwomen' image on thefront cover to representconservative Muslim women as 'other'women, as defined by Said in *Orientalism*. The imagery gained prominence in the Arab and Western literary world as authors sought to capture the helplessness of Muslim/Arab women and the manner in which they were treated in their society. Even in the twenty-first century, the same theme can be found in modern books and novels. For example, in Jan Goodwin'sbook titled *Price of Honor: Muslim Women Lift Veil of Silence on the Islamic World* (2002), women are shown entirely covered in a veil.Such images of Muslim/Arab women on book covers share a consistent message – that Muslim women lack identity and face desperate situations, so therefore they need saving.Another example is Fadia Fakir´s novel *My Name is Salma*(2010), which tells the story of a Jordanian girl by the name of Salma and depicts the book'scover page with the girl wearing a loose traditional dress and black veil. According to the book, the wearing of the headscarf is the cause of her tragedies, especially when the family finds out that the girl had sexual encounters outside of marriage, leading to her being jailed and threatened with being killed. Thus the veiling of the Muslim/Arab women as depicted on the covers of novels portrays oppression, bad luck, and a conservative attitude towards women, who are dreadfully in need of rescue.

Hence, Muslim/Arab women's lack of freedom is expressed in the conservativefashion that covers their bodies, and as a result they come to be identified with an equivalent major issue, such as lack of independence, patriarchal control, oppression, etc.Even if the intention of an author is to show that these women are courageous and unafraid to take a stand for themselves,the images that are used on book covers state otherwise.They fail to capture the transition and evolution that has been taking place in the modernisation and liberalisation of gender stereotypes in Muslim/Arab society, particularly over the past few decades. According to Alghamdi, there are a number of female critics who have criticised the Orientalist point of view,as it gives a false image of Muslim/Arab women(2020, p. 158). They are showcased in a stereotyped manner, and their individuality is not awarded any kind of significance or relevance, even though their image is used on book covers. Based on sucha perspective, the identity of Muslim/Arab women becomes distorted and misleading.Over decades,their representation has remained static, and there havebeen fewsigns of growth, evolution, or change towards a bright, optimistic and courageous image.

In *Orientalism*,Said notes that Western society uses Eastern society as an inverted image. According to the author, the East and its people are considered to be something that the West and its people are not (1978, p. 48). In the West, for example, women are considered to be smart, independent and empowered. In contrast, in images of Muslim/Arab women that are used on literaryfront covers, they are shown as vulnerable, oppressed, and imprisoned individuals who need to be rescued so that they may lead a life of respect and dignity.The fact that similar kinds of images are still continuouslyused to represent Muslim/Arab womenon book covers showsthat to date there has beenno change in the outlook toward women from the East,regardless of the innumerable calls for liberal feminism worldwide,including the Arab world.Arab feminism refers to the strategies being implemented by different countries in the Middle East to achieve political, social, and economic equality while promoting Arab nationalism. This has gained significant international attention due to the continued representation of Muslim women as being oppressed.The main ideas of Arab feminism include achieving full equality for all females in public and private spheres. It entails developing a more radical approach towards achieving feminist ideas and championing equal rights for women. The aforementioned dominant representation of Muslim/Arab women in the West has been challenged by various Arab feminist writers in an attempt to use their experiences. However, book covers continue to use the headscarf or the veil as the primary tool for the mainstream stereotypical representation of Muslim/Arab women in need of saving.Accordingly, the book industry attempts to introduce the Muslim/Arab woman as the perceived 'other' not only in the manuscripts but also through the front covers of these texts. This industry has questioned the freedom of Muslim/Arab women.Unfortunately, today these inaccurate depictions continue to spread and shape the minds of many.

In fact, these images have been used over time in varying literary works to symbolise and emphasisetheir supposed inferiority and backwardness and as a result, the book covers of those narratives reflect such images. Theseare then usedto give a glimpse into their inferior position in society, where they do not have the freedom to raise their voices and share their perspectives. Although the literary works considered here span diverse topics, the selection of stereotypical images of Muslim/Arab women continues.According tovan Es, women of Muslim background are typically shown as pitiable and oppressed individuals(2017, p. 43). If Muslim/Arab women are the centralissue, then an oppressed image of the 'Oriental' woman is represented.Al-Matrafi (2012)argues that, on the one hand, the manner in which Muslim/Arab women are portrayed in literary works shows what is presumed to be the

backwardness of their culture. On the other hand, such images focus on the victimisation of those female characters so that readers can be involved in the work in which their sympathy is requested. Regardless of the intention with which the images of Muslim/Arab women are used in these books, they are portrayed in a negative light, and any trace of social progression is not captured. The representation is negative since it distorts the identity of Muslim/Arab women in a real-life social setting.The way these images are used on book covers can be considered to be negative because the visual elements continue to create an inaccurate impression of these women, which they show to be highly vulnerable individuals whose lives are left to the mercy of the reader who might help in their liberation.The question is: do these women really need saving or is there an over-generalised and misrepresentative image circulating? Further research is needed in this regard.

