The American Self and the Arab Other in 1980s Bestsellers in the United States

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The stereotype, that *we* Arabs have of our parents, is that they are overprotective, overbearing, and they love us too much. My parents, Haidar Dubbati and Wafa Hinnawi, then, are not the stereotypical Arab parents. They placed my own dreams and ambitions ahead of any other considerations and reservations they might have had, including having their youngest daughter live away from them for four years. This is their dissertation as much as it is mine. I would like to mention my sister Lulua Dubbati, who had to endure four years without her only sister, and my brother Yusuf Dubbati whose pride in his kid sister's accomplishments I hold dear to my heart.

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Even though I have been critical of the motivations of U.S. funding of research in the Arab region, I remain indebted to the opportunities the Fulbright grants program extend to students, like myself, who come from the Middle East. I acknowledge the

Fulbright program's financial support, which allowed me to come to the United States to complete my research project and gain an actual and personal experience of being an Arab in America. I wish, however, that such a program and its motivations were not tainted by a multi-billion military conquest and invasion of Arab and Muslim countries.

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Abstract of the Dissertation

The American Self and the Arab Other in
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Popular fiction is often regarded as a 'degraded' literary form whose social impact is confined to pure entertainment and leisurely reading. When historians of the 1980s name some of the most influential writers of the decade, Stephen King and Danielle Steel fail to make the list despite their enormous popularity and their novels' readability. Excluding popular fiction from classrooms, anthologies, and literary criticism relegates the 'common' readers to mere consumers of fiction and recipients of the genre's depiction of reality in binary oppositions of good/evil, heroic/villainous, and masculine/feminine. In an attempt to trouble the 'trinity' of reader/text/writer, this dissertation reads the popularity of the formulaic as indicative of a popular desire to sustain a binary view of us/them. It contextualizes the discussion in the depiction of the American self and the Arab Other in 1980s bestsellers, posing two questions: why are Steel and King absent from literary discussion of colonial literature in the 1980s and why shouldn't they be included?

In answering these questions, this dissertation introduces the concept of juxtaposition as another method of representation, which does not overtly or explicitly construct the Arab stereotype. Juxtaposition creates a subtle contrast between 'us' and 'them' without verbalizing it and insinuates contrast and oppositionality without addressing the complexities and multidimensionality of what is being contrasted or juxtaposed, such as the binary of self and Other, the American national identity or its sexual politics. Popular fiction as bestsellers creates simultaneity of influence by

providing the medium in which the reading public is exposed to homogeneous and binary representations of the Arab family and the American family in juxtaposition. King and Steel's novels produce knowledge of the Arab Other through their simultaneous popularity with novels that popularize the Arab stereotype. The plausibility of the social clarity in Steel and King's bestsellers relies on the representability of equally clear demonology of Arabs in contemporary bestsellers such as The Haj and The Little Drummer Girl.

This dissertation reads the juxtaposition of the American self and the Arab Other in the historical context of the 1980s as a prelude rather than a discontinuity of the 1990s and 2000s during which the United States engaged in a full-scale military offensive against Iraq and Afghanistan and maintained its military presence in the Arab peninsula. It disputes the view of '9/11' as a moment of rupture, and by focusing on the 1980s, it argues that post-9/11 discourse continues the systematic demonization of Arabs.

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Introduction

On March 17, 1983, the New York Times published a story on the Reagan administration's commitment to help rid Lebanon of foreign forces. The column was placed in the margin next to a Lord & Taylor advertisement, which takes up most of the page. The newspaper ad consists of a sketch of a tall slender woman, simply but elegantly dressed, posing with one hand on her hip while the other is holding the tail of her dress. On top of the page and in bold letters stands the caption, 'The American Look.' What is striking about this page are both the juxtaposition of the seemingly unrelated story and the image and the different proportions given to each. It is hard to read the story, printed in a small font, without having this large image of the so-called 'American look' in the periphery of one's view, unavoidably providing a visual background to a story that lacks any images. The 'casual' juxtaposition creates subtle meanings centered on associations between images and stories, which seem unrelated while they co-construct each other.

The American woman's beauty, femininity, and "penchant for romance" are reinforced while reinforcing the chaotic, senseless, and inexplicable violence in the Middle East.

In this dissertation, I construct an association between the image of 'us' and 'them' based on a similar juxtaposition that creates a subtle contrast without verbalizing it. I examine the parallel of representation of 'American values' and 'Arab values' in selected bestseller fiction in the United States in the 1980s. The purpose of the project is to investigate the role that bestsellers played during the decade preceding the first Gulf War in homogenizing the values that define 'Americanness' and reinforcing a sense of the 'homeness' of America and the 'aberration' of Arab societies and their values. I argue that the two representational patterns are intertwined and interdependent but more importantly tacitly constructed. The understanding of 'home' as what is not only familiar but also righteous needs to work in opposition to what is an affront to these values. In a decade during which Arabs and their regions were consistently represented in mainstream U.S. media as a threat, from Libyan leader Mu'amar Qaddafy's expansionist and nuclear ambitions to Lebanon as the scene of anti-American battling forces, popular fiction at the time magnified this perceived Arab threat. This project places what people were reading in its political and historical contexts but also traces the co-construction of the 'American self' and the 'Arab Other.'

While in Orientalism (1978) Edward Said rereads orientalist research as an ideologically minded and politically motivated school of thought that fictionalizes a perception of the Other as inferior, in Culture and Imperialism (1993) he goes one step further in suggesting that the binary of the self and the Other is not centered on western misperception of the Other but also includes an equally firm and stable understanding of

the self as the norm. One colonialist tool that stabilizes this oppositionality is the novel. Said offers a rereading of the rise of the genre, situating it historically in a western society that is conscious of its cultural superiority and imperialist needs. He sees the novel, in its ability to narrativize history and reality, as a political vehicle by which imperialism has been able to sell the concept of the binarism of self and the Other. Similarly, in exploring the origin of imperialism, Hannah Arendt connects the dots between Nazism and the 'scramble for Africa' both of which she argues were allowed by the racialization of the nation (65). She traces racist nationalisms in Europe back to the mentality of colonialist conquests which nationalized and racialized cultural values; thus for Arendt the Holocaust was preceded and made possible by the dehumanization of the colonized Africans and North African Arabs. In The Anarchy of Empire (2002), Amy Kaplan suggests that the alienation of the domestic Other is interdependent with the denaturalization of foreign cultures and civilizations. She maintains that "Domestic metaphors of national identity are intimately intertwined with renderings of the foreign and the alien, and that the notions of the domestic and the foreign mutually constitute one another in an imperial context" (4). Thus, when the US government embarked on colonialist conquests such as the annexation of Texas or the determination of the status of Puerto Ricans, it often used a discourse that built on historical racial hierarchies inside the U.S. that deemed African-Americans inferior.[1] What transpires is "a U.S. practice of viewing foreign people through the lenses of racial categories at home" (10). Furthermore,

[1] She cites the supreme court ruling over Puerto Rico's status as 'foreign possessions' in which the justices warned that the nationalization of Puerto Ricans would result in "the enslavement and darkening of white Americans" (9). Such a language is not only inspired by the rhetoric of segregation (which was legalized five years earlier) but also uses the colonialist chaotic reversal of roles perfected by Griffin's The Birth of a Nation in which the slaves are represented as enslaving the white slave-owners.

Kaplan underlines the representation of the inferiority of the foreign Other as instrumental in nationalizing American discourse. She refers to Mark Twain as a literary figure who is synonymous with Americanness itself, a status which he achieved not when he was "identified with Southwestern vernacular" but rather "while speaking as an authority about those whom he called 'Our Fellow Savages'" (59). Therefore, Twain's writings on his travel to Hawaii (and the Middle East) "positioned him in an implicitly racialized discourse of national identity where he could perform as a civilized white American by virtue of his travels among primitive peoples" (60). Kaplan's argument illuminates what she calls the "anarchy of empire," which blurs distinctions between "here and there, between inside and outside" (16) even when it does not question its construction of the opposition between home and abroad and at-homeness and foreignness.

In The Conquest of America (1984), Tzvetan Todorov suggests that the binary of the self/familiar and the Other/foreignness is the foundation and the driving force that led to the 'discovery' of America and "establishes our present identity" (5). While the word 'discovery' suggests a new revelation, Columbus landed in the New World with the mentality of the Old World, a medieval mindset[2], and an inability to fathom the cultures and languages of the inhabitants of America whom he deemed alien and different (11-12). Todorov argues that Columbus only understood the land because of the textual knowledge with which he arrived from Europe, and his understanding of the Native American culture conformed to that knowledge. When Columbus saw the Natives for the first time, he described them as peaceful and goodhearted, a perception which would later

[2] In his journals, Columbus makes several references to Jerusalem and the need to liberate it.

change to the opposite. His inability to see them beyond the binary of good/evil is evidence of what Todorov describes as his "pragmatic estimate of a situation and not from the desire to know" (38). The Native Americans needed to fit the set and determined knowledge of Columbus and other European colonialists and they never existed in western consciousness independent from this knowledge. Therefore, they were described as thieves yet generous, meek yet violent, and noble yet savages, as the ambiguity of the representation (what Kaplan calls the anarchy of empire) is due to ever changing colonialist needs (to contain, battle, exterminate the colonized).

What makes this 'Columbus knowledge' crucial to the twentieth-century era and its identity politics is the mistaken perception that the western masses, particularly the American public, do not know of, and are ill-informed about, global events and remote territories. The opinion charges that American public knowledge of world events is manipulated by media outlets such as Fox News or The Washington Post, which present biased views. This dissertation counters that the public does know and that is why it cannot see the world in its reality. Its Columbus knowledge consigns everything to a preconceived and often textual knowledge that places Asia in America because Columbus' unshakable knowledge locates it there. Similarly, despite the availability and accessibility of photographs, films, and texts that represent the diversity of Arabs' ways of life, social norms, and dress codes, Arabs in the collective American imagination live in tents, ride camels while Arab women are exotic creatures, confined in harems. When reality collides with the predetermined knowledge, then it is relegated to fantasy.

The co-construction of the self and the Other is clearest and most effective if not only possible when textualized, which is a point Said makes generally in Orientalism but

more specifically in Culture and Imperialism. He argues that this textual knowledge is so central to colonialism that imperialism and the novel are "unthinkable" without each other (84). Said's theorization and contextualization of the novel are made possible by what Ian Watt describes as its ability to individualize characters and particularize settings. These characteristics help to familiarize the Western audience with 'home' as the rule and the natural, and 'abroad' as the exotic, the exception, and the unnatural, creating the binary of the 'civilized' and the 'barbaric.' Therefore, Said finds the roots of imperialism as much in novels by Dickens and Eliot as in those by Kipling and Conrad (89). The latter novelists exoticized 'abroad'; however, without the former novels' familiarization of home and its social hierarchies of family, gender, and race, the exotic abroad will have nothing against which its 'anomaly' could be contrasted. Moreover, Said argues that the 'novels of home' are structured on the focality of authority, whether in the form of the narrator, father figures, husbands, or the family as a microcosm of society (91-2). Therefore, Crusoe's triumph at the end of Robinson Crusoe is unthinkable without Emma Bovary's suicide in Madame Bovary or Elizabeth Bennett's marriage in Pride and Prejudice. The stability of authority at home and the unredeemable chaos abroad are impossible to realistically imagine and represent without each other.

In this dissertation, I base my analysis of the juxtapositional co-construction of the American self and the Arab Other on Said's exploration of the role of the English novel in familiarizing 'home' and exoticizing 'abroad'; however, I will expand this characteristic which he examines exclusively in European and particularly in English novels to bestsellers in the late twentieth-century United States. Moreover, Said's work centers on highbrow literature, or novels that were canonized at the time of his research.

What I find absent from his rich and meticulous study of the imperialistic context of the development of the novel is a lengthy discussion of popular fiction and the role it plays in creating the home/abroad binary. For instance, in his influential works Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism, Said does not discuss Leon Uris' novels such as the enormously popular Exodus (1958), which have not only brought the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into American public consciousness but also contributed significantly to the unfavorable perceptions many Americans have of Arabs[3].

Focusing on popular fiction and bestsellers allows us to emphasize the role of readers in popularizing the perceptions of the self and the Other in a binary opposition. The second assumption on which I base my analysis is that popular fiction not only reflects images of Americans and Arabs that exist in mass and mainstream media but also responds to its readers' desires to see a pattern of representation that sustains the binary of us and them. The social significance of formulaic literature is that it maintains a formula that gives it its familiar storyline and generic form. Ken Gelder suggests that popular fiction is the only type of literature whose genres are categorized based on formula (romance, science fiction, spy novels, etc.) (40). Entering a bookstore, one is likely to find a Melville novel shelved alphabetically under fiction while one is directed to the science fiction or horror and thrillers section when inquiring about a Stephen King novel. In Fiction and the Reading Public, Q. D. Leavis reiterates the dominance of genre

[3] Said's reference to Uris elsewhere is often brief and only in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, emphasizing his novels' depiction of Palestinians as Israelis' foil while neglecting their role in the US imperialistic policies toward the Middle East. This strict contextualization of Uris suggests that his works can be read as political but not as Orientalist texts of interest to postcolonial studies. Said does not neglect Uris' works' importance in creating the Arab stereotype; however, unlike his analysis of the works of Kipling, Forster, or Austen, his approach indicates that he only sees Uris as a propagandist rather than an effective participant in the construction of colonialist thoughts. Said's treatment of Uris' novels is suggestive of a larger academic snobbery towards popular fiction as not theoretically significant.

in defining the formulaic as the driving force behind the emergence of the reading publics and the creation of public tastes. She argues that literary weeklies and monthlies managed to "standardise different levels of taste" (21) and "set the reader with a comfortable state of mind" (27). Consequently and paradoxically, publishers find themselves restricted by the public tastes which they have helped create in the first place and forced to comply with "the policy of what is called 'Giving the Public what it wants'" (22) by publishing stories which "conform to type" (27). Though acknowledging the influence of the public on editors when making publications selections, Leavis often relegates readers to passive recipients whose minds are "made up" for them (22).

Many writers on the formulaic disagree with the categorization of the readers of popular fiction as a mindless public whose interest in these novels is nothing more than a "drug habit" (Leavis 7). Pierre Bourdieu identifies readers' influence as the determining factor that distinguishes highbrow literature from the formulaic. He describes highbrow literature as autonomous and lowbrow fiction as heteronomous. The autonomy of highbrow literature emerges from its independence from its public reception. The writers of highbrow fiction are not audience-minded since the considerations of how well readers will receive their works bear no influence on their creative production. Formulaic literature, on the other hand, relies on such a reception that plays a central role in literary production. This, however, does not suggest that highbrow literature is left unaffected by some elements of reception. Bourdieu suggests that writers of highbrow literature replace the dependency on public reception with peer evaluation, which he calls an internal hierarchization. It is the academic reception of the literary work that determines its success as a highbrow literary work. Popular fiction, on the other hand, is receptive to its

reading public rather than an elite readership, which makes its hierarchization external. Moreover, the division between the two forms of literary production is not independently constructed; rather, there is a level of consciousness of the dividing line which Gelder calls the intention of the author who decides which direction his literary work will take before the production process begins.

Popular Fiction and Binary Opposition

In the dissertation, I argue that the formulaic responds to as it creates the public desire to see perceptions of self and Other solidified. Since bestseller writers, particularly 'brand authors' such as Stephen King, Danielle Steel and Leon Uris, rely on a sustainable market of readership, their novels maintain familiar and predictable formulas that readers instantly recognize and anticipate. Rather than refute/support the centrality of the role of either readers or writers in perpetuating these perceptions, I see the success of a bestseller as the meeting point of an author/reader conscious shaping of a hegemonic perception of reality. In other words, the commercial success of bestsellers is a reflection of a writer-reader "agreement" over the ways in which realities should be re-imagined and reproduced in the fiction. Popular fiction provides a unique medium in which all these questions and theories of representation, reception, literary production and genre intersect. Examining the popularity of these novels (founded on their generic structure) allows one to see readers as more than mere recipients of stereotype but as active participants in creating a market for novels that do not challenge the binary understanding of the world or the valorization of the local over the foreign.

Thus, studying the American representation of Arabs and their societies in isolation from the construction of American values and society in 1980s bestsellers is an endeavor that only examines half the story. Without establishing the unequivocal perception of one (us as good), the unquestionable representation of the other (them as banal) is inconceivable. My aim in this juxtaposition is to see literary works by King and Steel inseparably from novels, such as Uris' The Haj, Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre's The Fifth Horseman, and John Le Carre's The Little Drummer Girl, which base their plots on consistently evoked stereotypical representations of Arabs. Steel and King might not have specifically written about the Middle East, but their roles in stabilizing traditional family values, which are founded on gender roles and monogamy, and presenting science as a menace that can only be naturalized by an exclusive sense of morality, have contributed to creating the criteria by which Arabs are othered and dehumanized and "their values" deemed unnatural.

The recognizability of the self depends not only on the representation of the Other but also its representability. The creation of the Other as a homogeneous group that is familiar only in an apparent and a displayable absence/lack/difference stabilizes the recognizability of the self[4] as equally homogeneous but in equally apparent and displayable presence/abundance/familiarity. The displayability of difference justifies Homi Bhabha's equation of racial difference with the Freudian theory of lack, in which Bhabha reads Freud's phrase "all men have penises" as "[a]ll men have the same skin/race/culture—and the anxiety associated with lack and difference" (106-7). Consequently, the identification of the lack/difference/foreignness is performed by both

[4] I use 'self' and 'Other' as conceptualization of difference and otherness rather than as references to specific groups.

the self and the Other in what Bhabha calls “active consent” of exclusion (109). When the non-white recognizes his/her own non-whiteness, s/he identifies and simultaneously disidentifies with the positivities of whiteness, rendering it at once “one colour and no colour.” Bhabha concludes that the Other is discursively denied originality or singularity as it becomes a deviation, lack, or distortion of the self (96).

However, the construction of the ‘self’ also relies on that deviancy that the Other has to display to confirm the self’s identity. Even if the self takes a centrality of reference from which the Other has to depart, the lack of singularity and originality extends to both ends of the binary. They are both discursively imagined and are unthinkable as stable categories without each other. Therefore, it is not only the content of the representation/stereotype but also the permanence and stability of its representability that enables the stabilization of the criteria and medium by which the self is constructed and made recognizable and familiar. This leads Bhabha to disagree with the description of stereotype as “a simplification” because such an approach presupposes that the stereotype contains some elements of truth but in an exaggerated or simplified form while “it is a false representation of a given reality” (107). As Kaplan argued, in the discursive anarchy brought about by imperialism the colonizer can colonize while being colonized and like Columbus’ Indians, s/he can be aggressive and docile, mysterious and knowable, and (like Arab women in American media) voluptuous and sexually repressed.

The fantasy of the self in opposition to the Other is desired even if it does not correspond to reality whether lived or desired. What is sought is the permanence of the conceptualization of the self and the other and the binary of the perception of the two.

Figures such as the child, the family, heteronormativity, and monogamy are instrumental in constructing the plausibility of a homogeneous Other. Their stability is indisputable; hence, they are useful sites on which to project the wholesomeness of the nation and the recognizibilty of us as 'not them.' The representation of Arabs as unable to maintain monogamous unions which inevitably produce unwholesome children, naturalizes the 'Arab difference.' What is more natural than parental love towards children which is absent in American media's representation of Arab families. Further, familial-national rhetoric standardizes the binary of good/evil, naturalness/monstrosity, if not the binary itself which resists postmodernist relativization of standards and its decentering of 'truth.'Therefire, relying on the familial metaphor allows the representability of Arab otherness. It makes it possible to essentialize 'Arab violence' as inherent and symptomatic of a larger national and cultural failures and perversions.

The necessity of a prominently heteronormative relationship and the insistence on maintaining any definition of marriage as one that unites '*one* man with *one* woman' can be read as an attempt to associate same-sex unions with polygamy and 'queer' any relationship that does not fall within this definition of marriage and family. In this context, both homosexual and polygamous relationships are considered a 'deviancy' from the naturalized traditional marriage through which the normative family is imagined. I will argue that the need to protect and preserve the heteronormative marriage and family is a common theme in the works of Stephen King and Danielle Steel. Further, I will argue that this queers (in both senses of the word as 'strange' and not heteronormative) Arab marriages and families. These novels transform the family into a site of social stability and correction of social and sexual 'deviancy'. When read in juxtaposition with novels

that describe the collapse of the Arab filial bonds as a state of being rather than a dramatized exception, they become the site of the non-negotiability of the binary. The stability of 'our' cultural zone that popular fiction creates and popularizes is realizable and imaginable in the instability of 'their' families and the defamiliarization of their social norms. The social stability found in the works of King and Steel is only conceivable when read in juxtaposition with novels such as The Haj, The Fifth Horseman, and The Little Drummer Girl, which represent Arab society as unstable and exotic and unfamiliar to us. This initiates a circular relationship that deems Arab society unstable because it is dissimilar to ours, and dissimilar to ours because it is unstable.

It is no coincidence, therefore, that Steel's Star ends with the assassination of John F. Kennedy, a monumental moment in Americans' collective memory, but concludes with the reunion of its heroine Crystal with her beloved hero Spencer and their illegitimate son. The uncertainty triggered by the death of the President is overshadowed by the unequivocal importance the novel gives to the American family, whose restoration remedies the disruption of the larger national family caused by the assassination. Published in 1989 at the end of Ronald Reagan's last term and two years before the first Gulf War, Star topped the New York Times bestsellers list along with Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses. Even though one can argue that it is unlikely that the two novels garnered the same market of readership, the political implications of being simultaneously on the list should not be left unexplored. The Satanic Verses and the controversy it generated can be read in juxtaposition with the world present in American popular fiction, such as Star, with its resistance to ambiguity and insistence on restoring the wholesomeness of the family. In moments of national calamity, Steel's protagonists

unite to dispel any uncertainty while Rushdie's novel sets off a political whirlwind that culminates with the Iranian fatwa and ends with what Daniel Pipes calls the division between Muslims and Westerners "along the fault line of culture" (133) and what Bernard Lewis sees as evidence of a "clash of civilizations." While in Star, the violent death of the president heals divisions, the threat of violence which Satanic triggers is perceived to have created divisions and cast doubt over the stability of the Middle East and its readiness to embrace difference. My reading will suggest that the simultaneous popularity of these novels derives from a need to see one's own history and society in unequivocal clarity and positive light while viewing the Muslims' and Arabs'[5] societies and politics as turbulent and exotically different have propelled both novels to the bestsellers list.