Stereotyped Representations of Muslim/Arab Women's Veils on Book Covers

The media, internet, and other types of communication distort realities when it comes to the 'other', or it might only introduce"a glimpse of a much larger picture" (Sands, 2014, p. 36). For example, the images of veiled Muslim/Arab women that one can find on the front covers of fictional and non-fictional books generate a similardepiction of this portrayal. Al-Ramadan argues that even in the twenty-first century, Arab women are represented in a literary context through stereotypical images, one of which uses the veil(2017, p. 24).The author claims that these images are used by the 'other'to portray Arab women as oppressed individuals who have been victimised in their own country.Bailey & Tawadros (2003)declare that"the fascination of Western writers, artists, and photographers with the veil reflects the voyeuristic nature of the West's interest in what is strange and other"(Back cover).To many, particularly in the West,covered and veiled faces represent the oppression that women face in Muslim/Arab societies.Sands claims that "the West has taken the symbol of the veil as being one of the predominant 'issues' within Islam and has attacked this emblem suggesting the wearer as someone oppressed and in need of saving" (2014, p. 38).The extensive use of veils in images ofMuslim/Arab women demonstrates that veils are used to symbolise the barriers that confine them to speak of the unjust treatment in their patriarchal society.In other words, the veil not only prevents women from showing their faces, but this depiction of women also shows their lack of voice. Even when authors write about empoweringMuslim/Arab women and their fight against confinement, the use of veiled women on the front cover of their texts is common.This reinforces how images of these women in the literary context have stagnated in recent years and how little progress has been made toadopt new images of women showcasing their freedom, courage, and their efforts to fight for their fundamental rights.

Hence the stereotypical images of veiled Muslim/Arab women on book covers have been identified as a serious issue that has the capability to distort the thinking of potential readers.Fotouhiargues that a diverse range of factors, such as politics, interest in the literary market and the readers themselves, have impacted the selection of book covers(2017, p.205). In the past, several historical perspectives played an instrumental role in constructing a stereotypical vision of women, which led to the use of recurring series of images as book covers by literary writers. Fotouhi (2017) highlights how, over time, little effort has been made to move away from the stereotypical image of "half-veiled faces of Muslim/Arab women"; rather,this depiction has been emphasised and used on the front covers of numerous literary works. Although the author claims that the selection of images of Muslim/Arab women on book covers is indeed changing in the publishing field, particularly in the Arab world, progress is slow, and the stereotypes persist even today.This is evident, for example, in the book cover of*Knots* (2008) by Nuruddin Farah;*My Forbidden Face* (2003) by Latifa;*Voices Behind the Veil: The World of Islam Through the Eyes of Women* (2004) edited by Ergun Mehmet Caner;of *Price of Honour: Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Silence* (2002) by Jan Goodwin;*For the Love of a Son: One Afghan Woman's Quest for Her Stolen Child* (2010) by Jean Sasson, and many other works.It is evident that the Western and Arab liberals'understanding of the veil is extremely flawed.

The veiled images used to represent Muslim/Arab women nonetheless continue to depict them as they were shown in the book covers of yesteryear. This persistent neglect of contemporary feminist action in the Arab world represents a major regressive step as these distorted images fail to acknowledge the reforms that they have been able to bring about through the social movements in which they participate. The use of these stereotypical images, such as faces or bodies covered with veils, shows that the journey that these women have endured to present themselves in a new light is not respected, at least in the literary context where such Orientalising glances still predominate.

It issignificant to note that there are some Muslim feminists who challenge the historical and cultural specificities of inequalities and gender discrimination and fight to introduce the veil as a symbol of Islamic freedom, such as Leila Ahmed, who claims that the veil no longer represents "a woman's brainwashed submissiveness or at the very least her lack of choice" (Moaveni, 2011, para. 4).For them, the hijab acts as a statement of pride in Islam and feminine identity rather than as a representation of the oppression of women. In fact, they believe that it takes on the role of empowerment regarding a woman's sexual difference from a man (Berger, 1998). They associate the freedom to wear the veil withwomen having a right

over their own bodies. Accordingly, the differences in understanding the importance of the veils are due to the historically contentious relationship between the West and Islam, with secular Muslim women supporting veils to protect their Islamic identities. Women in Islamic nations are actively taking a stance to redefine their identity and shed themselves of the stereotyped image that persisted for decades, in order to break the hegemonic patriarchal system that has been imposed upon them for centuries. Muslim/Arab women might seem not to be able to enjoy the same kind of freedom, power, and status as their Westerncounterparts;they have, however, taken a few crucial steps to showcase their worth and uniqueness within the patriarchy as demonstrated through their religious beliefs. Regardless of such facts, the portrayal of Muslim/Arab women still puts emphasis on the identity of those women as diminished and depressed.Based on the representation of these women, it is evident that unveiling them is a Western obsession that has remained so for centuries. Apparently, the act of unveiling them is represented as a victory for the West, particularly those who believe these women are victimised. However, while many Western media continue to call for the unveiling of these women, many of them have failed to highlight the complex meanings associated with headscarves or veils. This can be seen as an attempt by the Western Media to harbour hostility against veils under the disguise of liberation, feminism, and humanism.

Bodily Gestures and the Vulnerability of Muslim/Arab Women on Book Covers

The portrayal of Muslim/Arab women on the covers of literary worksis not only marked by the use of veils, but also by the depiction of bodily gestures. Thisnon-verbal communication is assumed to help introduce the emotions of thoseMuslim/Arab women and capture their vulnerable position and silent cry for help.The use of bodily gesturessimilarly fails to represent these women in any way but through typical stereotypes, for exampleas helpless victims, defenselessescapees, or deluded pawns who are manipulated within the Arab patriarchy. Books like *In the Land of Invisible Women* (2008) by Qanta Ahmedand*The Hidden Face of Eve*: *Women in the Arab World* (2007) by Nawal El Saadawishow the hidden bodies of women with their head drooping towards the ground to emphasise the degradation and dishonour of body and soul. The image of women as deteriorated and humiliated is evident in their retracted heads; the cover of Al-Shaykh’s and & Cobham's*Woman of Sand and Myrrh*(2010) similarly depicts a veiled woman with a crestfallenheadand a lowered gaze.

Although the purpose of these images is to shed light on the situation of women in the Muslim/Arab world, they have instead only contributed to producing stereotypes.Drumsta

(2021)notes that the stereotypical representation of Muslim/Arab women who appear to be in need of saving continues to exist even in modern Arabic literature.The author argues that although female authors have entered the Arab-language literary scene and have produced rather exceptional work, the use of images representing Arab women has not undergone any significant change in recent years.Therecurring theme in such representations of Muslim/Arab women is the bodily gesture of women turningthemselves away from the camera's glance as they stare at the ground.From this illustration, the stereotypical representation of these women as being oppressed is evident in their bodily gestureson the front coverswhich clearly demonstrate their oppression and vulnerability.Thusthe wearing of the headscarf and posing with an imprisoned negative bodily gestureisseen as evidence of a silent cry from what is perceived as an oppressive culture and religion.Accordingly, the representation of theseimages is intended to help the reader effectively understand what issuggested as being theircircumstances, and empathise with thatreality. Such images demonstrate women/girls in need of urgent action to help save their lives. They are used as tools in promoting feminists' ideas to help champion equal rights for women.In fact, it proposes how such art can be used as an action that would appropriately help in eliminating any form of social, economic or political inequality in the region.

Representation of Muslim/Arab Women's Eyes on Front Covers

A distinguishing feature of several covers depictingMuslim/Arab women is the strong emphasis on the eyes, many with the left uncovered. Eyes are used as a means of expressing hidden emotions and harsh experiences.Lee and Anderson (2017) state that the eye serves as "a window into the soul". They claim, "the eyes are windows to the soullikely because they are first conduits for sight. Emotional expressive changes around the eye influence how we see, and in turn, this communicates to others how we think and feel" (2017, p. 494).Apart from the eyes, the remaining parts of the face are typically concealedby a veil, an image used in severalbooks, including*Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women* (2008) by Geraldine Brooks, *Sold: One Woman's True Account of Modern Slavery* (1994)by ZanaMuhsena and Andrew Crofts, and*Mayada, Daughter of Iraq: One Woman's Survival Under Saddam Hussein* (2004) by Jean Sasson.A trope of these covers, beyond the use of the veil, is the expressive eyes of women and their unique gaze. Although the content of each of these texts differs significantly, the images on the front covers arealmost identical, which demonstrates how stereotypical images of Muslim/Arab women are used in diverse literary works. This also underscores how little effort has been undertaken to change how Muslim/Arab women are represented on book covers in both Arab and Western literature.