Bestsellers and methodology of selection

This dissertation uses textual analysis in establishing juxtaposed representations in Danielle Steel's Full Circle (1984), Daddy (1989) and Star (1989), and Stephen King's Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption (1982), Pet Sematary (1983), IT (1986), and Misery (1987), as examples of bestsellers stabilizing the representation of American family tradition as heteronormative. I examine Ken Follett's Key to Rebecca (1980), Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre's The Fifth Horseman (1980), John Le Carre's The Little Drummer Girl (1983), and Leon Uris' The Haj (1984) as examples of bestsellers representing the Arab family as inherently dysfunctional. As in the

[5] Several studies and opinion polls, one of which was conducted in 1980, suggest that the majority of Americans think of Arabs and Muslims interchangeably. Many Americans, for instance, do not know that Iranians are not Arab.

juxtaposition of the image of the American woman and the Lebanon story in the New York Times, these novels' plotlines are seemingly unrelated; however, when read alongside each other as bestsellers, they co-construct the perceptions of the American self and the Arab Other. This dissertation reads these novels in juxtaposition while conscious of both the historical moment from which they emerged and the masses of readers which they intended to reach. In 1983, for instance, Stephen King's Pet Sematary, Danielle Steel's Full Circle, and Leon Uris' The Haj were simultaneously on the New York Times bestsellers weekly and annual lists. It is likely that contemporary readers had read these novels during the same period or that they had been aware of their subject matter. This dissertation examines the implication of this simultaneity of influence and the ways in which it affects both the production of the national identity of the self in relation/opposition to the Other. In other words, it sees the creation of the imagined communities (Anderson) through the fictionalization of the Orient (Said).

Steel and King were selected for this study because of their influence on the genre of popular fiction and enormous popularity in the 1980s. They were two of the most consistent bestseller writers of the last two decades of the twentieth century. They penned 29 novels that were on the New York Times bestsellers lists between the years 1980 and 1989. Steel's ten novels in the decade spent a total of 768 weeks on the New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller fiction lists in paperback and hardcover editions (Justice 290-1). Steel is listed in the Guinness Book of Records for "having at least one of her books on the Times bestseller list for 381 consecutive weeks" (The Official Website of Danielle Steel). In 1989 she had 130 million books in print (Jonathan Etra marvels that "only six countries have more people than there are Danielle Steel books" [40]), making

her one of the best-selling women authors of the 1980s. In the 1980s, King wrote and published nineteen novels, which remained on the New York Times and Publishers Weekly's bestseller fiction lists for a total of 1297 weeks (Justice 175-6). Both Steel and King's works were intensely anticipated by faithful groups of readers and guaranteed commercial success. Their enormous and consistent popularity as writers made them synonymous with the genre of popular fiction. Their works are often cited when referring to the gap between what people read and what literary critics deem literature.

Bestsellers are defined as books which enjoy distinctly high sales within a given period of time (Hinckley and Hinckley 3, Sutherland 18, Bloom 6). To appear on a bestseller list such as the New York Times', books have to sell a very large number of copies during a short period of time. 'Very large' can vary from tens of thousands to a million copies; however, what is consistent is that in order for bestsellers to be listed, they have to outsell other recently published books. In the second half of the twentieth century, when 'brand authors' were dominating books sales in the United States, a novel generally had to sell around a million copies to be considered a bestseller (Korda 166-171, Hinckley and Hinckley 3). This was particularly true in the 1980s, when a series of mergers "reduce[d] the number of major book publishers to six big groups" (Korda 166). Independent bookstores continued to struggle and those that survived the corporate wave became "national treasures" while bookstore chains continued to thrive (Korda 166-7). The introduction and success of mall-like book "superstores" provided bookselling with an air of "visibility" and independence. They created a venue for events such as book signing and bookclub readings, which created a community of readers and personalized readers' relationship with their favorite authors (167). Consequently, the book sales for

household names such as King, Tom Clancy, and Steel, “escalated into seven figures”which became “the benchmark” for a bestseller (167).

As corporate publishing and bookselling dominated the industry, emphasis on profit and scaling down expenses altered strategies of advertising and publishing, which had increasingly begun to take a commercial rather than a literary nature. The centrality of sales to book publishing; therefore, has made it more difficult for unknown writers to be signed by publishing houses and crack the bestseller lists. With writers such as Steel and King writing a book or two a year, ‘surprise’ bestselling fictions were a rarity and bestseller lists became an exclusive club populated by novels written by the same familiar nine or ten names.

The stability of the bestseller lists might tempt one to approach popular novels of the 1980s as a manifestation of the hypercommercialization of the publishing industry in the wake of media mergers and consolidations. Resa Dudovitz asks, “Do the lists create bestsellers, or are they, as some publishers claim, true indicators of popularity?” Dudovitz rightly acknowledges the complexity of the process of creating the bestseller in which “advertising campaigns, bookclub promotions, and bookstore displays” all contribute to bringing a book to public attention, but the process in which a book travels from the shelf to the shopping bag remains essentially in the hand of the reading publics (28). John Sutherland explains the phenomenon of “stampede selling” as one that is sustained by loyalty rather than mania. Readers “tend to be either brand-loyal to a particular category (science fiction, romance, horror) or a particular author” (26). Such an interpretation undercuts the overemphasis of influence of the bestseller list on the

marketability of fiction. Even though a 'New York Times Bestseller' stamp entices new readers, brand authors such as King and Steel rely on a large community of loyal readers.

This study views bestseller lists as an indication of the popularity of selected novels and takes notice of the simultaneous appearance of Pet Sematary and The Little Drummer Girl in 1983 and Full Circle and The Haj in 1984 on the weekly and annual New York Times bestseller lists. It attempts to read the juxtaposition of the images of the Arab family and American family in each. This dissertation relies on bestsellers lists from the New York Times, Publishers Weekly, and the Washington Post in determining its selection of novels. [6]. In particular, in choosing King's Misery, Pet Sematary, IT, and Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption, I looked for the most popular of King's popular novels based on the number of weeks they spent on bestseller lists, their iconic status within popular culture, the durability of their influence on American popular culture, and the success of their movie adaptations. My criterion of selection for Steel's bestsellers focused on their central themes and their simultaneous appearance on the Times bestseller list with The Haj and The Satanic Verses.

Historical scope

Selecting the 1980s as the historical period of interest is meant to counter a common belief and frequently used argument that the discriminatory policies against Arabs in the United States and Europe, racial profiling at US airports, and Guantanamo Bay came all as a response to the September 11, 2001 attacks by Al-Qaeda on the United States. This rationalization views '9/11' as the historical point from which the Arab

[6] For more information on the number of weeks the selected novels were on bestseller lists, see appendix.

stereotype and anti-Arabism began. The invention of 'post-9/11' is meant to mark that day as a turning point that disrupted the current of events that preceded it. People often talk about their memories of 9/12, but what about 9/10? Focusing on the 1980s is my way to address the collective western amnesia and to argue that the history of Arab stereotype in U.S. mass media and popular culture long preceded '9/11' and was instrumental to U.S. military colonization of the Middle East.

The 1980s is an important decade for this project. In terms of the Middle East, it occurs between two decades that saw the last Arab-Israeli war and the first large-scale military intervention into the region by the United States. In the United States, it is marked by polarizing Reaganism that augmented a Cold War politics deeply situated in the rhetoric of binary oppositions. Reagan as president and former actor in B-movies that relied on formula embodied the binarism that characterized the decade and its cultural confusions. His unshakable optimism and sunshine rhetoric helped him defeat Jimmy Carter in 1980 and secure reelection in 1984 despite economic woes and political scandals. The success of his political career is suggestive of a wider public nostalgia for a simpler past while moving in an accelerating speed towards multi-structural corporate America. This dissertation locates Reagan's politics and presidency in the formulaic, as they are an extension of his career as an actor and a performer.

In a PBS series, The Presidents, a two-part episode discussed the two terms of Ronald Reagan as president. The 180-minute narrative reconstructs the personal and political circumstances that prepared Reagan for his climactic confrontation with the Soviet foe. Part one, titled "The Life Guard," describes Reagan's birth and rise in his community and in Hollywood, emerging from a bleak childhood under the wing of an

alcoholic and financially ruined father and a romanticized view of his own destiny. This sentimental view would later find its way to the screen in many of Reagan's movies where he played the role of the hero in the face of adversaries. From Reagan's unlikely careers as a shoe salesman, actor, governor, and president, the documentary singles out his job as a lifeguard as his most cherished role, setting the tone for the construction of Ronald Reagan the public figure and his future battle with the Soviets to protect and safeguard America. Relegated to a footnote is his failure to deal with staggering rates of poverty and crime, provide medical care to thousands of AIDS victims, and protect hundreds of thousands who contracted and would contract the HIV/AIDS.

The PBS documentary reconceptualizes Reagan's legacy as he saw it: the mastermind of a magnified and polarizing confrontation to hide the social confusions of the 1980s that reflected his paradoxical understanding of the social and sexual politics of the United States. It was a decade that saw the rise of neoconservatism, Reagan's social mandate, as well as pop culture icons Madonna and Prince. Whereas Reagan made the protection of the family and family values a cornerstone of his speeches and election campaigns (though he himself endured a broken marriage and strained relationships with his children), a growing number of American families were headed by single mothers and constituted sixty percent of families living as "hyper poor" (Batchelor and Stoddart 19). Reagan's rhetoric was consistently nostalgic for the supposedly simpler rural 1950s while the country had been steadily and irreversibly moving toward an urbanism and consumerism (19). Gil Troy sums up Reagan's America as "liberty-laden but moralistic, consumer-oriented but idealistic, nationalist but individualistic, and consistently optimistic," (4) even while one in every twenty Americans was living under poverty lines,

the number of black children raised by single mothers leapt to 52 percent, and the country was facing a mysterious epidemic that was killing thousands of young people.

The PBS documentary as well as the obituaries following his death in 2004 show how divided and selective Americans are in remembering Ronald Reagan. The uncertainty in evaluating Reagan's presidency stems from a gap between his image and the policies that characterized his presidency. Succeeding a president whose term was dogged with defeatism, Reagan rose to power on the promise of restoring national pride by redefining what it meant to be American. The 1970s concluded with an ongoing hostage crisis in Iran and the failure of a small-scale rescue plan. The Soviets invaded Afghanistan and economic hardships were looming. Reagan defeated incumbent president Jimmy Carter by "identifying many challenges that infuriated [voters], while reassuring them that they would overcome" (Troy 35). His political successes relied on a dose of optimism and pride in Americanness, which found a life of its own without being sustained by reality or actual achievements. It was no surprise, therefore, that opinion polls conducted in 1984, when Reagan was running for reelection, showed that the public loved Reagan but disapproved of his policies, a disparity upon which Reagan seized and capitalized (Troy 149).

The public's ability to separate the politician from his politics transformed Reagan's presidency into a performance. Reagan's former career not only as an actor but as a B-movie star came to play and in many instances salvaged his political career. His public rhetoric and public policies mimicked his movies, which relied on a formula of the American hero fighting foreign evils and riding into the sunset with his beautiful American girl. In real life, Reagan perfected a similar political discourse in an escalating

arms race with the Soviets, the invasion of Grenada, and funding the Nicaragua Contras. He relied on invoking what Michael Rogin calls 'demonology' that creates domestic and foreign monsters, such as "the Indian cannibal, the black rapist, the papal whore of Babylon . . . the many-tentacled Communist conspiracy, the agents of international terrorism" (Ronald Reagan The Movie xiii). Reagan's fears of the Soviet evil empire were believable because the public had already seen them on screen when Reagan the actor fought enemy agents. (In Murder in the Air (1940), these agents are using ultra-advanced technology to attack America.) The PBS documentary goes as far as to blame the Iran/Contra scandal on Reagan's inability to distinguish between fictitious enemies he acted against on screen and credible threats in real life. His policies stemmed from genuine belief in the Soviet threat and the need to support anti-communist forces in Nicaragua.

The formula of Reagan's films relied on a polarity of evil versus good. Peter Jennings and Todd Brewster describe Reagan's policies and rhetoric as one that "brooked no moral ambiguity; tolerated no tantalizing intellectual diversions; sought no brokered solution. To him there was just right and wrong. And for too long America had not only been wrong but un-Americanly wrong" (qtd. in Batchelor and Stoddart 4). The winning strategy of Reagan's rhetoric was its ability to define what being America should be, which rendered any deviation as un-American. This is the tone of his successful campaign ad 'Morning in America,' which represented Americans as a hardworking people enjoying a prosperous economy and sunny conditions. The ad succeeded in "connecting patriotism, family, and moral conviction [which] . . . separated America from the rest of the world and particularly the Soviet Union's 'Evil Empire'" (6). What

distinguished the Reagan rhetoric was not only these polarizing views but the direct and straightforward method by which he spoke to the American public even when the content of his speeches was not always accurate (4).

This characteristic of Reagan's speech is relevant to this dissertation as it embodies the appeal of formulaic literature in its simplification of complex concepts such as values and virtue, its accessibility to the public, and its indifference to its contemporary reality, which is superseded by commitment to formula. Rogin suggests that Reagan perfected a duality of roles behind the scene (blacklisting his fellow Hollywood members) and before the camera that helped elevate him into a prominent figure in both Hollywood and Washington. However, Rogin underlines Reagan's "confusion" between "covert action and spectacle" that helped him weather one of the worst scandals of his presidency (99-100). He analyzes the way in which Reagan responded to the Iran/Contra controversy by admitting that "It happened on my watch" (qtd. in Rogin 100), reenacting a scene from his last movie Hellcats of the Navy (100). His admission of guilt works effectively in helping the President "evade responsibility by assuming it" (101). This justification is made possible by Reagan's dual image as a politician and a star of formulaic movies, which follows a pattern that insists on the rise of the hero even after his fall and the necessity of a happy ending. Additionally, Rogin argues that by admitting that the mistakes of Iran/Contra, a covert operation, happened "on my watch," Reagan confuses the representation of his role from a participant of the scandal to a spectator, like Americans watching his television address from their homes, making him "there and not there at the same time" (101). By consigning his role to that of a 'watcher,' Reagan also dissociates himself from intentional and active involvement in

Iran/Contra and aligns himself with the American spectators who are as guiltless. This is reinforced by Reagan's consistent defense strategy that he had no knowledge of the agreement some U.S. officials approved to sell weapons to Iran and fund the Nicaraguan Contras.

Rogin also argues that the displacement of political accountability, particularly the confusion between covert operations and spectacle, can only occur within individual and collective amnesias. One of Reagan's defense mechanism was claiming that he had forgotten that he signed the orders to allow the deal behind the Iran/Contra operation, invoking John N. Mitchell (Attorney General in the Nixon Administration) and inspiring Alberto Gonzales (Attorney General in George W. Bush Administration), who both repeatedly responded with "I do not recall" during their respective Congressional hearings. However, Rogin suggests that these politicians' amnesia is made believable and permissible by a national amnesia, which allows selective remembering often consistent with nationalized myths. He analyzes Reagan's famous "Make my day" line, in which he cited the words of a movie character played by Clint Eastwood. Reagan uttered those doubly famous words to Congress, daring it to increase taxes despite his threat of a veto. The scene is from Eastwood's Sudden Impact in which he dares a black rapist, who is taking a white woman hostage under gunpoint, to make his day. However, when asking hundreds of his students to identify the scene and movie from which the quote was taken, Rogin found that the majority were unable to remember the scene or its details except for one student. He was black and only remembered the black villain but not the female hostage. Rogin concludes that the context of Reagan's quote is read within a political agenda and nationalist narrative that maintain the heroism of the white American male

and sacrifices blacks and women, who are forgotten by both politicians and the public (103-4). What the American public remembers is that "men alone risk their lives in equal combat. In the one we forget, white men show how tough they are by resubordinating and sacrificing their race and gender others" (104). Without public amnesia, politicians' amnesia and selective remembering is implausible, unbelievable, and unforgiven.

The significance of Rogin's project in reading Reaganism from within his movies is the way it underlines Reagan's ability to confuse reality with fiction and fantasy which finctionalizes history while materializes fantasies[7]. Furthermore, Reagan's ability to perfect this manipulation and recreation of history and reality is allowed by his position in popular culture as a Hollywood personality, television appearances as General Electric spokesman, and a star of formulaic films. If some suggest that in Reagan's mind, it was unclear where movies plots ended and reality started, this confusion was paralleled with another one in which the public could not distinguish between Reagan the actor playing a movie character and Reagan the president. Additionally, Rogin's approach is relevant to this dissertation in reading the creation of the imaginary image of the self and the Other within a moment of intersection between elite political national discourse and public reception and willing participation in it. Without the public's willingness to remember and forget in accordance with the image of an idealistic national identity (which makes

[7] Talking to some of his students who had read his book Ronald Reagan, the Movie, Rogin asked them which parts of the book they thought were fiction and which were real. One student, an Asian-American, said he believed that the House of Un-American Activities Committee hearings could not be real (104-5). Similarly, when George Clooney made Good Night and Good Luck, he said he was criticized for the HUAC hearings scenes which some found exaggerated and the actor who played McCarthy was overacting. Clooney explained that those scenes were actual footage, showing the hearings and the real McCarthy. The inability to remember what actually occurred is indicative of "instances not of individual forgetting but of historical memory loss" (Rogin 105). In these moments of collective willing amnesia, events which are too troubling, such as HUAC or Eastwood's disregard for the life of a woman, are either relegated to fantasy or forgotten altogether.

the HUAC hearings unimaginably American), it would have been impossible for the political discourse to excuse Reagan's Iran/Contra scandal and President George W. Bush his unfounded claims of Iraq's acquisition of weapons of mass destruction.[8] Similarly, the public's ability to remember and retrieve information and conceptualization of Arab cultures and lives is determined by the public confusion between fiction they saw in movies (Exodus, Lawrence of Arabia, Jewels of the Nile among many others) and actual reality of how Arabs live. It responds to as it feeds the western political and cultural discourse over the Arab region and culture, making the two inseparable.

The 1980s are critical in understanding the historical context of these representations and the public desire for familiarity and a binary perception of 'their' world and 'ours.' The 1980s fall between two decades that witnessed large-scale US military operations abroad with starkly different outcomes. Americans were reeling from the Vietnam debacle that left them wary of sending troops overseas, what Ronald Reagan called the 'Vietnam Syndrome.' The fear of another Vietnam minimized Reagan's military foreign policy to sporadic and limited US military involvements in Lebanon during the civil war which ended swiftly in 1984 following the deaths of 241 GIs in the US headquarters bombing in Beirut. Two years later, the bombed Libya after accusing it of masterminding the attacks against Americans in Europe. The US also played a major role in the Iraq-Iran war, providing logistical support for Iraq in the years 1980-83 while

[8] Interestingly, the two presidential impeachments of the last four decades involved Richard Nixon whose main offense was not ruining the tapes which presented concrete evidence of his guilt that made any public amnesia impossible. The other incident is of Bill Clinton whose sex scandal involved white (Southern) man's infidelity, and lying to cover it, with a woman in a much lower position in the political ranking who was available and willing to sexually service him. All of this can be read within gender stereotypes of white man's sexual-political dominance over white woman which makes it easier and more readily remembered by the public, thus less excusable even if less damaging (since such a transgression is expected within the stereotype).

selling arms to Iran in the Iran/Contra deal in the years 1983-85. The decade began with the American hostage crisis in Tehran whose news coverage captivated the US public and created what McAlister calls the "cognitive mapping of the Middle East in terms of Islam [that] made non-Arab Iran the new synecdoche for the whole area" (200).

The role Reagan played in heightening the rhetoric of the Cold War is also instrumental in comprehending the public mood, which had been fixated on the view of the self in a polarized structure of power. With the collapse of the Soviet Union as a superpower in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a decade of valorizing Americanism and demonizing Arabs and Muslims was the convenient prelude to the 1990s and the 2000s when Arab leaders and Arab militiamen would replace the Soviets as the 'bad guys.' An understanding of the US popular culture represented and shaped by popular fiction and its political context in relation to the Middle East will show why the first Gulf War seemed as the logical next step.

Review of Related Literature

The emphasis on pre-9/11 periods is partly the premise of Melani McAlister's Epic Encounters, which reads U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East within a larger cultural discourse. She analyzes the importance of the representation of the region in shaping "postwar US nationalism and the contest over the meanings of 'Americanness" (39), arguing that the region and its 'culture' had to be made known to an American public to make it "accessible" and legitimate for colonization (3). Such a representation both created the national perception of the self which McAlister grounds in foreign policies and the Arabs as a danger that needs containment particularly in the 1970s and

1980s. Therefore, literature and mass media transformed the Middle East into a "stage" on which the American national identity and the US colonial interests in the region are played out (3). McAlister suggests that the construction of the Middle East as a U.S. site of colonial interests relied on Orientalist patterns of representation, even as she questions Said's all-encompassing and indistinguishing approach to Orientalism as a homogeneous imperialist movement. "Not all stereotypes," she argues, "are Orientalist; they might be racist, imperialist, and exoticizing without engaging in the particular logic of Orientalism: binary, feminizing, and citational" (12). McAlister's critical stance here works effectively in addressing a specificity for the colonization of the Middle East whose expression and articulation in popular media in the United States take a distinct form from European nineteenth-century Orientalist discourse.