Regardless of the specific message that has been conveyed in these books, the stereotypical representation of these women that is thereby introduced visuallycreatesan impression in the minds of the readers about the helpless and restricted situation of Muslim/Arab women.

Moreover, some covers feature the trope of 'only one eye' of the female image.Unlike the common understanding of the one-eye image today, which, among others, has been used as a symbol of the Illuminati—those who claim to have superior enlightenment—the image of 'onlyone eye' in the front covers of literary works discussed in this paper suggest something different. Because eyes are considered as a"window into the soul", andas contemporary psychology explains,because they communicate one's emotional state,to obscure one eye may suggest the imprisonment of the soul and the deprivation of one's identity(Lee & Anderson, 2017, p. 494). In other words, this suggests that although only one eye is publicly visible, this eye is striving to allow the reader into her silent soulto notice the pain, distress, and sadness imprisoned inside.This is evident in many book covers, such as *Unveiled* (1997) by Cherry Mosteshar, *For the Love of a Son: One Afghan Woman's Quest for her Stolen Child*(2010) by Jean Sasson, *In Praise of Hatred* (2014) by KhaledKhalifa, and *How Fatima Started Islam* (2009) by Noor Barack. These front covers show a Muslim/Arab femalewhose only distinguishing feature is her eyes, demonstrating yet another Orientalising pattern.

Consequently, from the eyes, the stereotypical representation of Muslim/Arab women on book covers indicate a docile, veiled, speechless and subdued gender.Thus, eyes play an important role in representing the emotions ofMuslim/Arab women, whether sorrow, helplessness or desperation.Their images have been continuously stereotyped, despite the fact that in recent years their standing in society academically,socially, and financially has seen marked improvement, such as the major steps taken by many Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, a country that allegedly has a bias towards the persecution of women.The Saudi government, for example, calls for the empowerment of womenin light of their vision for 2030, in which women are given great opportunities and position in building the country.[2]However, the majority of the books that address the issues related toMuslim/Arab women do not feature suitable covers that highlight their progression. They do not portray a dynamic, exposed, loud, and rebellious image; instead, these images only demonstrate the sorrow and discrimination that these women face as perceived in Muslim/Arab society, thereby overlooking any sense of social progress.

[2]Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman developed a historic vision that includes a number of goals and reform strategies for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, of which the empowerment of women is a part.

Muslim/Arab Women Represented as a Homogenous Group

From the early writings by European Orientalists who visited the Arab nations in the early nineteenth century, Muslim and Arab women have continued to be categorised, leading to struggles with inclusion and equality in different societies. Recent writings by Orientalists accentuate that they are treated as a homogenous group, viewed as symbols of terrorism, and can easily be labelled in Western societies or misunderstood by their Western counterparts. Despite the increasing literature onmulticulturalism, the issues around Muslim or Arab women continueto be discussed in terms of social injustice. The propaganda distributed against these women in particular, which is mainly enriched through the media, represents them as one homogenous entitywho are dominated, degraded, silenced, covered and submissive. Consequently, these women are not only faced with patriarchal oppression but also with a specific kind of labelling in which they struggle inorder to beat these stereotypes throughout their lives.The manner in which images of these women is used on the front covers of books classifiesthem as a homogenous group.

Despite Muslim/Arab women's diversity in terms of cultural, social and ethnic differences, the covers fail to capture any of this. Their identity is instead restricted by using their outer appearance, particularly the veil. Joseph Donica(2021) writes:

> Head coverings have also been used in more pointed ways by Arabs and non-Arabs alike to indicate an Arab identity on other levels. The veil, in any of its forms, has been used by Arab-Muslim women to identify themselves religiously, culturally, and even politically, and it has been used by non-Arab and non-Muslim people to identify Arab-Muslim women as culturally 'other'—especially in Europe and the U.S. There is also a long history of Western film and art using head coverings to identify characters as Arab, at times in a derogatory way.(p.164)

Such images influenceattitudes toward Arabs in general, particularly in the West, asinformed by Edward Said in *Orientalism*.Despite the fact thatMuslim/Arab women have been able to showcase their resilience to take a stance against oppression in patriarchal societies, the use of coveredbodies and faces labels them under a particular classification and consequently overlooks their journey, progress and transition. While attempting to intersect gender, culture and religion, the representation of these women on front covers further confirms how they are labelled as a homogenous group that isconfronted with numerous barriers, both in regards to social and to political participation. Instead of celebrating the individuality and personality of these women, the pressurehas been on them as a

homogenousgroup that continues to lead a life filled with oppression, injustice and unfair treatment.This highlights the stereotypical image mentioned in the first part of the paper that revolves around the theme of 'saving Muslim/Arab Women', as they are shown as victimised, oppressed and vulnerable individuals who need to be rescued. Accordingly, by showing them as a homogenous group, they are not only the subject ofstereotyping, but their true identity is not fairly captured on front covers.

The representation of Muslim/Arab women as a homogenous group shows that the changes that have taken place in their social status in recent years are ignored, and their individual identity and character are not taken into consideration by the publisher. On most occasions, the author makes major decisions on the book cover as they tend to utilise them to convey particular messages. However, this trend defies the various dress styles seen amongMuslim/Arab women; for example, the failure to appreciate cultural diversity and internalise the reasons why these women wear loose black dresses and cover their headsand faces, as opposed to other fashionable Muslim/Arabfemales who wear headscarves revealing strands of their hair and sometimes apart of their neck. Unlike the mainstream feminist post-colonial context, many authors are unable to detect other conditions and status of these women.For example, an image of a Muslim/Arab woman wearing a veil but in a smiling and natural manner, may not necessarily indicate any form of oppression. Besides, the intentions for these photos are questionable, and any insightful reader can ask questions on who takes such photos and why not alternative images of happy and vibrant Muslim/Arab women. When the Orientalist perspective is adopted to assess the images of these women on book covers, we see how their representation differs starkly from, for example, that of Western women, who are typically shown to be happy, powerful, and confident individuals and who are capable of making their own decisions. Such representation may be a way to homogenise specific cultures, communities, and people, as they are perceived as preconception and bias. It is important to note that many of these authors who choose such images fail to delve deeply into the psychology and consciousness of Muslim/Arabwomen's personalities, culture, values, and practices, and to differentiate them from the 'Other'. This will help dismantle the stereotypes created about the East, particularly by the West. This move affects the attitude of the 'other', particularly the West's, towards Muslim/Arab modernity and appreciation of its social values.Moreover, such negative perceptions are also created by female Arab activists themselves, such as Nawal Saadawi, an Egyptian doctor and author who is titled as the 'Simone de Beauvoir of Egypt'. Saadawidevoted her life to fight what she believes is a "a deeply conservative political culture that was sometimes described as immutably pharaonic"

(Cowell, 2021, para. 3). Her views are introduced in her feministdiscourse which tacklesthe degraded position of Muslim/Arab women.Thus it is evident that the writing of some of the Arab elites, such as Saadawi, have extensively exposed how the conservative cultures have negatively affected the Muslim/Arab woman's socio-economic and political image worldwide, but unfortunately this has reinforced the stereotypical image of those women and introduced them as a homogenous group.The visual elements used on the front covers of books show not only thecommon struggles between the West and East that havebeen evident for decades, but also between Muslim/Arab feminists and their conservative cultures.

Conclusion

The portrayal of Muslim/Arab women on the front covers of literary works indicates the power struggles between social groups in the West and East as well as Arab liberators and conservative cultures.Bothattempt to impose their norms of modernism, liberalism, consumerism and progress. The reductive interpretation of the veiling of Muslim/Arab women and equating it to oppression has created negative stereotypes, representing them as ‘inferior’ and 'uncivilised' compared to their Western or Arab liberated counterparts. This shows the disregard for the differences in their values, beliefs, and practices. In this article, the images of Muslim/Arab women on the front covers of diverse literary works have been analysed, showing how they are portrayed rather consistently as leading an oppressive life and as helpless victims within Muslim/Arab society who need to be rescued.In addition, this paper highlights how they are mostly seen as a homogenous group,oppressed by what is assumed to be their destructive race and culture.Literally, the female image on these front covers is emphasised negatively — behind a veil, with their faces partially or entirely covered, heads drooping, eyes gazing towards the floor with distress and sorrow—symbolising the supposed worthlessness of their identity. The most alarming part about this issue“is that a majority of the general population accepts information as being factual without completing their own research and uses these inaccurate depictions to shape their world views” (Sands, 2014, p. 36). Unfortunately, facts are mixed up with misconceptions, as Sands explains,“a majority of people do not question the authenticity of the information provided. Many websites are maintained by people who may have not completed adequate research themselves, and pass along inaccurate data and/or extremely biased views” (2014, p. 36).Hence, one can conclude that images of Muslim/Arab women on the front covers of literary works mainly aim to introducemonolithicrepresentations that proclaim distorted facts about a certain group and culture.

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