Even though McAlister underscores the discursive nature of Americans' knowledge of the Middle East, she frames her analysis and deconstruction of this knowledge away from the problematic questions of what texts mean "with the implication that there is a hidden or allegorical code to their secret meaning." She, instead, explores "how the texts participate in a field, and then in a set of fields, and thus in a social and political world" (8). McAlister's interest in "participation in a field" shifts emphasis from the intentionality of the producers of the discourse to a "conversation" between cultural products and political discourses brought together by "coincidence" (7). She persuasively situates Middle East politics in the U.S. cultural reproduction of the region as she brings together the two fields, of the cultural and the political, in a "conversation" over national identity performed on a foreign/international theater. Underscoring coincidence as the medium that "brings specific cultural products into

conversation within specific political discourses" allows her to underline the cultural products' independence from their recipients and their producers whose intentions, involvements, and expectations lie outside the parameter of analysis and meaning-production. This dissertation is similarly interested in popular fiction as a cultural product that participates in the field of meaning-making and knowledge-constructing. However, it aims to extend the "conversation" to include those who reproduce cultural knowledge of Arabs and American recipients of this reproduction. Juxtaposition, unlike coincidence, entails an intentional and designed act of implicit production of the co-construction of the Arab and American identities.

McAlister states that we cannot assume that writers were responding to a political need to represent certain races as dangerous and inherently uncivilized. It is hard to know and affirm with certainty what writers and filmmakers intended to 'say' in their reproduction and recycling of Arab stereotypes, but it is not unthinkable to speculate pedagogically and thus reconstruct the readers' and audience's responses and the novelists' awareness of their cultural and political locations with the discourse on the Other. We might not be certain of what the writers' intentions were and the ways in which their readers received their novels and interpreted them. What I intend to examine while well aware of these limitations is the patterns which so-called brand authors such as Uris, Steel, and King created which suggest an awareness of a cultural and a political role within popular culture that simplifies an understanding of political events and conflicts that highbrow literature and high media attempt to complicate.

These writers established a literary career that places them and their works in the center of social and political issues: Uris on informing the public on Middle Eastern

cultures, Steel and King on regulating gender and sexuality. While McAlister relies on coincidence to unpack the intersections of politics and foreign policies, on one hand, and culture and art on the other, I explore juxtaposition as a concept in which these novels can be analyzed in relation to each other without assuming an interrelated intentionality. I will readily presuppose that popular fiction writers are aware of their socio-political impact on their own society, which I will justify by a close and thorough examination of the genre of novel and popular fiction. Their literary and historical development provides enough ground to suggest that the location of novelists falls ideally and naturally in the center of society. Even though King and Steel were likely unaware of the influence of their works on the perception of Arabs, reading their novels in juxtaposition with those that depict a hegemonic understanding of Arab culture as the Other and exotic is a scholarly endeavor that allows for not only the re-creation of the production and reception processes of these novels at the time of their publication but also complicates a common understanding of popular fiction as merely escapist. Confining the understanding of the genre's influence in the accidental gives a paramount importance to critical interpretation of the novels rather than and at the expense of unwrapping their generic production and dynamic reception. The consequence of this approach locks the conversation within a critical and academic circle inaccessible to the reading public, which is constantly receptive to the novels, thus transforming them into cultural products with traceable narrative patterns[9]. Uris and Steel and King to a lesser degree were not

[9] Additionally, excluding the public from the cultural and political process of meaning-making even when this meaning is intended to influence public opinion contributes to an understanding of 'culture' as an abstract and a mere product. McAlister, echoing several writers including Said, writes, "Foreign policy is one of the ways in which nations speak for themselves; it defines not only the boundaries of the nation but also its character, its interests, its allies, and its enemies" (6). However, if foreign policy defines all of this,

writing for an academic elite, but their targeted audience was the readers who lined up in Barnes and Nobles to buy their novels. There is a mutual understanding of the social significance of these novels that is not coincidental.

The intentions of the producers of the discourse on the Other are central in Edward Said's influential works Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism. Said reshapes the understanding of Orientalism from a branch of science and a source of knowledge of the Orient, to an image-distorting and perception-shaping ideological and political tool whose credibility was not based on the authenticity of representation as much as the credentials of the Orientalists who came to form the only source of knowledge of the Orient by effectively silencing the Orientals. Not only did European discourse mold an imperialism-friendly representation and an understanding of a fictionalized Orient but also an understanding of the self in a dialectical relationship with the Other. Said highlights a direct link between Orientalists and politicians as the latter relied on the discursive production of Orientalism to advocate their colonial conquests as merely humanitarian and moral missions.

Even though Said exposes the fictitiousness of Orientalists' representation, his study mainly focuses on historians, anthropologists, and minimally on highbrow novelists.

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how do "nations speak for themselves"? The majority of attempts to unpack the Arab stereotype, in their earnest and often brilliant methodology, tend to emphasize discourse and media's role as imperative in the creation of the stereotype and its colonialist objectives at the expense of the agency of the recipients of the discourse. The public who are at the receiving end of the reproduction of the cultural products that intersect with political and imperialist interests remain passive as unidentifiable masses whose desires and own cultural and political alliances remain unacknowledged and rendered irrelevant as if the mere existence of the cultural products that make the Middle East colonizable is proof of their influence. Thus, postcolonial theorists overwhelmingly emphasize highbrow literature as significant discursive sites of colonialism and decolonization, which maintains the discussion among writers, critics, and theorists over the meaning of literatures and their cultural and political location. McAlister turns to popular culture, however, with the same approach that gives cultural products paramount significance as if they were 'launched' into a vacuum.

The role of popular fiction remains largely absent in the production of public perception of the geographically remote but ideologically present Other. Like Epic Encounters, Orientalism works on the assumption that the audience of Orientalist discourse were eager recipients of rather than willing participants in the production of the Arab or Oriental Other. This explains why Said's two works are exclusively concerned with reconstructing a partnership between colonial politicians and Orientalist institutions that relegate the knowledge of the Other to a mere reproduction rather than a depiction. However, they show little interest in exploring the correspondence between the imaginary creation of the Orient with the imaginative faculty of the western public that could only conceive the Other in fantastical terms. Said effectively elucidates the mythical belief that the Orient can only be made accessible to western sensibilities by Orientalists who translate its mysteries into a coherent and scientific discourse. The need; however, for Orientalists is based on the popular belief in this inaccessibility and the unfamiliarity of the Orient. Therefore, while McAlister deems authors' intentions irrelevant to the study of the U.S. construction of the Arab Other, Said absents the audience in the production of the knowledge of the self.

While Said focuses exclusively on canonical works, other writers have studied the representation of Arabs in twentieth century popular fiction; however, the majority of them have merely compiled a list of stereotypical images without examining the construction of the stereotype. Therefore, works such as Gregory Orfalea's "The Arab in Post World War II Novel" and Terry Janice's Mistaken Identity remain a valuable bibliographical source but, as Toine Van Teeffelen rightly notes, the current analysis of the discourse on the region do not identify the Arab as an Other in a binary perception

with the American self. In “Race and Metaphor,” Van Teeffelen complicates the one-dimensional ‘listing approach’ by acknowledging that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a stage on which several clashes of forces come into play, one of which is a western/nonwestern dichotomy. He argues that Arabs’ sexual ‘deviancy’ and filial breakdown, depicted in these novels reflect a political need to diminish the viability of a Palestinian nationhood. He contrasts that with the representation of Jewish families in pre-1948 Palestine and in Israel, which resemble American families, thus creating a national bond that garners public support for one side over the other. He recognizes the novel as an effective medium to construct social reality through metaphorical production in which individual stories come to represent a society or a whole nation. My dissertation expands his argument, which serves as a framework for deconstructing Arab stereotypes. While he sees the metaphorical representation of Arab reality as a process in which popular fiction generated support for Israel at the expense of Arabs, I will examine this depiction of Arabs as the Other as a continuation of the genre’s construction of a homogeneous and essentialized collective American self.

Ultimately, I see my intervention in introducing juxtaposition as a concept through which meanings can be made without being articulated and pronounced and associations are left to their recipients’ imagination to be reconstructed. By examining both bestsellers that popularize certain perceptions of the American self and society (Steel and King), and others that defamiliarize Arabs and their values (The Haj, The Fifth Horseman), I propose an approach to the construction of the Arab stereotype that allows meanings more fluidity as a three-way process. It acknowledges the agency and contribution of writers, readers, critics, and popular fiction as cultural and political

artifacts. Writers and scholars have to date examined only fiction that directly represents Arabs and the Middle East and North Africa without detailing their pertinence to bestsellers depicting American values. My intention is not to impose meaning on the novels of King or Steel but rather critically read them next to novels "about" the Middle East and Arabs as people did in the 1980s.

My second contribution is involving the readers in the debate over the construction of binarism. Often readers, whether of highbrow or formulaic literature, are relegated to mere recipients of the literary product unless they are literary critics. Their influence on literary production is considered minimal, thus their influence on the production and popularization of stereotypes and the polarity of us and them is understated. I chose to focus on bestsellers as the genre and medium of literary production in which readers' response and reception trends are most traceable. My intention is to reevaluate the public participation in the production of the stereotypical representation of Arabs in literature and the exclusive understanding of their values and culture only in opposition to American values and way of life. My intention of raising this question is not to support a dichotomous view on the influence of writing-reading on each other; in fact, I believe that there is no need to separate this influence, but rather to counter-balance a recent tendency that treats the public as a passive body of recipients who are unresistingly spoon-fed misconceptions and stereotypes. The constant defense of Americans' lack of action against their government foreign policies has been based on the argument that the majority of the population is uninformed or ill-informed and are manipulated by mass media and popular fiction. My contention is that this alleged passivity not only perpetuates itself (quite a catch-22 situation in which people are

passive because they do not know and they do not know because they are passive) but also eliminates any individual or collective accountability. Failing to assign responsibility for the popularity of novels that perpetuate stereotype on the readers who have made them immensely popular is a recipe for not only non-action but also avoidance of addressing the root causes of the problem.

Chapter division

In chapter 1, "The Novel as Colonial: Popularizing the Binary," I examine the origin and rise of the novel as a genre located firmly in its social and historical context. Relying on a body of theoretical work on the generic structure of the novel, I argue that the novel as a socially normative literary instrument is integral to expanding western colonial conquests. The transition to discussing popular fiction as "degraded" literature (Wald) emphasizes the often neglected role of readers' participation of popularizing the novel as a genre and the formulaic as a subgenre and their role in maintaining stereotypes and creating social comfort zones. In chapter 2, "Popular Verses: The Satanic Verses, an Unlikely Bestseller," I test these propositions by exploring Rushdie's novel as an example of a literary text that troubles the division between high and lowbrow fiction but is still read within a binary perception of reality. I read the unlikely popularity of The Satanic Verses as a possibility of approaching reception as a dynamic process in constant engagement with the generic nature of texts and the political and social contexts of both texts and reading. In chapter 3, "Nation as Family: Arab family and American Family Juxtaposed," I focus on the implication of the construction of the family as a microcosm of the nation in the way it naturalizes social and racial hierarchies. I also introduce the

concept of juxtaposition and discuss its pertinence in constructing the traditional American family ideals as a stable category. Chapter 4, “Queering the Arabs” examines the ways in which the representation of American sexuality in bestsellers as monolithically heteronormative imposes an associative understanding of Arab sexuality and polygamy with homosexuality and same-sex couplehood and relationships. It excludes both Arab sexuality and homosexuality and deems them as sexual ‘deviance.’ I also argue that queer theories and homosexual visibility destabilize gender as a natural marker of difference and a site of exclusion of the Arab Other. I included an appendix that provides additional information on the bestsellers selected for this research such as the number of weeks they had been on bestseller lists and contemporary reviews. I also historicize their reception.

Chapter 1

The Novel as Colonial: Popularizing the Binary

While still at the pre-writing stage of my research, I was searching for contemporary reviews of Leon Uris' The Haj, a bestseller published in 1984 which depicted the Arab family as a site of physical and sexual violence, incest, and gender inequality. One of my searches in the database of U.S. newspapers archives returned with an unexpected story, an article published in the New York Times in 1985 titled "What Vacationing Executives are Reading," in which top U.S. executives were asked to list some of the books they were reading in the summer. I anticipated that one of them chose to read The Haj, which would explain why the article came up during my search. Scrolling down and looking for that mystery reader, I found out it was none other than

Donald H. Rumsfeld who was then the president and chief executive of G.D. Searle & Co. and who eighteen years later as the U.S. Defense Secretary would be the main architect of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Along with The Haj, How Democracies Perish by Jean-Francois Revel, Paul Johnson's Modern Times, and Reflections of a Neo-Conservative by Irvin Kristol were among the books Rumsfeld chose to read. What interested me most about the finding is that it was unexpected and unintentional. I was not trying to search for influential readers of this novel to establish a connection between the Arab stereotype in popular fiction and American imperialist interests in the Middle East, even though the relevance of the representation of Arabs and Muslims in the 1980s to the current blatant racial profiling is one of the intended conclusions of this dissertation.[10] of Arabs and the invasion of Iraq which are usually blamed on so-called 9/11. I admit, however, that my initial response was 'Eureka!' as if the premise of my thesis hinges on finding a tangible link between popular fiction and American policymaking. Though relevant, this is not the thesis of this dissertation. It is not new knowledge that the link between the two exists. Several writers have unpacked the pivotal role played by popular culture in producing the Arab stereotype that justifies American colonialist policies in the Arab and Muslim regions. Jack Shaheen's unveiling of the sheer abundance and frequency of the Arab stereotype in American TV, Hollywood movies, comic books, documentaries, and fiction is astounding. Other writers applied Edward Said's reconceptualization of European Orientalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to American imperialism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries,

[10] I am not arguing that racial profiling and Arab discrimination are a twentieth century phenomenon. However, it is rather the overt nature and public display of the discrimination that is distinctive of the 2000s.

even when some modified that model to inject a degree of distinction and exceptionalism to the American imperialist project (McAlister).

My interest in Rumsfeld, however, is not as a policymaker or a politician, capitalizing on the Arab stereotype to justify the invasion of an Arab country. It is rather Rumsfeld the reader who is of a greater interest to this dissertation. What kind of knowledge has The Haj imparted to him about the Middle East? For one, it is sought knowledge since the controversial nature of the novel was well known at the time of its publication and when Rumsfeld was reading it. The novel's publisher, Doubleday, did not shy away from the controversy, putting ads in The New York Times with the headline: "Why has Leon Uris bestselling return to the land of 'Exodus' aroused a passionate response in readers and reviewers? The ad further asked, "Should a novelist be impartial?" before quoting The Washington Post's description of the novel as "social journalism." Other reviewers disagreed, panning the novel as viciously racist, which made it almost unreadable (Said, "An Ideology of Difference" 55), unapologetically biased (Zureik, Broyard), and a work of historical fiction that tried to rewrite history as it claimed to historicize the Palestinian 'failure' to realize statehood (Broyard). Even the praise The Washington Post bestowed on the novel admitted that the The Haj was a "fat slur" on Arabs and "polemic" in its presentation of the events leading to the creation of Israel in 1948 (Schott 3). Both the novel and The Washington Post's praise offended the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations whose co-founder wrote to The Post**,** asking whether the newspaper's reaction would have been that mild, had the "fat slur" been made against other minorities such as Jews. Anticipating while simultaneously capitalizing on the outrage over the novel's stereotype, Doubleday's ad hid the writer's

bias under his Jewishness, which was stereotyped as evocative of persecution and suffering as if they were the singular meanings of the Jewish experience. The ad proposed that being a Jew allowed Uris to take sides while still holding claims over the truth ("I claim no impartiality . . . but what I've written is the truth," the ad quoted him). This truth claiming rather than the 'slur' is what provoked most of the offended reactions to the novel, indicated by The Washington Post's review which Doubleday quoted:

> Leon Uris and James Michener, R.F. Delderfield and James Clavell and other novelists with mass audiences may tell us relatively little about our inner weather, but they report on storms and setting suns outside. They read the environment we must function in. Occasionally they replicate our social structures. They sift the history that brought us to the present. They give us the briefing papers necessary to convert news stories into human stories. All of which serve our emotional need to make order out of confusion, to explain the inexplicable, to simplify the complex and to find solutions to conundrums. Curiosity got us out of the jungle. Without dreams we'll return. (Schott 2)

The Haj, thus restructures the "environment" we live in (reality) in a manner that simplifies its confusion. Its perceived ability to simplify rather than fictionalize reality lies at the heart of the uproar over the novel. This is the conclusion that Elizabeth Long makes after observing a book club discussion of the book which she attended in 1988. The readers "wondered about [Uris'] bias only in relation to his value judgments. They never questioned that Palestinian Arabs were as Uris described them, only whether he judged their rejection of Western ideas of progress, for example, too harshly" (605).

Stereotypes in a popular medium like bestsellers are most successful when they build on and magnify cultural myths. The Haj, thus, was successful in being overtly and unashamedly biased and racist because it built on popular myths in the United States about Arabs' sexuality, unmodernity and anti-modernity, and exoticism. For instance, the novel's consistent representation of male sexuality as an "assault" (165) even when the sexual encounter is consensual narrativizes a widely held belief that sex in the Arab culture is a medium in which male dominance is exercised over women. Another common belief represented in the United States as a matter of fact is Arabs' hatred of Jews which Uris utilizes well in the novel to depoliticize the genesis of the Arab-Israeli conflict from one over land to a cultural clash fueled by an Islam the novel represents as resolutely hostile to the other. The emphasis on the exclusively religious and cultural nature of the conflict also qualifies Uris as a Jewish and a Zionist writer to represent a one-sided account of the historical events that led to the pivotal 1948 war as the beginning of the Israeli state and the end of Palestinian statehood[11].

There was no other way for The Haj to have succeeded except by outrageously recycling these long-held Arab stereotypes, for a stereotype intrinsically relies on repetition and simplification. Stereotypes are an admittedly simplistic and an exaggerated view of truth, nonetheless seen as truth (Bhabha 107). Hollywood movies might

[11] The Haj was published 26 years after Uris' massively popular Exodus (1958) which brought the 'birth of Israel' into American public awareness as a romantic tale. Described by some reviewers as a sequel to Exodus, The Haj comes in a decade that saw the political rise of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as an autonomous nationalist movement outside collective Arab military and political action. If Exodus is a historical retelling of the story of the emergence of Israeli nationalism and political realization of Zionism in response to the Arab military threat, The Haj can be read as a narrative on the impossibility of Palestinian nationhood that can only produce disruptive and dangerous nationalism. Published ten years after PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's speech at the United Nations and two years before he unilaterally declared Palestinian independence, the novel addresses Palestinian nationalism and statehood as unrealizable because it is only realizable as an ideological threat to the west and Arabs themselves.

exaggerate the Arab threat to American stability by casting Arabs as terrorists and bombers**;** however, they correspond to as they participate in the public belief that the Arab terrorist stereotype is based on a simpler truth of the inherent violence among Arabs and against the 'infidels[12].' Thus, Doubleday celebrated Uris' absence of impartiality rather than refuted it because it understood that through popular stereotypes the novel was marketable[13]. This is the point which brings us back to Rumsfeld the reader and the politician. Considering the Pentagon's disastrous planning in 2003 of the post-invasion of Iraq, which left the United States under-prepared, one has to wonder whether novels such as Tha Haj were only an instrument of discursive and ideological influence to justify American colonialism or were also used as a source of information on Arab 'culture' for politicians like Rumsfeld. Taking that novel as an exaggerated representation of reality—nonetheless a reality—might explain the Defense Department's anticipation of little resistance from Iraqis to western 'liberation,' for the Arabs in The Haj are inherently unable to self-govern, "do not know how to participate in a community," and cannot change. The novel was most effective in narrativizing popular myths of Arabs' unredeemable nationalist and national failures and their natural tendency to be governed rather than govern.

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[12] The image of the infidel is also a western creation, as it falsely claims that Muslims view all non-Muslims as nonbelievers when in Koranic texts and in common Muslim practice, Christians and Jews are seen as part of monotheism. Thus, Islam permits Muslims to marry Christians or Jews, forge treaties with them, and trust them enough to 'break bread' with them, which all acknowledges the similarities between the traditions and customs of the followers of the three religions. The image of the Muslim who is at a holy war against Christians and Jews and who rapes pregnant Jewish women and brutally kill them, as depicted in The Haj, are the creation of the western imagination which is not supported by actual history of Christian/Jewsih-Muslim relations.

[13] John Le Carre's The Little Drummer Girl's controversy, on the other hand, was met with less enthusiasm. The novel's stereotype was subtle and its storytelling of the Arab-Israeli conflict presented itself as impartial. It arguably mimics the complexity of the conflict and its multisidedness rather than simplifies it as a story of heroes and villains.

Interestingly, another book whose themes are quite similar to those of The Haj was indirectly connected to Rumsfeld. Reports surfaced in 2004 that Raphael Patai's controversial The Arab Mind (1972) was heavily used and relied upon by the U.S. military in preparing for the invasion of Iraq (it was reprinted in 2002 with a forward by Colonel De Atkine, who revealed that the book was a must-read for his military personnel students following the 2001 attacks). Patai's book, the nonfiction equivalent of The Haj, was described as "the bible of [neoconservatives] on Arab behavior" and was widely read by "pro-war Washington conservatives" in the months leading to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Hersh 6)[14]. Of interest to the military was Patai's chapter on Arab sex and sexuality, which depicted sex as a taboo whose public display provoked great humiliation for Arabs. Such knowledge, the report claims, explained the sexual nature of the torture of Iraqis in the Abu Ghreib prison scandal in 2004[15]. These themes are consistent with depictions in The Haj in which Arab men use sex as a weapon against each other and against Jews. Arab women in the novel who are raped as part of tribal revenge appear to be more afraid of their husbands' reaction to their 'dishonor,' thus they refrain from resisting their rapists for fear of leaving any visible bruises that they cannot hide (231-2).

The significance of the The Arab Mind reference here is to enable us to analyze Rumsfeld's reading selection of The Haj in 1985 within a wider context of meaning-construction of a homogeneous Arab culture and mentality. It creates a pattern that allows

[14] For details on the use of The Arab Mind in the U.S. military and by U.S. military personnel, see Emram Qureshi's "Misreading 'The Arab Mind': The Dubious Guidebook to Middle East Culture that's on the Pentagon's Reading List," Norvell B. De Atkine's "The Arab Mind Revisited," and Brian Whitaker's "Its Best Use is as a Doorstop."

[15] For a discussion of the use of photography in the sexual torture of the Abu Ghreib prisoners, see Razack.

us to see through the randomness of the selection and speculate over the intentionality of the readers in their reading choices and the authors in writing these texts (since Uris and Patai have similar backgrounds as Zionist Jewish writers of East European descent). I use Rumsfeld the reader as an example of the way in which reading and literary reception can be reconstructed within a political and a historical context. Such an approach views literary production, reception, reproduction, and reinterpretation as a dynamic process in which none of the participants loses its agency. I argue that popular fiction is a literary and cultural product of the interaction between the intentionality of the author, readers, critics, and publishers. Collaboratively (whether intentionally/consciously or not) they produce knowledge of the American self and the Arab Other without reducing readers to mere passive recipients, bestsellers to pure entertainment, or authors to vague figures whose intentions are indiscernible.

In this chapter, I examine genre as "a social contract between a writer and a specific public" (Jameson 106), situating the discussion in the rise of the novel within an intellectual realization of its definability as a social instrument. I question the presumed arbitrary nature of the academic division between the literary and the popular, locating it within the aforementioned understanding of the social power of the novel. I also focus on the readers as creators of the genre of popular fiction and the implication of this assumption on the production and reproduction of the Arab stereotype. Chapter 1 works as a prelude to chapter 2 which focuses on the construction of Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses as a bestseller. The theoretical discussion in this chapter elucidates the social and historical production of the controversy dubbed as The Rushdie Affair with the

active involvement of its authors, readers in both the United States and Muslim countries, and the American media.

What's in a genre: Should we read King and Steel's work as colonial?

To answer this question, one should turn it on its head and rather ask, why can't we read them as colonial literature? They are often novels we read on planes, trains, and in bed but not in classrooms or for a GRE test, or in literary anthologies. The implication of this exclusion is the way popular fiction is defined as lacking literary and aesthetic value. Thus, its definition as lowbrow is intertwined with the way highbrow literature is defined. The implausibility of reading Steel and King in a colonial context is suggestive of a larger contention over the ways in which genres are defined. Rather than thinking of the high and low divide here as arbitrary, I suggest that behind it lies an awareness of the novel's social power that needs to be institutionalized (through the canon) in order to be managed. The novel as a genre has been since its canonization a political and social instrument that informed as it moralized. The authority to decide what a novel is and how its literariness is determined is one that is also exercised over the representation of reality and the norms.

In Culture and Imperialism (1993), Edward Said criticizes the absence of colonial contextualization of the study of the novel as a new genre. Novels with imperialist themes, such as Kipling's Kim or Defoe's The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe are open to postcolonial theory; however, theoreticians and practitioners absent this contextualization from their own study of the genre. The novel as a generic construct is intertwined with the imperialism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the age from

which it emerged into literary criticism. Said argues that the novel's pivotal role was in the "consolidation of authority" which is indispensable for colonial discourse (92). The way the novel maps out social space in which hierarchies are maintained whether at 'home' or 'abroad' makes it a convenient normative instrument. The novelty of the novel as a new genre relied on its contemporariness and the promise of realistic depictions. The tendency by several genre theorists to focus the distinctive features of the novel on its awareness of its social function and its location in its contemporary moment has opened the debate to epistemological considerations over the representation of truth and history. In this context, defining what constituted a novel has inevitably resulted in an endeavor to monopolize the perception of reality. The exclusion of novels that do not conform to the academic formula of realism is fundamentally political.

Thus, when genre historians, such as Ian Watt chose to date the rise of the novel back to Richardson, Defoe, and Fielding, excluding romance and formulaic novels that preceded them and were popular among contemporary readers, the determining factors for these selections were not stylistic but rather social and political. Defoe and Richardson's novels represented a reality that conformed to the enlightenment principles of their age while the contribution of formulaic fiction to the shaping of the genre was marginalized if not excluded from the discussion. Therefore, if we are to understand the origin of the division between the popular and the literary and the significance of this separation which goes beyond academic snobbery, we should examine closely theoretical attempts to define the novel as a predominantly realist genre.

Marthe Robert attributes what he calls the novel's limitless boundaries to the difficulties in distinguishing it from other genres. Because of the "anarchy" of the novel

and its "natural lack of organization," genre theorists use the novel's subject matter--the world depicted in the novels--as a way by which they subcategorize it. Robert notes that unlike older genres, which are categorized stylistically such as epic, drama, and poetry, novels in bookstores are often shelved according to that relationship with reality: science fiction, historical novels, and romance[16]. Therefore, since its inception, the novel's social location—what it had to say about the world—has defined it as a work of literature, making it inseparable from the political moment from which it emerged and it was created to communicate.

Robert argues that because of the generic irregularity of the novel and the reliance on its content to define it, many of the novel assessors, such as Voltaire, took a moralizing tone in evaluating the greatness of a novel. Because of its close relationship with reality, this moralizing assessment attempted to locate the novel in relation to (and its accurate depiction of) History, Truth, and Ethics. What constituted a good novel is its truthful recreation of history, its society and the moralizing message of its story. Consequently, the novel is transformed from a work of fiction to what Robert calls "a medium for progress" and an "immensely efficient instrument, which in the hands of a conscientious novelist . . . brings the sinner back to the fold, comforts the needy and highlights the horrors of individual and social injustices." In short, the novel "has a mission." And while this moralizing power is present in some other genres (though not necessarily in all as Fredric Jameson excludes tragedy, for instance, from the good vs.

[16] However, Robert does not distinguish between literary and popular fiction. For instance, Borders Bookstore shelves Stephen King novels under 'horror' section while Edgar Allan Poe's works can be found simply under 'literature/fiction.' Jane Eyre is also placed in the literature/fiction section while Danielle Steel novels are shelved under 'romance.' Harry Potter is subcategorized as kids, independent reader, and science fiction while the canonized—though not less popular—Peter Pan and Wizard of Oz are shelved under fiction/literature.

bad dialectic which defines the novel and particularly the romance), only in the novel it justifies and defines its rise as a genre.

This is the premise of Ian Watt's classic yet controversial The Rise of the Novel. He establishes the rise of the genre based on distinct characteristics which distinguished it from what had been read and written. The novel individualizes its characters, particularizes its setting, and historicizes its story. Its groundbreaking generic feature is its ability and willingness to relinquish classic modes long maintained by older genres such as classical drama, epics, and poetry, which tended to allegorize its characters and stories, relying heavily on symbolism and the universality of its themes. Hamlet might be a Danish royalty, but only as a son torn by familial allegiances and between intellectuality and revenge does he attain significance and relevance to Shakespeare's contemporary audiences as well as readers across the ages. Robinson Crusoe, on the other hand, is distinctly British and particularly European. His date of birth is known, his name is common and contemporary, and his national and cultural distinctions heighten his alienation from the foreign lands on which he arrives. Watt characterizes the uniqueness and the popularity of the novel as a new genre by its ability to intricately deal with the reality it tries to imitate. In its stylistic break from 'older' genres of drama, epic, and narrative poetry, the novel rejects the universal which Watt argues classical genres have maintained. The discovery of truth in the novel is an individualistic act undertaken by characters the genre distinctly individualizes, inhabiting a world which is localized, in a narrative that is historicized. The characters, therefore, are made familiar by their individualized representation as they live in a world that is knowable and a period that is locatable on a linear time. While the epic and classical drama universalize their themes,

relying on myth and legends or an ahistorical dramatization in which plots are not datable, the novel tells a story which is familiar to its readers not as a legend or a myth but as a narrative of their own worlds or of contemporary events. Thus the novel came to challenge "this literary traditionalism," giving primacy to individual truths and experiences which is the point of its originality, definability, and popularity as a genre.

Even though the novel, according to Watt, underlines individual truth, it does not imply that it individualizes truth itself. This is the point Jose Ortega y Gasset emphasizes in Meditation on Quixote. He suggests that the novel's generic achievement is in concretizing what "we already know in abstract" while the epic, as representative of classical genres, maintains the abstraction of existence (a point Georg Lukacs stresses in his contrast between the two genres). The novel succeeds when "we close the book [and] say: 'Adulterous women in the provinces are actually like this; and these rural assemblies are really rural assemblies" (227). Therefore, what is underlined in the novel's empirical accomplishment is not only its truthful depiction of reality but also its ability to correspond to our abstract knowledge. The popularity of the novel lies in constructing a narrative that resembles our worlds and creating the familiarity we feel as we read each page. This familiarity is no coincidence: "If we examine more closely our ordinary notion of reality, perhaps we should find that we do not consider real what actually happens but a certain manner of happening that is familiar to us" (280). Reality, therefore, is familiarity.

The implication of this understanding of reality is that it renders the 'exotic' not only unfamiliar but also unreal. This is the realization upon which the novel emerged: it is not a narrative, Ortega Y Gasset suggests, but a descriptive work. It describes what we

already know. Consequently, the individualization of the novel's characters, which Watt underlines, is not a process in which truth is relativized because these characters are "typical," "nonpoetic," and most importantly "lifelike," and "from the street" (227). Thus, the individualization of the novel's characters is a process by which a fictional character is made familiar in order to represent us, and the truths it concludes from its experiences and adventures are meant to reflect our own as readers. Consequently, the realism of the novel is not attributed to a faithful depiction of reality but its description of reality the way the reading public sees it.

Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg in The Nature of Narrative also focus on the novel's relation with reality and history in examining its generic emergence. Unlike the epic, the novel, they argue, is truthful to an "actual past rather than to a traditional version of the past." It replaces an "allegiance to *mythos*" with an "allegiance to reality" whether as empirical novels ("truth to fact") or fictional novels ("truth to sensation and environment"). This is a similar theme in Bakhtin's "Epic and Novel," in which he sees the novel's reconceptualization of time as indicative not only of its generic nature but also a contemporary desire by readers to see literature reflecting a datable past and a historical and particular present. It is no coincidence that many early novels in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were serialized, as authors and publishers were aware of its appeal to the reading public which constituted its main audience. The serialization of novels such as Dickens' Great Expectation also involved the audience in the process of production in which readers' responses were immediate and tangible (by purchasing the magazines that published the novel's installments and by participating in the debate over the novel). The public involvement in creating literary patterns which was

not accessible to them in classic literary forms motivated what Bakhtin calls the novelization of “ancient literature” such as poetry and drama. The mythical hero, the ahistorical present and the “absolute” past are replaced with contemporary characters, an “openended” present and a datable past. This novelization is a point in which the novel dominates other genres rather than be one among others as it “inserts [into them] an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality (the openended present)”. The dominance of openendedness is what Bakhtin characterizes as the novel’s distinct feature. All novels, thus, are openended because their continuance extends to the reality they emerge from and into. The endings of novels occur in their contemporary reality whereas in ancient literature, all happens in the past sealed by a reliance on a mythology of gods and legends. Their past is untouchable and impenetrable thus absolute. Bakhtin concludes that this prominence of the present distinguishes the novel from other genres which rely on memory and “the tradition of the past,” as the novel is “determined by experience, knowledge and practice . . . when the novel becomes the dominant genre, epistemology becomes the dominant discourse” (76).

The sociopolitical nature of not only the novel’s narrativization of reality but also its generic form (that is derived from its social context rather than aesthetic criteria) and literary history placed exceptional emphasis on epistemology and pursuit of so-called knowledge as key to the genre’s development. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the rise of the novel as a genre took place in the eighteenth century dominated by the age of

reason and Enlightenment ideals[17]. The control over the reproduction of reality is the underlying force in defining the novel. What Michael McKeon critiques in Watt's canonical work is the absence of the political and historical context in his discussion of the rise of the novel. McKeon attempts to trouble what he describes as the social and political stability on which Watt bases his study of the circumstances leading to the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century. He points to the instability of the questions of truth. Novelists and genre theorists have been in disagreement over the epistemological question of "how to tell the truth in narrative," which McKeon labels as a "generic category" (385).

A central point in the debate over truth is the use of romance as an anti-truth genre and as a departure point when they defined the novel. The romance was seen by a movement McKeon calls naïve empiricism as the opposite of truth and history. Novelists claimed the value of their work by distinguishing them from the romance, thus laying a claim to both truth (which explains Defoe's insistence that Robinson Crusoe was not fiction) and historicity which is significant to the novelists' "assertion that what one is describing really happened" (386). The romance/novel divide created the perception that what occurred in the novel is real, thus the depiction of the Africans in Robinson Crusoe as either slaves or cannibals is truthful. McKeon suggests that Watt's intentional neglect of the romance when historicizing the rise of the novel created a sense of stability and

[17] 'Rise' here might be a misleading word since novel forms did predate Defoe and Richardson. Historicizing the rise of the novel as originating from the eighteenth century insists on the western tradition and heritage of the genre and recognizes it within the academic definitions. However, this is consistent with the argument of the dissertation that the development of the novel as a genre within western literary history is a site of cultural and colonial contestation, which attempts to control an influential 'new' genre by redefining it within terms that serve authoritative establishments (university, government) in western tradition. This is the premise of Said's Culture and Imperialism, identifying the colonial construction of the novel as passed on to us by high theory and western historicity.

unanimity regarding the definition of the genre and its political and intellectual context. McKeon suggests that the development of the novel is reflective of the ways in which the construction of genres indicates a social and political struggle over the perception and presentation of reality. Significantly, he conduces that the novel does not only epitomize a dialectical contest over representation of reality but also "encapsulates the dialectical nature of historical process itself of a critical moment in the emergence of the modern world" (396).

John J. Richetti also underlines Watt's exclusion of romance and formulaic fiction as an indication of a tendency to read the history of the genre as "the triumph of an enlightened realism over reactionary romance, the development or evolution of a superior literary instrument" (2). In Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700-1739, Richetti attempts to recover fiction written before the three novelists in order to elucidate "values which the eighteenth century reading public attached to fiction" (9). It is an endeavor not unlike the one that this dissertation attempts but in a different historical period. He views fiction as a "cultural artifact" (8) and "an event in the development of mass culture" (9) when analyzed with the understanding that "every novel . . . is written with an audience in mind" (7). Due to the particularity of the novel, as argued in principle by Watt, "the writer of fiction, then, exists in a relation to a body of generally accepted popular assumptions and attitudes, popular in that they are held, or he assumes that they are, by most of his audience" (12). Even though the generic premise of both Watt and Richetti's works are similar (the sociality of the novel), they differ in their understanding of how its social power functions.

While Watt emphasizes the novelists' recreation of reality as immediately experienced and accessed by contemporary readers, Richetti approaches fiction writing as a social process that occurs in society rather than delivered to society. Raymond Williams makes the same argument as Richetti when he criticizes attempts to examine the relation between society and literature as if the two are separate and distinct entities:

> When people then asked questions about relation of literature to society, literature to psychology or biology, or literature to human nature, they looked in practice for the components within this object which could be recognized as pre-existing. They looked for social, political and economic features, they looked at elements in this man's life, they looked for archetypes and myths in a collective psychology, or they looked for permanent elements in a permanent human nature. In other words, the practice of writing was being treated as an object. ("Literature in Society" 29)

Williams identifies several shortcomings to this approach. First, it is a form of reduction of "the *active* nature of all literary production" (29). It reduces literature to an object in order to simplify and contain its interpretations in a singular mode. Consequently, it neglects the "process of making . . . in favor of the more negotiable activity of responding to an object" (31). By objectifying literature, this approach emphasizes response but only in a narrow perspective that renders the writer-reader dynamics "subsidiary, incidental, almost indifferent" (29). The question of literature *and* society fixates both and posits their isolation. Instead, Williams calls for a different approach that views literature *in* society rather than being about society, discarding the supposition of the preexistence of

society and the reduction of society to a mere “background” to literature in what appears to be an implicit critique of realism (24-5).

Williams, thus, challenges a traditional understanding of society and culture which dictates this reductive relationship. Classical literary modes of thoughts often operate on what Williams calls a “residual culture” that consists of past experiences and values. Instead, he identifies two other forms of culture (of equally temporal nature): an emergent culture of future experiences and a more relevant and dominant form which he names “corporate culture.” Corporate culture is a “lived” culture that consists of contemporary meanings and values which seem “natural, real, expressing the sense of what it is at that time to be human” (33). Recognizing the centrality of the corporate culture in forming values and meanings underlines the changeability of the process of producing and making meanings. It liberates static critical thinking which presumes the immovability of culture and society when it relies solely on residual culture. Such an approach Williams critiques as “archaeological,” as it concerns itself with unearthing original meanings without fathoming the inherent nature of cultural and literary production that is active and constantly evolving (35). Critical activity, therefore, remains a selective tradition but instead of electing to emphasize residual culture and what Bakhtin calls “sealed past,” it reads works “through the meanings and values of the contemporary corporate culture.” Consequently, what transpires is a continuous process of interpretations and reinterpretations (since it is intertwined with a similarly changing and evolving corporate and contemporary culture) that negates the insistence on original meanings and values.

Aware of the implications of a restrictive role of readers and audience beyond the common body of culture they form,[18] Williams introduces the concept of structure of feelings. He defines it as "pre-emerged" experiences which are felt by the public but are not articulated yet. The feelings are "isolated," "individual" and "private." They are "felt by members of society but not confessed," thus has no form (37). New literature—or literature that the public responds to as new—is what is felt but has not been articulated yet. The structure of feelings adds an element of anticipation to the process of literary production. It maintains literature *in* society which is the source and the target of emerging literature. The structure of feelings also troubles an understanding of the public as merely receptive to literary or political discourse. What Williams suggests underscores a form of resonance as the key to the success of new discursive terminologies. For instance, when former US President George W. Bush declared that people were either 'with us or with the terrorists,' it was the most defining moment of his two-term presidency and America under his administration. It paved the way for policies and actions, which could have been inconceivable before, such as indefinite incarceration of political prisoners, admitted torture, and a unilateral large-scale military action that resulted in the occupation of a remote country. Is that moment's immeasurable impact due to its novelty as a political stance that abandons any form of diplomacy or its articulation of "apprehended" feelings that predate the attacks of September 11, 2001 and has found an articulation within the Bush doctrine? It can be argued that Bush's success, evident in his election and reelection and political survival, relied on his ability to

[18] However, Williams does address the issue of "collective modes" and "individual projects" and the pertinence of the latter to the formation of the former (35-6). I select to omit this discussion from this chapter due to scope considerations.

comprehend and read the structure of feelings of his contemporary moment and articulate it while withstanding ridicule.

The different theoretical views on the rise of the novel and its generic distinctions indicate an understanding of the significance of the sociopolitical role of the genre. It does not mean that the awareness of the social impact of literature did not exist before the canonization of the novel as a genre, but the contemporary nature of the novel made it more overt and pertinent to what Said calls its social space. More than other genres, the novel has based its generic uniqueness on the social space which is central to its popularity among readers and the way academic institutions came to define it. The debate, therefore, over what constitutes a novel is rather political and ideological, as it centers on regulating and controlling empirical knowledge. Consequently, theorists, such as Watt and Northrop Frye excluded romance and formulaic literature from the discussion of the historical emergence of the novel and its generic structure.

Too popular for its own good: Is Popular fiction not serious enough?

It is important to recognize from the outset that the concept of popular fiction is not stable. What is considered popular/lowbrow in one historical period can become highbrow and 'art' in another (Radford 4). What is permanent, however, is the dichotomic perception of literature as high/low or art/popular. The body of theoretical work on popular fiction almost unanimously regards the condescending attitude by academic institutions and elites as the genre's most defining characteristic. Leslie A. Fiedler sums up attempts to define the genre as one of exclusion in which popular fiction is "ghettoized" from classrooms. His view mirrors those by others which suggest that

popular fiction is often represented as the “opposite” of literature (Gelder), the “other of dominant literary culture” (Pawling 21), and the opposite of modern fiction (Jameson). What unites these definitions is the reliance on constructing an oppositional relation between the popular and the literary determined by the former’s lack of aesthetic values.

Since western literary criticism’s recognition of the novel as a genre is aware of its influential epistemological role, the division between high and lowbrow literature can be also viewed as an attempt to minimize the public or what Benjamin calls the masses from exerting influence over the way reality is represented and interpreted. Relegating the formulaic to mere leisurely escapist reading and the margins of literary debate over the sociality of fiction also excludes the readers from actively contributing to the production of discursive and textual reality. If negation (not being literary) and public recognition, as Bourdieu argues, are what define popular fiction, then the definition of the literary and the location of readers in interpreting and producing fiction are as central in the discussion of the novel as an imperialist instrument. Such an approach when intertwined with Said’s relocation of the novel as a genre within colonial discourse also implicates readers in the production of the binary of self/Other and home/abroad.

These distinctions between literary and popular fiction are not a recent phenomenon. Leavis shows that early in the development of the novel, there existed an aesthetic evaluation that made, for instance, of George Elliot a writer of elite societies and of Charles Dickens the author of the masses. Even the different ways their works had been marketed in which Dickens’ novels were serialized suggests an awareness of the intended audience of each. However, these audiences did read both works even while assessing their different social and literary values. What Leavis rightly notes is that only

in the twentieth century had the word ‘bestsellers’ gained its degrading connotation that prompted these works’ exclusion from literary institutions. There seems to be a growing divide between critics and public assessments and enjoyment of literature which was not present before. Leavis cites examples such as when Dr. Johnson often confessed “rejoicing to concur with the common reader—a position that for the modern critic of equivalent standing would be ridiculous” (35).

What distinguishes the modern debate over what constitutes literature is not the tendency to critically and aesthetically assess the works of fiction but rather to label works as high or low, thus ‘readable’ and ‘unreadable’ and consequently withhold acknowledgement of social impact if not even existence of works of fiction regarded as below standards. For instance, in their study of the 1980s, Batchelor and Stoddart describe Stephen King as the most successful writer of the decade; however, they fail to include any of his works in the 1980s timeline in which they selected the most important and influential literary works each year of the decade. The conclusion Leavis makes with which other writers on popular fiction concur is that there is a tendency by modern critics and elitist readers to pretend to be ignorant of what the audience of lowbrow fiction reads (35). In doing so, they do not only under-appreciate these works of fiction and underplay their social significance but also exclude them from the genre altogether.

In “Towards a Definition of Popular Literature,” Fiedler argues that persisting definitions of popular fiction are the outcome of an institutional attempt to retain an authoritative control over literary values and public reception. He maintains that popular literature as a generic category or subcategory was invented by elitist theorists to standardize public taste (30). With the death of god in the twentieth century and demise

of the church, there was a growing awareness of the rise of art and literature as the new "Culture Religion" (36). Instead of priests who used morality as the standards by which they regulated literary production and consumption, critics emerged as the authority that determines what is to be regarded as literature, relying on aesthetics. Examples of such critics in the United States were the Arnoldian school, T. S. Eliot and Cleanth Brooks who decided the literary canon that would end up on school and colleges syllabi (37). Fiedler notes that it was at that point, with the second and third generation of New Criticism, that "elitist criticism was almost academicized," transforming the University into "the sole guardian of 'taste' and 'standards'" (37). Consequently, literature came to mean serious books while fiction deemed sub-par was regarded as para-literature (37). Even with the waning influence of New Criticism and formalism, Fiedler charges that the university found ways to reintroduce new forms of formalism to maintain its central role in canonizing literature (38).

Whereas Fiedler sees the role of the elitist critics and academic institutions as dominantly responsible for creating the category of low or popular fiction, Ken Gelder takes a different approach that examines the genre from within the process of production that makes popular fiction an industry while acknowledging the tendency to negate it as literature. He bases his view on Bourdieu's differentiation between high and low art as autonomous and heteronomous respectively which leads him to conclude that the key difference between what is literary and what is popular relies on the intentions of the author (22). Since popular fiction is "mindful and respectful of its audience," Ken suggests that audience-consciousness influences not only the writing of fiction but also the ways in which it is marketed (23). He cites Jonathan Franzen as an example of a

writer who refused to have Oprah Winfrey's book club logo on the cover of his critically acclaimed novel The Corrections after it was selected by the media mogul and popular culture icon for her book club. The rationale behind his unease about appearing on the Oprah show was that it questioned his place in "the high-art literary tradition" (qtd. in Kirkpatrick 1). Even though his novel was already a bestseller, its selection by Oprah would have increased its sales by at least half a million copies. What troubled Franzen was the implication of Oprah's endorsement that blurred the distinctions between high and low literature. Recognition by the masses, exemplified by Oprah, Franzen felt, would undermine the literariness of his work and "frighten some highbrow readers away" (Fialkoff 1). Those whom Fiedler described as elitist critics did not rush to support Franzen's stance, as many of them, including Harold Bloom, a figure whose name is almost synonymous with the canonization concept itself, called him arrogant and hypocritical. Francine Fialkoff in Library Journal called the fallout between Winfrey and Franzen—which led her to uninvite him to the show—a missed opportunity to "elevate" public taste and expose Oprah's audience to higher forms of literature (1).

One of the reasons behind the literary and media uproar over Franzen's comments is the bluntness by which he addressed the implicitly and given distinctions between high and low literature. Franzen's critics admitted that some of Oprah's selections included 'middlebrow' literature among works by highbrow literary figures such as Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, and John Steinbeck. This position does not negate the divisions between literary and popular fiction but acknowledges the need for a compromise that would make the literary popular without becoming formulaic. A similar concession that would

include popular and formulaic fiction in classrooms and anthologies seems unthinkable[19]. The Franzen-Oprah controversy elucidates another common understanding of popular fiction as a commodity or a product. Gelder notes that one of the justifications of excluding popular fiction is a tendency to label it as entertainment that requires minimum efforts from its readers (a point Leavis emphasizes). Thus, the canon defenders charge that literature "must be read seriously" while popular fiction is merely consumed, doubting whether one could actually 'read' popular fiction (Gelder 35-6). The commodification of literature is what Franzen publicly feared the Oprah logo would do. He did not mind the selection itself but rather the stamp that suggests some sort of ownership by popular culture of high art. The significant point to consider here is that even though highbrow literature has been traditionally defined by a certain degree of literary sublimity which is often seen as indiscernible by the average reader, hence its commercial failure and critical success, it is rather when the intention of the author is translated into a marketing strategy that Bourdieu's distinctions take place (as in the case of Franzen). Franzen feared that the commercialization of his novel would trouble the difference between high and low brow literature and denies it the literary position (as high literature) which he intended when he wrote the novel. Similarly, Salman Rushdie complained when India banned The Satanic Verses that those offended by it had not 'read' it the way he intended it to be read (a contentious point in itself). As will be shown in chapter 2, 'reading' this novel gains a multiplicity of meanings that do not necessarily problematize the high/low brow or literary/popular divide.

[19] There have been several attempts to rewrite the cannon, particularly by feminist anthologists who refocused attention on underappreciated romance writers of the nineteenth century. However, these attempts are often conceptualized.

What is also underlined in both Gelder and Fiedler's readings of the creation of popular fiction as a separate genre from literature is the emergence of readers as central and influential entity in defining what is popular. Bourdieu and Gelder singled out public recognition of popular fiction and authors' consciousness of this recognition as its defining characteristic. Fiedler saw institutional criticism's attempt to control public taste as the dominant factor in its exclusivist attitude towards the genre. What is undeniably fundamental in understanding popular fiction and the insistence on maintaining the dividing lines between high and low fiction is the prominence and visibility of the readers whether one wishes to describe them as consumers or readers.

In his influential Adventure, Mystery, and Romance, John Cawelti examines the location of popular fiction in relation to cultural 'values.' He differentiates between conventions and patterns which are contextualized historically and geographically and those which are archetypically present across cultures (5-6). So "cultural stereotypes," such as "virginal blondes" and temperamental redheads pertain to particular cultures and periods while plotlines, such as "boy meets girl, boy and girl have a misunderstanding" are recognizable across cultures. Popular fiction, such as westerns, spy novels, romances, combines both kinds of stereotypes, as its narrative patterns "are embodiments of archetypical story forms in terms of specific cultural materials" (6). In popular fiction "formulas are ways in which specific cultural themes and stereotypes become embodied in more universal story archetypes." This allows for a universalization and centralization of a local culture (cowboys, frontiers) in the archetypes (good vs. evil, boy saves girl) that give it a form, and consequently, the marginalization of those groups which are not readable within that culture, such as homosexuals, Native Americans (domestic Others),

Arabs and Asians (foreign Others). This combination makes these stories recognizable within a certain context and yet capable of alienating those outside the culture that gives some of its details their specifity.

In a world of familiarity the formulaic offers, readers find "a basic emotional security," which is achieved by what Cawelti calls a process of intensification by the repetition of patterns of storylines found in works by writers such as Danielle Steel, Stephen King, and Leon Uris. The intensification of familiarity depends on the employment of stereotypical characters and situations since the creator of popular fiction "cannot risk departing very far from the typical characters and situations his audience has come to expect" (11). In such a familiarity and the recognizability of patterns, popular fiction creates its own world whose stability is turned into a collective comfort zone. High literature "confronts us with the world as we know it, while the formulaic reflects the construction of an ideal world without the disorder, the ambiguities, the uncertainty, and the limitations of the world of our experience" (13). This is the effect Earnest Yanarellia and Lee Sigelman see "cultural and stereotypes congeal into typical plot structures" and leads to "students of popular culture to make connections between popular works of fiction and feelings, beliefs, and values of larger collectivities" (8).

Therefore, popular fiction's reliance on repetition, familiarity, patterns, and certainty, makes it a site for "cultural stability" rather a challenge of social structure (Cawelti 35). Cawelti sees the functions of popular fiction in relation to collective culture in affirming "existing interests and attitudes by presenting an imaginary world that is aligned with these interests and attitudes," maintaining "a culture's ongoing consensus about the nature of reality and morality," resolving "tensions and ambiguities resulting

from the conflicting interests of different groups within the culture or from ambiguous attitudes toward particular values," and enabling "the audience to explore in fantasy the boundary between the permitted and the forbidden and to experience in a carefully controlled way the possibility of stepping across this boundary" (35). These functions echo Said's and Williams' perception of the novel's role in protecting the knowability of the community by maintaining its protagonists within cultural and social boundaries.

The location of readers

The centrality of formula in the structure of popular fiction invites the reader into the debate over the genre. Thus, Wolfgang Iser's implied reader and real reader merge into one, as the readership writers of bestsellers anticipate is not implied or imagined but is traceable and targetable. Consequently, reader/writer and text/reader divisions are complicated, as the way in which writers and readers communicate through the text and the market transcends the conventional view of readers as mere recipients or interpreters of the text. Readers of popular fiction participate in the literary production by their purchasing power, avid fandom, and the spatial medium of book clubs. Their preferences are communicable through newsletters, fan clubs, and bestseller lists which serve as indicators of the marketability and the consistent commercial success of certain writers, such as Steel and King whose works rely on formula. Janice Radway's Reading the Romance, an influential work that adopts a reader response methodology, traces the link between the formula and readers' response. She refers to the 'knowing reader' and 'experienced reader' who form a strong relationship with certain genres such as Romance that allow the reader to gain a degree of expertise on the patterns of plot and character

development formulas. Their response to the thematic patterns of heterosexual love, female chastity, male virility, heteronormativity, and family values contributes to the maintaining of the formula and popular culture as an industry. Radway's findings suggest that readers' preferences for certain archetypes (which are specifically gender-based in the subgenre she examines) influenced their permanence and repetition. Publishers of romance, for instance, have been aware and susceptible to the expectations of genre's readership and often interfered in the way romance writers wrote their next novels. (Frenier 75-97). Through newsletters and book clubs, readers of romance were also able to communicate their preferences (Radway). Such an approach to reception fuses the different directions of reader response theory which either underlines texts as the focal point of reception (Iser, Poulet, Todorov) or the reader as the interpreter of texts (Holland, Fish). Steel's faithful readership, for instance, were not fed a certain archetype of femininity and the family but they were actively involved in its construction. Readers of the 1980s who consistently propelled the works of Steel and King to the top of bestsellers lists were as invested in the formula as their authors were.

Reconceptualizing the role of the reader, particularly in the production of popular fiction, troubles some common beliefs that the public is manipulated by mass media in general and popular fiction in particular, that readers are lured into buying these novels which are "popular by deception" (Radway). Their deceptive representation of reality as simplistic and polarized trick the readers into a fantasy world in which they escape graver and more realistic concerns. Such a perception is not only inaccurate but also reductive. Popular fiction is one genre in which the readers exert influence. It is one of the fundamental aspects of its popularity, that it is an open and "public" medium that

provides an alternative to highbrow literature which is usually closed and "private" (Worpole 11). Other writers argue that if popular fiction deceives its readers, then it is a self-willed deception. The pleasure and enjoyment of reading a novel, one can predict its storyline and ending, is arriving at this predictable conclusion for which the reader is willing to suspend his/her belief (Holland Dynamic of Literary Response 6-9). If readers are hoaxed into reading fiction which has been "overdetermined and over-conventionalized (Worpole 44), they attain pleasure from experiencing the mechanism that leads them into the conventional ending (Harris). Certainly, 'experienced' readers of Steel know that the heroine will reunite with the hero and their union will be happy and productive, and King's readers are not expecting the evil spirits, villains, and monsters to triumph over the heroes. The pleasure of their novels is in the emotional adventures of the heroines and the thrilling battles the heroes undertake against villains. In the context of the formula, pleasure will be lost when the heroine does not reconcile with her love interest, an unbelievable ending. Readers, therefore, are far from being just recipients of an 'over-determined' plot but are rather vocal in expressing their "active needs" in having the world they desire with its norms untroubled and polarity intact unfold in their favorite novels.

If formulaic popular fiction maintains a binary perception of the world of male/female, good/evil, and us/them, it is then not a vision of the world maintained by the genre or demanded by the readers. It is a combination of both and the collaboration of their efforts. Dismissing the popularity of the polarity of this vision whether by degrading the medium as lowbrow or unintellectual or downplaying the centrality of the public in its creation since the fiction is not serious enough, neglects the context from which they

emerge. Such an understanding of the world and social norms are not produced by the genre alone "but by the interaction of text and context" (Radford 17). Readers' active needs, which take form in the fiction they choose to read, are suggestive of a larger cultural, political, and social context as did Rumsfeld's reading of The Haj and the introduction, directly or indirectly, of The Arab Mind in the cultural education of U.S. soldiers and military personnel. The relegation of the formulaic to pure and empty entertainment is a way in which social and gender norms and racial hierarchies are disguised as unrealistic and unrepresentative of real racial and gender relations. If only 'serious' fiction represents reality, then other forms of representations do not merit extensive examination. This approach is more dangerous than the production of these norms and hierarchies. It allows them to pass as unexamined and underemphasized when their influence is greater than estimated and are symptomatic of a deeper layered construction of power that does not only operate on the official level within political institutions but also in a popular and public domain in which the American public participates in their production.

Conclusion

Popular fiction is relevant to the sustainability of the binary and the stability of representability in both its generic form and its story patterns. First, popular fiction is often seen as the 'undesirable' sibling of highbrow fiction. As "opposite to literature," popular fiction is not considered non-literature but rather non- (anti?) literary, as the canonization logic interprets its commercial success as symptomatic of a sacrificed literariness (Gelder). This makes the writing of popular fiction the product of intentions

rather than aesthetics. When writers intentionally make their novels accessible to a larger and non-academic audience, their work is categorized as popular rather than high/canonical/literary. Consequently, in pop fiction more than any other genre or subgenre, Said's triangle of text-world-critic is transformed into a more dynamic triangle of text-reader-writer because in pop fiction the 'world' is no longer an enormous anonymous entity but rather discernable units and subgroups whose responses to the text determine its genre as popular fiction. While highbrow literature relies on peer reception, popular fiction is defined by public recognition. Second, while critics mediate meaning between text and readers, popular fiction writers' involvement with their readers is direct through the market that the popularity of their works creates. This leads to a reciprocal rather than a unidirectional relationship between what Walter Benjamin calls the production of the masses and mass reproduction. These popular fictions in their mass popularity have not only given their writers the socio-political power to shape public opinion but also helped the readers of these works, who are willing with great dedication to buy these novels, to contribute to the formulation of the genre of popular fiction and influence the writers' literary and creative decisions.

The awareness of readers/audience has several consequences: It creates the so-called 'constant readers' which is an identifiable thus targetable group which has the tools to make their preferences known and communicable whether in their purchasing power or in their written responses published in newspapers and circulated newsletters. It also crystallizes the abstract knowledge of the public which the novel comes to describe. This ironically reproduces the mythical element from which novel theoreticians argue the new genre has departed. Instead of Greek divine myths which were the source of

inspiration for classical genres such as drama and epic, public beliefs are made into popular myths (beliefs which are mythologized by their mass reproduction) when they are made identifiable and narratable by popular fiction. Popular myths of the vastness, emptiness, and newsness of America as a land of opportunity inspire plotlines that romanticize the American hero "who saves the small paradisal community threatened by evil through a combination of individual courage, moral righteousness, and sexual renunciation, and who then rides away into the setting sun" (Cawelti). Popular fiction mythologizes cultural and social 'values' when it applies their strict locality to universal formulas such as 'boy meets girl' and 'boy saves girl.' This allows for a universalization and centralization of a local culture (cowboys, frontiers) in the archetypes (good vs. evil, boy saves girl) that give it a form. Consequently, this marginalizes groups which are not readable within that culture, such as homosexuals, Native Americans (domestic Others), Arabs and Asians (foreign Others).

Popular fiction's standardization of the local culture and archetype satisfies the needs of escape and relaxation. It creates a world of familiarity through repetition, patterns, and predictability of events and endings. In such a familiarity and the recognizability of patterns even when they do not compare to our personal lives, popular fiction creates its own world whose stability is turned into a collective comfort zone. Popular fiction, therefore, does not offer escapism only from reality but also from high literature which "confronts us with the world as we know it, while [popular fiction] reflects the construction of an ideal world without the disorder, the ambiguities, the uncertainty, and the limitations of the world of our experience" (Cawelti). Readers of romance, for instance, might not desire to emulate the lives of the heroines, but what

these readers seek in popular fiction is the social and cultural stability of the genre found in the knowability of the outcome and conclusion of the story and the clarity of problematic concepts such as goodness, values, and freedom.

However, this stability is founded on the dialectic of good and evil, moral and immoral, and masculine and feminine which presents a view of the world in binary oppositions. It is also exclusive since it is essentially local even while it localizes universal values such as ‘goodness’ ‘morality’ and ‘heroism’ and it relies on stereotypes. Because of its binarism and exclusivity, this stability works effectively in othering non-white, homosexual, and foreign groups. The stability of home, as Edward Said argues in Culture and Imperialism, allows the exoticization of abroad. ‘Home’ is made stable only when it is placed in contrast with its antithesis. Therefore, Said sees novels such as Kim and Robinson Crusoe as an inevitable (and intentional) continuation of novels which familiarize and stabilize home (by canonical writers such as Dickens and Austen). The social stability depicted in the latter novels relies on the inherent instability of foreign races in the former.

Chapter 2

Popular Verses: The Satanic Verses, an Unlikely Bestseller

In September 1988, The Satanic Verses was published in Britain and in March 1989, it entered the New York Times hardcover bestsellers list at number two before spending nine weeks at number one and a total of 24 weeks on the list. In those six months, the novel, which normally would have hardly been read outside classrooms or garnered discussions except in the academic circles, became the book everyone wanted to read in the United States but few read. The Satanic Verses became part of popular culture (and so did its author Salman Rushdie) and "one of the great *unread* but heavily purchased books of the century" (Bloom 227). This chapter investigates the phenomenon of The Satanic Verses as a book that has become a bestseller against the tradition that separates the popular from the literary. The chapter focuses analysis on the reception of the novel and the way it was read and unread by examining archival sources published between September 1988 and July 1989 and recreating the events and responses that contributed to the creation of The Satanic Verses the bestseller.

In one of several statements he made to western press defending The Satanic Verses, Salman Rushdie said the riots in Pakistan that killed ten people were over a book that did not exist (qtd. in “Rushdie to Speak in New York despite Threats”). He could be alluding to the fact that the majority of Muslims particularly those living in non-western countries, were reacting to a novel they had not read because it had not been translated to their native languages or was banned by the governments of their countries. Rushdie might also be suggesting that Muslim crowds were not reacting to his novel but to a misunderstood version of the book. After all, Rushdie remarks, “It is very hard to be offended by The Satanic Verses - it requires a long period of intense reading. It's a quarter of a million words" (qtd. in Anthony). Rushdie’s comment addresses the central question of this chapter. Did people really read The Satanic Verses? He was right in suggesting that most Muslims angered by the novel had not read it. However, does this mean that people in the west did read this “nearly impenetrable” novel (Rose)? Did they read it as a ‘serious’ book or as a work of entertainment encapsulating the unfolding events of six months in 1989 which were stranger than fiction? Was The Satanic Verses intended to be a modern bestseller? If one takes the position of a tradition that separates between what people read in masses (bestsellers) and the literature taught at schools and colleges and anthologized by Norton editors (canon), then the answer would be ‘no.’ The complexity of the narrative structure of the novel, its intertextuality, the multilayered themes, the manipulative fantastical elements, and the eloquence of language all indicate that its intended audience was not Joe Public but the academic elite. However, the massive and enduring popularity of the novel upon publication suggests that these strict lines between what Joe Public and Professor Smith are reading are not as clear, and the

anticipation of public taste is not determined solely by a literary or popular formula. To understand how The Satanic Verses succeeded in playing to both seemingly and deceptively isolated and isolatable groups of audience, one has to read the controversy surrounding the novel, what came to be known as The Rushdie Affair, as a narrative that competed with the narrative in the novel. This chapter reads Rushdie's novel within a duality of narratives: The Satanic Verses the novel/text and The Satanic Verses the book. In the novel, the main characters are Gibreel and Saladin while in the latter, key players are Ayatollah Khomeini, Rushdie, and both the readers and the nonreaders.

The narrative of The Satanic Verses the book began in September 1988 when it was first published in Britain. It came to public attention the following month when India banned the importation of the book after two Muslim members of Parliament called it offensive and blasphemous. The Indian government described its action as a preemptive measure, anticipating the outrage the book would trigger in Muslim communities. On October 19, 1988, Rushdie wrote an open letter to then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi published in the New York Times condemning the action as a concession to extremists and as a form of regression away from "modernity" and "civilization" towards pre-democratic times. He denied that his novel had insulted Islam:

> The section of the book in question (and let's remember that the book isn't actually *about* Islam, but about migration, metamorphosis, divided selves, love, death, London and Bombay) deals with a prophet—who is not called Mohammed—living in a highly fantastical city made of sand (it dissolves when water falls upon it). He is surrounded by fictional followers, one of whom happens to bear my own first name. Moreover, this entire sequence happens in a

dream, the fictional dream of a fictional character, an Indian movie star, and one who is losing his mind, at that. How much further from history one can get?

Rushdie seems to be basing his defense of the novel on its fictionality which is presumably self-evident. He attempts to simplify the allegory in the novel to a basic and literal interpretation (the prophet's name is not Mohammed so he is not the Prophet. His city, even though called Jahilia in reference to the times of pre-Islam Mecca, is not about the holy city because it dissolves when it is touched by water). However, that defense itself disintegrates at his concluding question. Can fiction be distanced from history by its mere fictitiousness? By selectively emptying the novel from its political context and historical allegories, Rushdie shifts focus from the literary to the political as if the two are ever separate.

However, at the outset Rushdie understands that his critics have not read his novel and his defense is quite mindful of that fact. Even while defending the novel against anti-Islam accusations, he remains focused on the larger issue of whether India would align itself with the western modern world or suppress freedom of expression to appease ideologically minded politicians. By alerting the Indian Prime Minister, on the pages of New York Times, to the danger of slipping from modernity, Rushdie initiated a construction of the controversy based on binary oppositions of civilized/uncivilized, modern/unmodern, secular/religious, western/fundamentalist, and victim/assailant (comparing his book to a potential rape victim who is put in prison for their own protection). He warned that the ban would turn India into a "laughing-stock" to the world which would "assume the worst" if the Indian government did not relent and lift the ban. Rushdie in his first reaction to the controversy set the tone for the unfolding drama as a

spectacle on a world stage rather than a domestic issue. He derided his critics in India for using his book as "a political football" to win Muslim votes; however, Rushdie himself used the novel as a symbol of the struggle over freedom of expression. The way in which peoples and governments react to his book determines their civilization or lack of it. As in erasing the religious subtext in The Satanic Verses, Rushdie's open letter elliptically addresses the political climate in his native India, electing to leave out the Muslim/Hindu tension as the central motive behind the government's decision to ban the book. Rather he placed the controversy in the universal rhetoric of freedom of speech and democratic ideals, possibly anticipating that the controversy would extend beyond Indian borders.

Tension continued to mount despite the ban. Rushdie began to receive death threats almost immediately, which forced him to cancel several trips. Muslim organizations began writing to the British government asking for a similar ban. Several other countries such as South Africa, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt also banned the novel and Egypt's Grand Mufti called for legal action against Rushdie. In January 1988, the first book burning of The Satanic Verses took place in the British city of Bradford and W H Smith, the country's biggest bookselling chain, decided to withdraw the book, which all elicited extensive media coverage in Britain. However, in the U.S. media, the story received little attention. For instance, between September 26, 1988 when the book was first published in Britain and February 14, 1989, The Washington Post published eight articles or news stories related to the violent reactions to the book. On January 18, 1989, it ran the story of the burning of Rushdie's book in the Style section. Only once the novel was a front page story when a U.S. facility came under attack in Pakistan in February 12, 1989. All of this, however, changed on February 14 when Iranian leader

Ayatollah Khomeini released his edict declaring it every Muslim's duty to execute Rushdie for his 'blasphemous' book. Since then U.S. newspapers began publishing at least two articles daily and the story moved to the front page. While similar threats and calls had been made since the banning of the book by India, it was Khomeini's insertion of himself in the unfolding of the events that internationalized the story and transformed Rushdie into a popular culture figure and his "impenetrable" novel into an iconic book snatched by a multitude of American readers (Rose). Before the controversy erupted, Viking were hoping to sell 30,000 copies of The Satanic Verses, an ambitious figure considering that Rushdie's two other critically acclaimed novels Shame and Midnight's Children sold only 8,000 copies each. However, by May 1989 the number of copies of The Satanic Verses in print was a staggering 800,000 while the novel "was selling at its peak 20,000 copies a week at Waldenbooks" (Streitfeld). The unexpected popularity of the book—which would not be available in paperback until three years later—was undeniably a response to the events triggered by the Khomeini edict that sent Rushdie into hiding in a safe house under British police protection and, according to writer and critic Martin Amis, made him vanish to "the front page."

Why was Khomeini that influential and why did he enter the drama that late? Some writers at the time suggested that the iconic Iranian leader was hoping to "upstage" his Sunni rivals, the Saudis, who were working behind the scenes to instigate Muslim councils in Britain to protest the book (Randal, "Iran's Rivalry with Saudis Seen as Factor in Book Row"). Others read Khomeini's reaction as a personal one responding to a character in The Satanic Verses some interpreted as a parody of the religious leader (Anthony). While some writers argued that Khomeini weighed in on the controversy

when the book was published in the United States and Rushdie was about to begin a book tour there, in a direct attempt to stir an international crisis, particularly that the edict came less than a year after U.S. army shot down Iran Air Flight 655, killing all onboard. The Rushdie controversy presented itself as an opportunity for Khomeini to continue his verbal attack on the U.S. government's Muslim allies, such as the Saudi royal family and what he called their "American Islam." It could also be an attempt to ride a wave of Muslim rage and gain a prominent position among Muslims who were frustrated with their secular leaders and their alliance with western powers seen as consistently pro-Israel (the whole controversy unfolded a year after the first Palestinian Intifada which mobilized public opinion in Arab and Muslim countries). The other question is why Khomeini mattered so much to the controversy. Even though his 'death sentence' was seen as an extreme reaction, it was not unprecedented in the ensuing controversy. Violent riots had already hit several countries including India, Pakistan, and Britain. Bomb threats had been made against the book's New York publishers who received thousands of threatening letters (Mitgang). There had already been threats made against Rushdie's life which complicated his New York tour planned to start on February 14, 1989 before Khomeini announced his fatwa. Was it that Khomeini verbalized some sentiments at the time in one decree, legitimizing the anger and giving a purpose to the furor? Or was it the stereotypes that Americans already held against Khomeini, Iranians, and consequently Muslims that ignited public interest and captured American imagination in that leader-vs.-writer saga?

Khomeini in particular and the Iranian regime were virtually unknown to Americans before late 1979. The Iranian revolution that toppled the Shah government

and brought Islamists to power was largely ignored by U.S. media (Naficy 78). This changed on November 4, 1979 when 53 Americans were taken hostage in Tehran, triggering a diplomatic crisis between the two countries and embarrassing the Carter administration into defeat in the 1980 presidential election. Media coverage of the 444-day hostage crisis was broadcast daily by U.S. networks, transforming it into a televised spectacle. Some networks ran a logo on their screens counting the number of days the hostages had been in captivity. The villainy of the Iranian regime, thus, was played out as a television movie or a "soap opera" (Naficy 79). The coverage captivated Americans with the standoff beamed from their television sets into their living rooms (McAlister). The length of the hostage crisis and the Carter administration's inability to end it and free Americans were seen as a wound to national pride and U.S. military invincibility (Gerges 76). These feelings were compounded by the failure of the small rescue operation attempted on April 24, 1980 which ended with the crash of two aircrafts and the death of eight American soldiers. As Khomeini grew in stature, becoming "so popular" (Naficy 79) and such an overshadowing figure that Time magazine selected him the Man of the Year in 1979, Jimmy Carter's popularity was plummeting. The hostage crisis embodied the failures of Carter's presidency and his perceived defeatism which President Reagan came to challenge and supersede with an optimistic attitude and a firm belief in American exceptionalism. It was no coincidence, therefore, that the Algiers agreement that ended the standoff was signed just few minutes before Reagan was sworn in. The postponement of the announcement, former Carter officials alleged, came at the request of Republican officials in order to claim it as their victory. One, therefore, has to view the United States/Iran animosity in the 1980s as a multisided affair, in which Iranian villainy was of

a crucial help to neoconservative American leaders. The unspoken alliance between the two governments seemed indispensable in building their popular base and shaping their controversial and polarizing policies. This alliance, however, would become public in the middle of Reagan's second term with the Iran/Contra scandal and would trouble the carefully constructed worlds of spectacle and covert operations that characterized the Reagan/Bush administration.[20]

One outcome of the hostage crisis and its media coverage, Melani McAlister points out, is the way in which it transformed Iran into a "synecdoche" of the Arab World and Muslim countries. Several opinion polls conducted in the early 1980s support her conclusion. Shelley Slade's analysis of a 1980 poll shows that 86% have a low opinion of Iran and 61% characterized their views as very low while 70% believe that Iran is an Arab country[21]. "Only Saudi Arabia and Iraq are more widely understood to be Arab." Level education did not factor in this misrecognition, as "college graduates were more certain that Iran is an Arab country" (148). These findings indicate the dominance of Iran's domestic politics and strained international relations on Americans' views of Arabs. Moreover, it suggests that American knowledge of the Arab World is limited to its strategic importance as oil-producers since the three countries most associated with Arabs are the richest in oil reserves[22]. The hostage crisis also had a great impact on Americans' opinion of Iran, as 56% said the two words they most associate with the country were "hostages" and "prisoners" (148-9). 'Khomeini,' 'oil,' and 'Shah,' were prominent

[20] See Michael Rogin, "'Make my Day!': Spectacle as Amnesia in Imperial Politics."

[21] Consequently, this dissertation makes no distinction between Muslims and Arabs when discussing Arabs' representations in American media and popular fiction.

[22] The Arab-Israeli conflict played an important role in the region's relevance to American public awareness which will be discussed in chapter 2

responses followed by ‘hatred,’ ‘anger,’ ‘troublesome’ and ‘cruel’ (149). Several polls conducted in late 1970s and early 1980s indicate a decline in the country’s favorability among Americans from 48% before the revolution to 27% after Islamists took power. It hit its lowest at only 7% in January 1980 when the hostage crisis was resolved. When people were asked what word they associated with Islam, ‘Iran’ and ‘Muhammad’ received an equal percentage of responses, while 36% cited Iran as the country they most associated with Islam (Slade 157). This shows a growing belief in the interchangeability of the politics of Islam and of Iran (Gerges 78).

Furthermore, in the survey, people were asked if they favored a military response to oil-producing countries’ possible decision to cut off oil sales to the U.S.; the majority opposed the option. However, of all the countries on the list, Iran received the highest percentage of 26% of support of a military attack against it. The poll showed that 44% believed that Muslims had contempt for Christianity while a higher 58% believed that Muslims had no respect for Judaism which could indicate a general opinion among Americans that Arabs/Muslims’ conflict with Israel and their perceived negative view of the Christian west were religiously influenced. The findings also suggest that under the Iranian revolution “Islamism replaced secular nationalism as a security threat to U.S. interests, and fear of a clash between Islam and the West crystallized in the minds of Americans” (Gerges 77).

Therefore, Khomeini’s character as much as the content and purpose of his death decree were instrumental in heightening the sense of transgression against Rushdie and the divisions perceived between western and Arab/Muslim cultures. These studies of the historical context of what came to be known as the Rushdie Affair and the preconceived

notions the American public generally held against Iranians and Arabs reveal not only that the issue was over freedom of expression but it was also a continuation of a division among cultures and the superiority of one over the other(s). The Satanic Verses the novel's main critique targeted a western rather than a Muslim society, the politics of alienation that Britain adopted against immigrants. The protagonists' fall follows sectarian violence, but it is their journey in Britain that leaves one of them at the verge of insanity and both at loss of identity. However, The Satanic Verses the book overshadows if not undercuts the centrality of this theme, instead presenting the West in general and Britain in particular as a champion of the liberal nonwhite Muslim thinkers. What transpired from the events that took place between February 14 when Khomeini released his edict and June 3 of 1989 when he died is a stronger desire to divide but also an inclination to simplify not only a complex text but also postcolonial concepts of belonging, hybridity, identity, and narrativity. If Khomeini attempted to silence Rushdie, so did the rhetorical defense of the book from the majority of western elites and governments. Their message and intentions were in unison with Khomeini's in exploiting the book and Rushdie's right to speak, to score political points and affirm their own cultural superiority.

Most of the responses to post-Khomeini fatwa rarely discussed the novel and its themes as a work of fiction but rather centered on its role in deepening the rhetoric of us against them and the critique of Muslim extreme sensibility and absent sense. In "Laws of Islam," published ten days after the fatwa, Bernard Lewis came to the defense of Islam refuting the theological grounds on which Khomeini based his fatwa. He explained that Islam consisted of "a system of law and justice, not of lynching and terror." The Islamic

system, he continued, required that any verdict be issued within a judicial process which was notably absent in the case of Rushdie's perceived 'transgressions.' However, Lewis concluded his article with a defining question of how the controversy would affect 'us' as a western civilization. He firmly located the crisis in a dialectical relationship in which the west stood to lose if not politically then morally:

> Our question is whether we still value the freedoms which our forebears won and bequeathed to us, and whether we are prepared to defend them. If we are not—and the silence or mumbling of large parts of the political, commercial, literary, academic and ecclesiastical establishment in various Western countries is not encouraging—then the further erosion of our freedom at home will certainly be rapid and probably irreversible. And that would also be a terrible loss for the world of Islam.

The essence of Lewis' question which he would a year later uncompromisingly rephrase as the 'clash of civilization,' is the division between the Muslim world and a homogeneous West. He prophesized how the West cannot remain uninvolved and unaffected by what happened in the Muslim World from a distance (which would be actualized in less than two years when Ally Forces bomb Iraq). However, his critique of the "silence and mumbling" in the West was misplaced. Between the Khomeini fatwa and the publication of Lewis' article, several European countries recalled their diplomats from Tehran and placed some sanctions on Iran. Several writers publicly supported Rushdie with Susan Sontag calling the fatwa an act of terrorism. Probably, Lewis' "mumbling" comment was rather directed against the U.S. government whose reaction was muted and slow. President George H. Bush made a brief comment on February 22,

1989 that condemned both the book and the Iranian response as offensive. The Washington Post's news story still featured Bush's rejection of the Iranian decree in the headline (and omitting his critique of Rushdie) while printing an accompanying photo showing Bush "strain[ing] to hear query" at a press conference, possibly hinting at the president's inability to listen to international anger[23] (Devroy).

The divisive nature of the responses intensified following the rise of some voices in Europe and the United States which were critical of Rushdie. Among them was former president Jimmy Carter who called Rushdie's book an insult to Muslims while still condemning Khomeini's death decree. Writer Roald Dahl called Rushdie a "dangerous opportunist," accusing him of resorting to "sensationalism" to increase the sales of his book, an opinion Lord Shawcross, a British barrister and lead prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Crimes tribunal, seemed to share (Randal, "Dissenters from the Writers' Rally: In Britain Criticism Mounts" 2). Writers John Berger and John Le Carre, who both penned novels dealing with Arab or Muslim issues, called on Rushdie to halt the printing of more copies of The Satanic Verses to spare the lives of publishers and translators who were also receiving death threats. These "dissenters" (Randal) triggered counter-criticism that also silenced disagreement. For instance, a radio talk show host in Los Angeles announced plans to hold a public burning of Cat Stevens' records because of what he perceived as the Muslim convert's support of Khomeini's edict ("Cat Stevens' Hottest Albums?"). During a book fair in Frankfurt, a French publisher who voiced hesitance to have the novel translated was silenced by "cowards" chants from other participants. A bookstore on Wayne State University campus was boycotted when it refused to stock

[23] The criticism was part of a general understanding at the time that the U.S. administration had no foreign policy and was slow in engaging in Middle East politics.

copies of The Satanic Verses. A unified expression of support seemed to emerge as crucially self-defining in western communities that tolerated nothing less than vocal support in the literary circle and made the purchasing of the book some necessity.

Attempts to draw any kind of analogy between the angry Muslim reactions to the book and some political practices in the United States was rendered unthinkable and apologetic for the Iranian regime. In a March 10, 1989 article in The Washington Post, Pulitzer Price winner and prominent columnist Charles Krauthammer reproached such views as "fearless self-inflation." He criticized prominent columnist Anthony Lewis for implicitly comparing the Khomeini fatwa with President Bush's call during his 1988 campaign to require children to pledge allegiance to the flag at schools. Blacklisted author Howard Fast reminded people of the J. Edgar Hoover's reign of fear which imposed self-censorship. Another target of Krauthammer's scorn was Edward Said, whom he accused of selecting the wrong villain by including criticism of Israel's policy of banning books in the Palestinian territories in the context of The Satanic Verses controversy. Krauthammer called these attempts to read a contemporary event beyond a binary perspective as a "free association"[24] that reflects the writers' own ulterior motives and political allegiances. Krauthammer's stance can also be seen as a disinclination to see some Iranians' and Muslims' suppression of freedom of speech as anything but singularly

[24] John E. Richardson suggests a similar association but one in which situations seem different but are viewed simultaneously because of an ideological association. He provides as an example a letter-to-the-editor sent to The Guardian in which its writer criticized Le Carre's criticism of Rushdie's book an insult to Islam. The writer asks Le Carre if he thought the nine-year-old girl in Iran who was reportedly stoned for showing her face also insulted Islam. Richardson suggests that the reader's response was built on an analogy of "innocuous act of Iranian girl:: Islamic ruling:: violence" and "[innocuous] act of Rushdie:: Islamic ruling:: [threat] violence" (154-5). He says the strength of the association depends on the willingness to accept it. However, can one reject the analogy without appearing as if endorsing the stoning of the Iranian girl? Similarly, critics of Rushdie are accused of endorsing censorship as if one is incapable of criticizing both Khomeini and Rushdie.

Islamic and culturally non-western. Lamin Sanneh's review of The Satanic Verses also touches on the book's ability to correspond to an already existing view of Islam. When explaining to students what Sanneh sees as Muslims' belief in the non-translatability of their holy book, the Koran, he noted that their reaction centered on the Muslims' need to abandon such an archaic approach and follow in the footsteps of Christians who allowed and accepted the translation of the Bible as inevitable. He concludes that the students are unable to see Islam except as a "subcategory of Christianity" (623), which is an observation that Said makes in Orientalism.

However, what is implied in this misunderstanding is a central question of the intended audience of the novel. In her defense of the novel, The Washington Post editor Amy Schwartz claims, "The book isn't even written in a language most protesters can read." Feroza Jussawalla makes an interestingly contrary claim that the novel, or at least parts of it, was not written to be readily accessible to non-Muslim audiences. The jokes and "abuses" as well as the Koranic allusions and references to Indian and Hindu popular cultures in the novel are hard to understand by a western audience without footnotes or some specialized knowledge in those religions and their histories. This leads him to suggest that Rushdie "miscalculated his audience by assuming that his only audience would be one steeped in post-modernism" (106). This is something with which Schwartz would agree, as she presumes that only those of 'low' education rioted against the book since they could not read English texts and the novel had not been translated yet. She writes, the novel's "topic sentence is not 'religion is bad' or 'Mohammed was a charlatan.' Like most novels worth reading, it doesn't have a topic sentence, except possibly that life is sure complicated." She continues to remind us "good [novels] . . . as

opposed to apparatchik trash—do not take positions." However, Rushdie and his supporters did expect people to take a position over a book undeniably controversial. While writing and defending a complex novel, they expected people, whether Muslim or westerners, to assume a simple and uniformed response of literary appreciation and respect for freedom of speech.

Schwartz' argument arrives at the heart of this chapter's claims. Rushdie did write a postcolonial and postmodern novel of literary value that would lead the guards of public taste to classify it as literature. However, the controversy over the book was 'written' as a popular fiction and read as a formulaic with predictable conclusions and conflicts of a simplified structure. In an interview conducted before the publication of the novel but printed on March 31, 1989, Rushdie described what seems to be a different book from the one that was at the center post-publication. He referred to the three cities in the novel, London, Bombay and the fictional and fantastical city of Jahilia, as "really the same place," where "instabilities exist in all three, and so does racism, and so does communalism" (qtd. in "Between God and Devil" 1154). The novel's central themes of

> hybridization and impurity is something you become aware of quite early on if you grow up, as I did, an Indian Muslim in Bombay. The Islam I knew . . . out of necessity it had been infiltrated by Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity and the other beliefs crowded into the city. I have tried to use this in *The Satanic Verses*, to work out some kind of ethic of impurity. Most of our problems begin when people try to define the world in terms of a stark opposition between good and evil, or in terms of racial or national purity.

Rushdie went on to criticize the state of the world as one grounded in a dialectic in which cultures "discussed themselves and their futures using stories and narratives against one another." Even though Rushdie anticipated some kind of controversy, he did not situate it in a religious but rather nationalist context, emanating from his native country India for the novel not being "specifically Indian" (1153-4).

However, when addressing the post-ban and post-fatwa controversy over the book, Rushdie binarized the conflict over the novel's meanings as one between jihad and modernism (qtd. in Jussawalla 106) and locating himself as part of a movement towards modernism (Freund 2). In reducing the reaction to the novel to an oppositionality of jihad and modernism, Rushdie refuses to grant the reception of the book the same depth and complexity of the narrative's structure which he underlined in the pre-publication interview. The understanding of the book as an argument for modernity can operate only within an approach that reproduces Islam as an abstraction.[25] One of the responses to the controversy assertively advocated Islam-as-abstract as a way in which some rationalism can be injected into the ideology of the religion (Freund). The article read the controversy as a tale from "the one thousand and second night" whose main character is the "sly intellectual," rewarded by an "enlightened west," and hunted and haunted by the "bearded and steel-hearted" Khomeini, as the conflict spills into the streets in the west. Grounding the controversy in Enlightenment rhetoric is no coincidence, as it invoked the hegemony of science (rationalism) to counter the supernatural and superstitious religion (Islam) all within a language of binary oppositions. Ironically, the "westernized Rushdie"

[25] I am thankful to Professor Gayle Wald for her insight on this idea.

was also seen as a prophet capable of introducing a rationalistic version of Islam and gain many followers even as the article acknowledged that Rushdie was not interested in changing Islam but only in "scorning it" (2).

In his first interview after Khomeini's edict in New York, Rushdie said he should have been "more critical" of Islam in The Satanic Verses (qtd. in Randal "'Satanic Verses': The Fury and the Fiction" 1), contradicting his first statement in response to India's ban of the book that the novel was not about Islam. He continued to "call upon the intellectual community in this country [the United States] and abroad to stand up for freedom of imagination which is an issue larger than my book or indeed my life" (2). Rushdie also repeated his accusation against his critics and detractors that they had not read his novel. However, since his first statement, the debate, which he sanctioned, had moved away from the novel and over the book as a cultural object. The novel that has never even been about Islam has now transformed into a book that is not critical enough of the religion. The novel remains ambivalent toward Islam particularly within its play-within-play and structure-within-structure literary construct. However, Rushdie's public persona was as present and central overshadowing the novel in question. An Indian-born but London-based British citizen, Muslim by birth but secular by education, Rushdie should embody the immigrants of his novel who hybridize (Indian and British) cultures and in the process face madness. If this hybridity were a central theme in the novel, it was absent in The Satanic Verses the book. Rushdie in many of his appearances following the controversy aligned himself clearly with a west against Islam (as temporality and ideology were conflated so were space and religion), unhybridizing cultures and deconstructing the hybrid. Allegedly, he jokingly told an American reporter after

Khomeini's edict that he should now move to an MFZ (Muslim Free Zone) (Randal 2). Whether the quotation is authentic is less significant than what it reveals of a post-controversy understanding of spaces which are stable and dividable culturally and clearly within a dialectical structuring of the world. More importantly, The Satanic Verses the book has negated and overpowered The Satanic Verses the novel. Rushdie's novel has not only become a book no one has read but also a book that has been rewritten, reversing its ambiguities, ambivalence, hybridization of cultures and spaces, and reproducing instead a more definable view of a world stable within an indisputable cultural and ideological dialectic. The novel which is about metamorphosis, migration, and an alienating Britain, has become a book that stood as evidence of the triumph of western tolerance, fight for the rights of its immigrants, and a testimony of the west's modernity against Muslim antiquity epitomized by Khomeini. Rushdie goes on to criticize the shallowness of judging a book without even reading it even when he admits that the 'issue' has overshadowed the text he wrote. If issues such as modernity, freedom of imagination, autocracy are larger than the novel, how can people, whether Muslims or Americans, read it and which narrative Rushdie desired people to read, the text or the book?

There is no question that The Satanic Verses, the novel, disintegrated under the weight of a moment gripped by a collective desire to dissociate and alienate. The novel geopolitically traveled far in the nine months between September 1988 and June 1989 from its British setting, to a forbidden India, admonishing Iran, and settling on bookshelves in homes in many western countries. It is not difficult to see that even at its inception as a book before the ban, the riots, the edict, it could not have been read

differently. It was published at the conclusion of a decade that witnessed the last peak of a dividing and formulaic Cold War orchestrated by a president who redefined presidency as a performance. Angst toward Muslims as the next villain has already been anticipated by many Hollywood movies and popular fiction, yet American public and official sentiments towards its most emblematic figure, Khomeini, remained ambivalent, torn between fascination and dread. The U.S. government branded Iran an enemy state but secretly sold it weapons during its war with Iraq. The American public resented as they were captivated by Khomeini's power and dominance evidenced by the way Iran shaped the U.S. media coverage of the hostage crisis to a point in which some critics described American TV as "Ayatollah Television" (qtd. in Naficy 80). What mattered was the way Khomeini and the Iranian regime's version of Islam assimilated all others and came to represent a uniformed Arab and Muslim cultural and political structure which is definably anti-American and irreconcilable with 'western ideals.'[26]

What led to the unlikely popularity of The Satanic Verses, beside the inevitable public curiosity over censored works, is the way its reception had been constructed as a formulaic novel whose characteristics responded, created, and capitalized on general perceptions and local myths (Cawelti, Yanarellia and Sigelman). To elucidate the ways in which the mutual creations of myths in popular fiction/art and popular culture operate, I rely on Stuart Hall's analysis of the coding and decoding of popular art and Walter

[26] This might explain the way in which the dominantly secular Saddam Hussein became the United States main enemy only one year later. Hussein was not virtually unknown to an American public fixated on Libya's Muamar Qaddafi, PLO's Yasser Arafat, and Khomeini as the main Arab villains, but was also Khomeini's arch nemesis. However, the controversy (along with several other factors, such as the association of Arab oil with instability of American interests and national sovereignty and the prevalence of the Arab stereotype) recreated a hegemonic understanding of political Islam that did not distinguish between Hussein and Khomeini.

Benjamin's examination of the mechanicality of mass reproduction.

In "Coding/Decoding" Hall disputes the linearity of the traditional description of production as writer-text-reader when he sees a more dynamic process that does not end with the creation of the work. He argues that the author[27] encodes his text as a product to be decoded by readers. Hall's rereading of the production process encapsulates both coding and decoding as part of production rather than separates the writing and reading as two distinct stages. He underlines discursive production as the most important in the process of communication as an event is always represented as a story. Even though the author constructs his/her text in codes, there are no guarantees that when the reader decodes the text, s/he will arrive at the intended meaning. This asymmetry between coding and decoding is where miscommunication emerges, that is when the reader does not arrive at the intended meaning. Consequently, since coding is a discursive process, Hall sees no material difference between connotation and denotation as all codes are connoted. Literal meaning is the result of the naturalization of the codes which in turn creates a universal decoding and dominant meaning. Despite the naturalization of the codes, the dominance of meaning according to Hall does not negate the agency and independency of decoding, as the dominance of the dominant meaning is caused by the decoder's preference. It is rather a preferred reading which enforces the legitimacy of its decoding.

So have The Satanic Verses's coding and decoding contributed to the understanding of the reception of the novel among both Muslim and American audiences,

[27] Hall does not single out text as the only form of production, as his essay also includes discussion of television image production. For the purpose of this paper, I will only refer to the texts as one form of (textual) image production.

particularly since the collective nature of both receptions parallels Hall's dominant reading? It is difficult to determine the author's coding and discursive production which is the stuff of speculation. What is more significant is the nature of the codes which induced what seems to be a univocal reading/meaning of the novel as offensive to Islam among Muslims[28]. What resulted is similarly dominant reading of the text as pro-freedom in the West even though the second reading is a direct result of the first reading rather than a decoding of the text itself. This creates an intriguing modification of Hall's dynamic process in which the text's decoding is itself decoded. Muslims read The Satanic Verses as offensive because of the codes in the text which are naturalized as blasphemous. However, it is generally argued that the majority of Muslims at the time of the publication of the novel have not read the novel as it was banned in their countries. It was rather through the media and politicians who read the book or read about it that the majority of people were informed of its content. Therefore, the text was decoded by a few and the resulting decoding was passed on to the masses. This adds a significant element to Hall's formulation of the dominant reading whose legitimacy is enforced by controlled decoding.

The West's decoding of the Muslim's decoding is also a dominant reading. The interpretation of the vehement reaction to the text was universal: Muslim's intolerance to criticism and their suppression of the freedom of speech. The singularity of the

[28] There have been few Muslim voices that defended Rushdie, among them was Naguib Mahfouz, who wrote fiction which also stirred controversy and were censored. It is hard, however, to deduce whether their stance was in support of the novel or Rushdie's freedom to write. Were they responding to the novel or the controversy which seems to have forced people to take sides? The argument of this chapter is that The Satanic Verses the book has created a complex web of responses, the majority of which were made by people who had not read the novel, relocating meaning-making outside texts and genre definitions and in the example of The Satanic Verses, replacing the actual literary text itself.

interpretation was enabled by the naturalization of the codes. The year of The Satanic Verses's publication 1989 in the United States followed a decade during which Arabs and Muslim were represented as violent and a threat to Western civilizations. The Iranian Fatwa, therefore, came to signify in American media a unified Muslim stance rather than a declaration made by a single government which is not biding to the rest of Muslims. Having already a preconception of Muslims as a threat to Western values, Americans in particular and Westerners in general arrived at a preferred meaning of Muslims' reception of the text, one which corresponds to a naturalized binary perception of us and them.

In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin analyzes the relationship between reproduction of 'truths' and its reception by the masses. He writes that mass reproduction was aided by the reproduction of the masses. Benjamin suggests that the eagerness to get spatially closer to the unfolding of events, through the lenses of the camera, for instance, has replaced the pursuit of the uniqueness of the events themselves. By seeking their reproduction, the masses dispense of witnessing the actual events in favor of their duplication by art. This represents a collective desire for the reproduction of reality even if it sacrifices its authenticity. The camera or the text become the eye through which the recipient views reality's duplication, if not substituting reality itself. Since the unified formation of the masses precedes mass reproduction, the desire and anticipation of the reproduction of reality is as much part of the production of the 'truth' as it is of its reception. In the absence of the direct contact with the authentic knowledge of what The Satanic Verses is about, Muslims relied on mass reproduction of its content by the media. As masses, they reacted when mass reproduction decoded the text. That does not mean that individual readings of the text would have not led to the

same result, for if the masses receives art production as masses, they are more likely to react collectively.

American audiences had access to the text but not an immediate experience of Muslims' reaction and reception of it or knowledge of what offended them. They viewed it through mass reproduction lenses and on the pages of mass circulated newspapers. The reproduced reality substituted actual experience while creating the illusion of its authenticity. Therefore, through the images mass reproduced, it was difficult for Western audiences to distinguish between different Muslim receptions to the text: death threats, violent riots, demonstrations, rebuttals, and at times just individual and small groups' conversations. One image of fatwa and violence represented all.

However, this reading should not imply that reception of reproduced realities is text/media-centered and that the masses or the recipients are passive participants in the process. Mechanical reproduction transforms the experience of reality/art and actual objects to a perception in which reality is itself adjusted to the needs of its consuming public as the consuming public also adjusts to this reality (223). Reproduction and reception, thus, become a multidirectional, dynamic, and continuously self-inventing process. This relationship between audience/public and art/media is complex, and with even mainstream media growing more mindful of public responses and attention to social trends and political shifts, an understanding of the influence of one over the other should abandon a linear progression (popular culture predetermines the fiction which writers produce or writers produce fiction that shapes popular culture). Rather there should be a different approach that investigates a multifaceted dynamics of circumstances that produce fiction that responds to public perceptions while attempting to shape it. The

argument of this chapter and the dissertation is that the reproduction of reality as sets of binary oppositions is the result of a combination of factors in which popular fiction and popular perceptions worked collectively and collaboratively without a hierarchy of influence. The reproduction of The Satanic Verses controversy played out on public podiums and forums (which Rushdie consistently used to address the ban and subsequent death threats, as did Khomeini) and played to an already polarized audience in the United States.[29]

Moreover, the implication is that the mode of production (media, The Satanic Verses the book) becomes more central than the work of art reproduced (The Satanic Verses the text). Unlike classical genres such as the epic and classical drama which relied on immediate experience of the literary work (audiences listening to the bard or watching actors perform), what Benjamin calls "aura," reproducible art forms such as the novel and films forego this aura:

> This is the effect of the film—man has to operate with his whole living person, yet forgoing its aura. For aura is tied to his presence; there can be no replica of it. The aura which, on the stage, emanates from Macbeth, cannot be separated for the spectators from that of the actor. However, the singularity of the shot in the studio is that the camera is substituted for the public. Consequently, the aura that envelops the actor vanishes, and with it the aura of the figure he portrays (229).

[29] Which is not to suggest that only American readers/audience were ready to accept the civilized/barbaric binary reproduced in this controversy. So were Muslim masses which were also receptive to the idea of being offended and targeted. However, this research focuses on the production of the binary in the United States and though acknowledges that this is not exclusively American (or western), it will not examine it due to scope limitation.

Benjamin concludes, “The audience identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera. Consequently, the audience takes the position of the camera” (228) which places them in the positions of both spectators and directors, as the new mode of production dispenses with the physical presence of a stage on which events are dramatized (as in plays). The significance of the identification with the mode of reproduction (camera) relates to Gasset’s emphasis on the descriptive nature of the novel that makes the manner by which the reproduction of reality or realistic depictions as central to the genre as the subject matter. It also connects the audience to the production process as much as experiencing the process outcome, reading the novel or watching the film. For instance, fans’ anticipation and rituals while awaiting the publication of the next Harry Potter book and the details in which the media described J. K. Rowling’s process of writing and even transporting the manuscript all become part of the process of reception and its appeal. The public involvement grants it an active role in which s/he feels that s/he participate in the production of art rather than remain merely receptive. Similarly, readers in the west were more intimately connected with the production of the controversy, elevating purchasing the novel and reading it to a support of freedom of speech and defeat of thought control. The effect is an empowerment of the audience that includes them as part of the fiction they buy and read. Phil McCombs in a The Washington Post article published ten days after Khomeini’s edict, described the experience of ‘a reporter’ walking in the DC metro area with a hardcopy of The Satanic Verses. The reporter was often stopped by people on the metro train or on the street, as they wanted to look at the book, touch it, or inquire where they could purchase a copy. The book itself rather than the story became an object on which the binary of us/them and

exotic nature of them are all projected. The article described the mood in America which shifted from mild interest to intense involvement after the February 14 Khomeini's stage entrance, the same Khomeini who held Americans and American media and public attention hostage in 1979. Rushdie and his book were transformed into enigmas by the Khomeini effect, as Americans who would not normally read a literary work whose "baroque style" makes it "unreadable" (Randal 2). Another Washington Post article published the day after the fatwa makes a similar, though less implicit, distinction between "sophisticated" people who can "read *The Satanic Verses* as a novel and understand that the reference to Islam is just fictional" and Muslims protesters who "take it more straightforward" (Trueheart 2). However, neither did the 'unsophisticated' readers in the United States read the book as a novel of a pure work of fiction (hardly a sophisticated depiction of literature).

This chapter's reading of the reading or non-reading of The Satanic Verses is pertinent to the dissertation's thesis. It argues that reading is a dynamic, transformative (Holland), and performative (Iser) process that occurs within an ideological and political context (Jameson). Meanings simultaneously produce and are produced by mediated responses, which are not controlled by one factor or participant (readers, writers, publishers, text, or the market) but a collaboration of all these factors. They are constructed through an interaction of the intentions of the author and the interpretations of the readers mediated by the text. Events in the text are signified by words and the implication of these events are symbolized by "other factors in the imaginary universe, which are themselves signified by words" (Todorov, "Reading a Construction" 73). The defense of The Satanic Verses as merely a novel relies on a "traditional form of

interpretation, based on the search for a single meaning, set out to instruct the reader, consequently, it tended to ignore both the character of the text as a happening and the experience of the reader that is activated by this happening" (Iser 22). Rushdie, who tries to disallow 'misinterpretation' of his novel (it is only fiction, he protests), consequently attempts to dictate a uniformed meaning to his work, a response that is not different from those who called for the ban on the book. Ironically, Rushdie's insistence on the book's right to be read against offense has contributed to the "character of the text" that is inflammatory and contributive to the imagined divide between liberal 'West' and restrictive 'East'. The character of the book and the historical moment in which it was produced and from which responses emerged contributed to the meaning construction of The Satanic Verses regardless of Rushdie's own intentions if not because of them (which is in itself open to interpretation).

Additionally, this chapter contributes to the dissertation's discussion of highbrow and lowbrow literature, as it troubles and complicates the difference between the two. I still argue that the importance and relevance of formula in creating and distinguishing popular fiction, but I also maintain that the formula is not static and predetermined. Highbrow literature can be made to conform to the formula due to the transformative nature of reading which is not dependent on texts and the intentions of their authors. Political and cultural kinds of reading can make the creation of highbrow and lowbrow literature unpredictable and difficult to anticipate. The readers can reshape meanings beyond the formula whether determined linguistically (eloquence of text) or generically (plot and themes), as was the case with The Satanic Verses. The political and cultural production of the book corresponded to an already present understanding of the Muslim

Other, and on its strength was able to overpower the novel. The hegemonic reading of The Satanic Verses made the West and Islam as well as the novel and the book antithetical.

Chapter 3

Nation as Family:

American Family and Arab Family Juxtaposed

Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir once said that there would peace only when Arabs love their children more than they hate us. Queen Silvia of Sweden echoed the same sentiment when she condemned Palestinian mothers for sending their children to be killed by the Israeli army (qtd. in Steinberg)[30]. "Palestinian Body Armor," a political cartoon published by Cox and Forkum, shows a male Hamas militant strapping a child and a toddler to his body. The child wears an "I heart Martyrdom" t-shirt while the baby with a pacifier holds a handgun. Another cartoon by Scott Stantis shows Arab parents sending off their child to blow himself up while they hold a $25,000 'martyr bonus' check. They ask him to "make us proud." These are some of many political

[30] In her M.Phil thesis "The Meaning of Motherhood during the First *Intifada*: 1987-1993", Kanako Mabuchi also quotes Meir and Queen Silvia as representative of the way in which Palestinian familial bonds are denaturalized in western media. Her thesis examines archival materials produced by Palestinians during the first Intifada to counter popularized perceptions that Palestinians use their children as human bombs or shields.

cartoons that show Arab parents' readiness to sacrifice their children and instill in them the aspirations to become suicide bombers when they grow up. In Hollywood movies, audiences see similar scenes in which Arab children are used as human shields. In Stop-Loss (2008), an Iraqi man carries a young child close to his chest while holding a grenade in one hand. The hero of the movie, an American soldier, is forced to shoot both man and child to stop the man from killing everyone.

The belief that Arab children are of little worth to their families, popularized by mass media in the west, dehumanizes Arabs but also casts doubt on the viability and sustainability of their nationalism and nationhood. It is thus no coincidence that the same Golda Meir who cast that judgment, also dismissed the existence of a Palestinian people. Since nationalist discourse is imbued with familial metaphors and rhetoric, Arabs' perceived inability to love their children is portrayed as a larger failure within the national family to care for the weaker members of society. The representation of Arab families as dysfunctional, where filial hatred and incestuous desires prevail, naturalizes Arabs' location in a binary opposition with Americans and their families and allow a hegemonic understanding of the western family that cannot be infiltrated by the Other. As I will argue, the use of the family as symbolic of the nation maintains and naturalizes racial and cultural divides and upholds and fiercely defends the family as a traditional entity that is above any relativist reconceptualization. The American family as an ideal, therefore, is represented as a static state of being rather than a dynamically changing set of relationships. This allows family's representability and elevates it to a marker of difference which is instrumental to the creation of the Other and can be used by the state to sanction hierarchy.

Family ideals vs. actual families

The language of nationalism and nation construction is centrally familial. Vocabulary used to describe belonging to a country or a nation relies heavily on family metaphors: "Foreigners 'adopt' countries that are not their native homes, and are naturalized into the national family. We talk of the Family of Nations, of 'homeland' and native lands'" (McClintock 63). One speaks a mother tongue, speaks of a mother of a nation, and declares that a nation is born. Undoubtedly, the family matters in constructing and imagining a nation and the implication of this centrality goes beyond figures of speech. The use of the family as a metaphor for understanding the nation and creating the nationalist discourse through which a collectivity within set borders can locate itself and explain its existence renders both the family and the nation imaginary and contestable. Thus, the definitions of both the nation and the family are intertwined and interdependent. In this chapter, I will discuss the implications of the nation as family and the use of familial language to define nationalist identity and politics and maintain them. In chapter 4, I will turn to the impact of nationalism on the construction of family ideals and defending family laws and the ways in which the guarding of the stability of the family and its traditional definition matters to nationalist discourse and the successive U.S. governments and their colonialist interests.

However, it is important at the outset to distinguish between family traditions and actual families. Many writers and studies show that families as sociological entities differ significantly from family concepts; while the former is changeable and susceptible to social, economic and political changes, the latter is static and defendable as foundational

to social structures and hierarchies. The 1980s, for instance, were a period of major social changes that affected the structure of the family in the United States (though some writers such as Ralph LaRossa argues that this change is overestimated). More families were headed by single mothers, and a growing number of families consisted of parents who both worked outside the home. However, presidential candidates in the 1980 and 1984 elections emphasized family values as the cornerstone of their social mandate as if the family were a static and a singular entity, if an entity at all[31]. The permanence of family values or ideals is important in defining other institutions and concepts, such as nationalism and imperialism. Joane Nagel points out that normative definitions of masculinity, which are important in the production of family traditions, emphasize ideals rather than realistic and actual depictions and reflection of how real men are. For instance, most men are not like John Wayne even though his onscreen characters are held as a model of manhood (246). Maintaining an ideal of what a family is or should be grants governments and institutions the leverage to sanction certain social conducts and racial and gender hierarchies, normalize perceptions, and, as will be shown, legitimize stereotypes. As Patricia Hill Collins argues, the implementability of family ideals is irrelevant to their powerful influence on racial and gender relations in the U.S. domestic and foreign politics. Thus, traditional family ideals of gender roles and the racial purity of the family might not be reflected in contemporary marriages and family structures, but these ideals determine and shape social welfare and nationalization rules. (64-5).

[31] The emphasis on family values in election rhetoric and political speeches is not exclusive to the 1980s and takes different forms. The protection of 'traditional family' against the legalization of same-sex marriages was a key issue in the 2004 presidential election. This will be discussed in chapter 4.

The significance of the family to nationalist rhetoric is its allegedly inherent and permanent nature. Family as an ideal is seen as timeless and ahistorical which fixates it as a site of stability. Aware of this, many combating groups and campaigns often use the family rhetoric and symbol to foreground their political stances. For instance, while abolitionists emphasized the devastating and disruptive impact slavery had on black families, anti-abolition campaigners opposed abolishing slavery on the ground that freeing the slaves would threaten the racial purity of white families. In fixating the family as an ideal, both government and oppressed groups can use it as an argument in support of their opposing agendas (Collins 63).

The family also allows nationalist discourse to present its progression as "natural" and "organic" rather than being historical and violently disruptive. By using the family metaphor, which suggests natural movement forward of a hierarchical (parental) nature, national discourse advocates itself as "evolutionary" rather than "revolutionary" (McClintock 65). It claims continuity where there is rupture and naturalizes its exclusion and oppression as benign and organic. The use of familial rhetoric helps absolve nationalism from its temporal paradox as a movement that presents itself as modern yet still looks nostalgically towards the past and upholds traditions (65-6). Thus, the "evolutionary family" succeeds in masquerading "the idea of *social discontinuity* (hierarchy through space) and temporal *discontinuity* (hierarchy across time) as a natural, *organic continuity*. The idea of the Family of Man became invaluable in its capacity to give state and imperial intervention the alibi of nature" (65). What materializes is a nationalist imperial project that moves liberally through space and time, constructing hierarchies modeled on familial relations that defy temporal (modern/premodern) and

spatial (North/South, East/West) concerns because they are fixed categories (parents/children, husbands/wives) of no tangible progression or development. What nationalism achieves is attaining the power to write history while locating itself outside history.

Since family as a construct is benignly hierarchical (parents over children and elder children over younger siblings), it becomes a useful tool for advocating a similar model for the nation and among nations. The application of familial rhetoric on non-familial institutions and concepts, such as nationalism and imperialism naturalizes the social, racial, and gender hierarchies, which are central to their formation. Collins emphasizes the role "traditional family ideals" have played in constructing a nation by mapping out and sustaining racial and gender hierarchies (64-5). For instance, public reluctance to view domestic violence as seriously as other forms of non-familial violence stems from the ideal that normalizes male dominance over women within the family structure (Collins 66). The "invisibility" of crimes against African Americans and homosexuals, unless caught on tape, originates from the same ideal. As domestic violence is a family matter, racial, gender, and sexual hate crimes are the concerns of the national family that should be dealt with in similar discretion (Collins 66). Further, the distribution of power in the American society mirrors that of the family ideals, and the use of nation as family allows the naturalization of the government's regulation of gender and race relations. Therefore, the gender and racial hierarchical distribution in politics in the United States can be justified as a natural progression that mirrors its family model rather than being symptomatic of a system of racial and gender inequality (Collins 65). One can see this division of roles which originated from family ideals in the dominance

of white males in political institutions and workplace and the 'assistant' role played by white females as both "administer to allegedly less-qualified people of color who themselves struggle with the same family rhetoric" (Collins 65).[32] What Collins argues is that even when actual families progress beyond some of these hierarchies, such as the distribution of power between fathers and mothers, the model attached to traditional family ideals persists and helps maintain and legitimize social and racial hierarchies.

The traditional family model also naturalizes hierarchy amongst nations and countries. As Collins and McClintock have shown, naturalizing nationalist hierarchy as organic has made it legitimate for colonialist countries to enforce their authority over other races under the pretext of parental care. As slavers in the South presented black slaves as children who need to be cared for, European governments advocated their imperialist agendas by portraying their nations as caretakers of so-called less developed races in Africa, the Near East, and the Indian subcontinent resigning them into a permanent "waiting room of history" (Chakrabarty 8). For instance, countries in Africa and the Arab region in early twentieth century, which were under European military and political control were described as a 'protectorate.'

[32] The 2008 U.S. presidential election campaign presents an interesting example of the use of age, gender, and race in constructing the national identity of the United States (of which the White House is an emblem). The Clinton campaign designed a TV ad centered on whom the American people want to answer the 3am phone call that determines the fate of the nation. The Clinton campaign during the democratic primary race and later the McCain campaign during the election race emphasized that then Senator Obama was not experienced enough or ready to receive and handle that call. However, since the black race whether in the United States or in Africa has been long reduced to an infantile stage indefinitely waiting maturity, the stress on Obama's youth and inexperience inevitably evoked racial connotations. When then Senator Clinton mistakenly described her experience arriving in former Yugoslavia as running for cover under snipers' fire, the Obama campaign wondered whether she was ready to receive that 3am phone call. Clinton's attempt to conjure up white female captivity narrative (being under foreign danger) backfired, throwing doubts on her ability to lead the nation and take a role in the nationalist familial roles beyond assistance. Senator McCain's age was also a factor in determining his readiness to answer the 3am call. This was compounded by his choice of Sarah Palin as a running mate who was consistently described as being a heartbeat away from the presidency.

Since nation as family also operates spatially, family ideals gender and racialize spaces, thus protecting these spaces by turning their boundaries into a family matter (Collins 68-9). Traditional family ideals feminize private spheres and masculinize public spaces, a division which heightens nationalist calls for defending the homeland from intruders as men protect their homes from uninvited strangers. The representation of home as the sphere of women was used in resisting abolitionism in the American South as freed black slaves were represented as threats to white women. This argument is also prevalent in anti-immigrant campaigns, which painted immigrants as threats to American homes and the purity of the race (Kaplan). Because spaces are spatial translation of family ideals, they come to represent the home and its boundaries. Thus, the emergence of the ghettos and Jim Crow laws are an extension of the family ideal that opposes interracial marriages and the mixes of the races (Collins 67-9).

In the military, another nationalist institution whose construction and self-advocacy are built on traditional family ideals, women are used as a symbol of the country. Like home, the homeland is seen as a private sphere, thus the association with women. When feminized, the country is perceived as vulnerable and defenseless and its protection is a patriotic duty that validates the masculinity of the mostly male army. Nagel suggests that women matter significantly to nationalism in its militant form because they are perceived as mothers of the nation, wives and daughters and "bearers of masculine honour" (256). In the movie G.I. Jane (1997), the plot revolves around the infiltration and penetration of the male dominated U.S. Navy SEALS by a woman, Jordan O'Neal. The sergeant who is training the soldiers believes that the presence of female soldiers weakens and demoralizes his men. To prove his point, in one grueling exercise,

he threatens to anally rape O'Neal, which agitates her male colleagues. In his simulation of the rape, the sergeant enacts the rape of the country and when the rape is anal, it emasculates the soldiers. The heteronormativity of the army structure is crucial because altering it will destabilize family ideals themselves and denaturalizes the social hierarchy. This leads Nagel to conclude that the cause of the resistance to the presence of openly homosexual and female soldiers in the American army is the concern over the traditional definition of masculinity and gender roles. If the identity of the American army is dependent on traditional masculinity, U.S. imperialist ambitions and dominance over other countries stands to lose its ground if this gendered construct is troubled. Since home stands for the homeland, then other territories and nations as potential regions of conquest are also feminized. As the white woman stands as a symbol of western and American homeland, so does the non-white woman in non-white regions. As will be shown, the Arab woman, veiled or unveiled, becomes a symbol of a homogenized Arab culture and its feminized nationalism.

Another important movie that locates the Arab family within global politics is Babel (2006). The movie switches between four seemingly separate stories about family before revealing that they are all 'related' by a gun. A Japanese widower dealing with a lonely deaf daughter gives a Moroccan guide a rifle as a gift during a visit to Morocco. The Moroccan guide sells the rifle to his neighbor who gives it to his two sons to use while tending their herds. While the two sons, fueled by sibling rivalry, compete to prove who is a more skillful hunter, the younger of the two shoots at a tourist bus. On the bus, the bullet seriously wounds an American woman, who is going on a make-or-break vacation with her estranged husband. Back home in the United States, the American

couple's Mexican nanny is left solely to care for their two children and is forced to take them with her across the border to attend her son's wedding in Mexico where she loses them and consequently her legal status in the United States. Through the four families, a complex and predominantly violent relationship is constructed within the global family. Each family is rattled by the same weapon of destruction (the rifle) which brings them all together in an ominous message about the status and future of globalism.

The movie succeeds in constructing this global family by relying on stereotypical depictions of racially different families. The Japanese family is cold and distant with the father continuously removed from his needy daughter by his business concerns. The Mexicans are rowdy, dirty, cruel, and drunk. The wedding scene looks like a carnival in the middle of a dusty scene. The Arabs live in slums in the unbearable heat of the desert. The movie represents the Arab family as stereotypically dysfunctional. The age hierarchy is disrupted when the younger brother excels in rifle aiming over his older brother. His exceptional skill, however, is tempered by his sexual perversions. Instead of engaging in typical adolescence acts of sexual curiosity by peeping on a female neighbor, he directs his desires towards his own sister. He peeps on his sister who, knowing she is watched by her brother, begins to undress in a pornographically constructed scene of fulfilled incestuous desires and striptease show seen through a peephole. When the elder brother confronts him about his unnatural relationship with his sister, Yusuf defends his action as consensual before sitting behind a big rock and masturbating. Played by a diminutive actor, Yusuf still looks like a child, which adds to the unnaturalness of his sexual acts and desires. Being an Arab, When all secrets are revealed and the father learns that his son is the one who injured the American woman and about the relationship between his

daughter and son, he lines up his children and slaps them in the face. In almost an identical scene, the Moroccan detective investigating the bus shooting lines up the guide, who sold the rifle to Yusuf's father, and his wife and slaps him for answers. What happens within the Arab Moroccan family reflects the oppressive and abusive hierarchy within the national Arab family where violence and dominance are the norm.

Babel, thus, presents an image of the Arab family built on centuries-old stereotype of incest and violent sibling rivalry. The family's violence, however, erupts on a global scene and triggers international unrest when one aspect of the stereotype of the family in general and the Arab family in particular that is of the hierarchy of age (the superiority of elder boys over their younger brothers) is disrupted. At the end of the movie, Yusuf surrenders to the Moroccan police after they shoot his unarmed brother. The American woman begins her physical and emotional recovery when she is transported to a hospital and reconciles with her husband after the ordeal heals their differences. The Japanese father finally hears his daughter's cry for help and in an eerie scene hugs his naked daughter as the camera zooms out showing her full nudity in the arms of her fully dressed father. The Mexican nanny is deported and arrives tearful at the border to the welcome of her newly wed son. As for the Moroccan family, we learn nothing about what happens to them, whether the elder brother dies or the younger son's confession is believed and the incident is regarded as an accident rather than a 'terrorist' attack. Above all, the Arab family is left without redemption. As part of the international and the transnational family,

Arabs are the instigators of violence (even when the weapons are not their own). They are the unruly brother whose digressions, even if random and unintentional, are destructive[33].

The Juxtaposition of Arab women and Western women as symbols of the nation

In the 1987 movie Baby Boom, J.C. Wiatt (pronounced 'white') a decidedly single white woman, inherits a baby girl from her cousin imposing a situation that jeopardizes her career-centered life and her chances of becoming the only female partner in the company in which she works. In one scene when she is interviewing nannies for baby Elizabeth, a Muslim woman makes a brief appearance but an indelible impression. In a slew of extremely inadequate candidates, a hunched Muslim woman, wearing a *burqa* that covers her face except for her eyes, lists her 'motherly' credentials as her ability to instill in baby Elizabeth respect for men, her desire not to speak or be spoken to, and her lack of need for a bed, as she prefers to sleep on the floor. The importance of the Muslim woman's appearance is that it culturalizes her inadequacy while the other interviewees' eccentricities remain individual and exaggerated. In addition, when seen in the context of the movie's main plot of motherhood vs. career, the Muslim woman plays the foil to western womanhood and feminism which halfheartedly attempt to raise some serious questions over America's readiness to accept working mothers but without troubling the system of gender or rendering the concessions the heroine is about to make uncomfortable.

[33] The film can also be read along the North/South lines, as the aching Japanese and American families are reconciled while the Mexican woman's life is destroyed and the Moroccan family's fate is left untold though is predictably bleak. Furthermore, the racial stereotypes are also present within the global family with Arabs as the creators of senseless death and Mexicans the dirty and inept laborers who freely slip across the southern border.

J.C. decides to resign from her job when her boss relegates her to a ‘supporting’ role after her attention and dedication are compromised by her sudden motherhood. Her next move is not to look for another job, begin her own business, or sue the company for discrimination, but rather she moves her new family from New York to the country town of Hadleyville in Vermont after she buys a house and a piece of land over the phone. Prepared by the introduction of the veiled Muslim woman, the movie continues its zigzag movement between city/country, motherhood/career, and self-absorption/selflessness each side of the binary presented in its extreme and nonnegotiable form. In Hadleyville, J.C.’s house and nerves collapse as the consequences of her rash and unjustifiable choices catch up with her. However, in small town where her plumber is the town’s main musical entertainer, the vet is also a teacher, the mayor is the vet’s nurse and occasional babysitter, the duality of roles, which seemed impossible in New York, becomes realizable here. Therefore, J.C. triumphs in the countryside where she failed in the city. She starts her own home-run business of homemade baby food opening a new market to an unexplored field and in proper vindication, she returns to the place of her former employment but this time as a client whose business is sought after by the same corporation which deemed her unqualified to represent it. Tempted by millions of dollars, J.C. ends the movie with a speech on the oppression of choice between home and work which all women should not be forced to make. Then she proceeds to make a choice and reject the corporation’s offer opting instead to go home to her daughter, business, and the vet whom she is romancing, but not without declaring that if they could bring her product to the supermarkets of America, so could she.

Baby Boom succeeds on so many levels in undermining what it appears to advocate. It criticizes the male corporate mentality but restores its legitimacy by amplifying the heroine's erratic nature and inability to make sound judgments. It champions small business over corporation but only when it corporatizes the family. The movie also uses the figure of the child as a corrective device. When J.C. gets in an argument with the vet over the possibility of moving back to New York, baby Elizabeth frowns ominously on the scene. When senior partners visit J.C. in her office to assess her potentials to become a partner, the otherwise docile Elizabeth rejects her milk bottle and looks agitated. Mostly, Baby Boom sees and represents the world in constant binary oppositions fundamentally grounded in gendered politics. In this context, the image of the Muslim woman in *burqa* gains a new dimension of meaning beyond comic relief. Juxtaposed with J.C.'s experience as a single white mother, the Muslim woman rationalizes the illogic of extremities in the film and contextualizes its excessive physical comedy and reliance on exaggeration. While J.C. condemns the oppression of choice, the presence of the veiled woman reminds her and us as viewers that the American woman at least *has* a choice. Through juxtaposed nonverbal commentary, the Muslim and western women's experiences seem at odd and the sacrifices J.C. is about to make are softened in contrast with the visible invisibility of the Muslim woman. The argument of this dissertation and its interest in juxtaposition is the way it reveals this nonverbal form of opposition of Arab and American experiences. Its subtlety which expects no reaction (after all the Muslim woman's scene is barely 30 second long) passes itself as natural. How else can the Muslim woman be represented, particularly in a story about the struggle of single white mothers in America? In this chapter, I will unpack this presumed if not

mythical simplicity. The structure of the Arab family and Muslim Arab woman stereotypes is multilayered and so is its juxtaposition with the traditional American family ideals.

Collins argues that since racial relations derive meaning from family rhetoric,

> [t]he actual racial categories matter less than the persistent belief in race itself as an enduring principle of social organization that connotes family ties. Thus, hierarchies of gender, age, and sexuality that exist *within* different racial groups (whose alleged family ties lead to a commonality of interest) mirrors the hierarchy characterizing relations *among* groups. In this way, racial inequality becomes comprehensible and justified via family rhetoric. (65-6)

This point of commonality contributes to the imposed naturalness of hierarchy since it occurs across racial groups. Additionally, it creates a codependency between hierarchies within groups and among groups. In other words, the racial hierarchy in the American society depends on other forms of hierarchies such as gender within Asian, black, Arab and other racial groups. In this context of understanding, the aforementioned discussion of the traditional family ideals in America relies on a similarly stable perception of equally traditional family ideals in Arab culture and society. There lies the cause of the collective western resistance to the idea that the dynamics within Arab families and the status of Arab women have changed and that the majority of Arab and Muslim women do not live in harems, all wear veils or are forced to cover up, and do not live in tents. The disruption of the stereotype of the Arab family troubles the traditional family ideals that exist and regulate racial and gender relations in the West and in the United States. If the

family ideals in the United States is based on a binary relation with the Other whose familial structure naturally lacks coherence and permanence, the durability of the Arab family as stereotyped is crucial to the durability and believability of the American traditional family ideals.

This is the sentiment expressed and the argument suggested by several Muslim and Arab writers and some western scholars. Homa Hoodfar in "The Veil in their Minds and on our Heads" says that only when the story the Muslim woman narrates about her experience 'back home' agrees with the stereotype held in the western imagination does she gain a voice and an audience. When Hoodfar attempted to explain to women in Canada that women's experiences in Iran, her country, were multidimensional and that the veil had a multiplicity of meanings, she was called an apologist. Many Muslim and Arab women who live or have lived in western countries, including myself, face this difficulty of becoming audible when our narratives deviate from the stereotype of gender oppression. Outside our countries, we carry double existence as ourselves and as markers of cultural difference. In his study of the Arab and Muslim stereotype in the United States, Michael Suleiman found that the 'Arab' and 'Muslim' categories convey more negativity in the American mind than the sub- and national groups, for example, 'Egyptian' or 'Lebanese' (36). One of my friends who, like myself, is a Jordanian woman studying in the United States, was surprised when her academic advisor, upon the completion of her degree, expressed hope that when she returned to Jordan, she would not wear the veil. She, unlike myself, does not wear the headscarf or the veil and the fact that she traveled alone from Jordan to the United States and lived there alone for four years and independently all should suggest that she does not come from a social or a familial

background that forces her to wear a dress code against her wishes. At that point, she underwent a transformation under the western male gaze from Hala, an individual from Jordan, to an archetype of Arab women who exist only stereotypically. During an orientation I attended as a first year Fulbright student, the organizers asked the exchange foreign students to wear their traditional costumes for a photo-op. Students from Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent were the ones who had to bear the burden of displaying diversity, as students from Europe and South America came to the event wearing 'regular' clothes. While we were gathering for the picture, I was surprised when one of the organizers asked me if I could go to the front row and stand next to the other students who chose to wear 'special' costumes. Since I was wearing a shirt and a pair of jeans, I did not expect to join the 'cultural' row until I realized that what set me apart was my headscarf. Like the sari, the headscarf was assigned a cultural meaning which I wasn't aware of until I saw myself through western lens. Like the Muslim woman in Baby Boom, our individualities are relegated to a footnote while our presence becomes an embodiment of a narrative subtext, a fictionalized archetype of what Arab/Muslim woman is. The visibility of our cultural difference, whether a veil, a headscarf, a darker complexion, or a foreign name, substitutes any narrative we can tell and communicate.

In her study of the Arab family as the Other, Judith E. Tucker laments the absence of serious study of the history of the Arab family except as a monolithic entity, "the mirror opposite of its Western European counterpart" (196). Thus, the Arab family "remained basically unchanged, undergoing neither the signal historical transformations of family structure that paved the way for capitalism in Europe nor the process of 'modernization' that promoted individualism at the expense of family control." The

stereotype of the Arab family as one model where marriages are arranged, women silenced, children illiterate, and spheres gendered rationalizes its oppositionality to western and white families and stabilizes western models as unpatriarchal. In reality; however, “the family in the Middle East was not an ahistorical institution expressing elaborate kin relations against which we can measure and highlight the dynamism of the European family. Rather, it was a unit of economic, social, and political relations situated within a particular historical context” (196). Like the western traditional family ideals and rhetoric which lend western nationalism legitimacy and stability, the traditional Arab family ideals function similarly to produce contrary results:

> The Arab family in western imagination, which is reflected in its media emerges as an extended family of patrilineal descent that preserved its integrity at least partly through the arranged marriage of very young women, often to their cousins. Within the family, male dominance was ensured by the practice of secluding the women, thereby effectively preventing them from exercising their property rights. Female submission and obedience was further enforced by the actual or potential practice of polygyny. (Tucker 198)

Tucker sums up the stereotypes of the ‘Other’ Arab family in three perceptions which all center on the Arab woman: the spatial seclusion of women because they bear the family honor, the absence of women’s consent in pre-arranged marriages, and the powerless status of women within these marriages and in their families. She suggests that unlike the western belief in the prevalence of this model in all Arab societies in which

women are secluded and silenced, her study of families in the Arab cities of Nablus and Cairo in the nineteenth century reveals that such a pattern existed only in upper-class society. Lower and working classes could not afford to keep the women at home to be serviced, as they relied on their income as well. Arranged marriages were also more common in upper class society and elites which married off their young daughters to their cousins to keep property and money in the family. Lower class families did not have much of wealth to exercise any power over their daughters' marriages. It was the same in pre-Revolution Iran where only upper class women were secluded in separate quarters while middle and poor class women were visible in the labor market. Hoodfar marks the shift in the meaning of the veil and the seclusion of women in Iran with the Shah's ban of the veil and the headscarf. The enforcement of a European style of clothing led to the widespread seclusion of middle class and lower class women who refused to leave their homes 'naked.' As a result, Iranian women who prior to the ban were active economically and socially had to remain at home and rely on male relatives to sell their commodities and do trade negotiations on their behalves (10-12). The gendering of spheres into public and private, which was prevalent only in Iran's upper class society, was now widely observed and self-imposed across social classes. The result was the imposition of a form of harem by a vehement implementation of Eurocentrism. Anti-Shah Iranians responded to his westernization of the country by attaching a nationalist meaning to the veil and transforming it into a battleground.

The prevalence of harems and the gendering of public and private spaces in upper class Arab society in the nineteenth century were not a departure from the condition of their counterparts in England and America. English and American Victorian societies

also viewed marriages as an economic institution centered on women and arranged their marriages accordingly. Women endured restrictions in movement and were confined to the private sphere while their own money was managed by male relatives or agents (Hamilton, “The Arab Woman in U.S. Popular Culture” 176). It was rather in eroticizing the harems and sexualizing the veil that the west orientalized Arab and Muslim communities and distanced itself from any commonality with the East. It is no coincidence that this change in the representation of the Orient and Muslim women occurred under Victorian morality and norms which often did not regard western women differently from the way they imagined Muslim women were being treated (Hoodfar 8). Between 1800 and 1950, 60,000 books were published on the Orient and Hoodfar notes that their “primary mission . . . was to depict the colonized Arabs/Muslims as inferior/backwards who were urgently in need of progress offered to them by the colonial superiors.” In western narratives, the harem underwent a transformation from being female quarters which were similar to Victorian households to “places where Muslim men imprisoned their wives, who had nothing to do except to beautify themselves and cater to their husbands’ huge sexual appetites” (Hoodfar 8). This imaginary reproduction of the harem constructs a multiplicity of stereotypes of the imprisoned and helpless Arab and Muslim women who are sexualized and objectified for the pleasures of Arab men and western men alike, and the aggrendization of the sexual ‘appetite’ of Arab and Muslim men that dominates their conducts and clouds their judgment. These intertwined stereotypes form the basis of how Arab men and women can be acceptably represented in western media and fiction. In popular fiction, for instance, Arab men are often depicted as lecherous people who are controlled by their desire for women (and particularly blond

western women) (Ibahim in The Haj, Khalil in The Little Drummer Girl) while Arab women are either secluded in harems (Ibrahim's wives) or are only skilled in using their sex appeal as belly-dancers or spies to control Arab or western men (Laila in The Fifth Horseman, Sonja in The Key to Rebecca). These representations are also common in Hollywood films.

The Arab and Muslim woman is simultaneously veiled and unveiled by white male-dominated narrative that covers her to uncover her. The Orient, therefore, is visible to the west through a peephole transforming the 'knowledge' of the Orient into an erotic and pornographic experience (Macmaster and Lewis 123, Alloula). The East/Orient becomes a Panopticon where people are monitored and observed by an invisible western eye. This mythical recreation of the Arab East which centers on the family and the Arab woman works identically to the way American nationalism projected itself on the western/American family ideals. While the traditional family ideals in the United States naturalize hierarchy domestically and internationally, the stereotype of the Arab family naturalizes Arabs' cultural, social, and political/national inferiority. If the family stands for the nation, the dysfunctional Arab family reflects Arabs' failed nationhood and evil nationalism that is bent on destroying the West, a common theme in Hollywood movies (Shaheen) and some of the bestsellers examined in this chapter.

The narrative structure of The Haj is founded on the inseparability of Ibrahim's dysfunctional family from the larger Palestinian national family's doomed state of being. It tells the story of Haj Ibrahim's family in British-mandated Palestine in 1920s. Ibrahim is the ultimate patriarchal authority figure in his family and in the village as its *mukhtar*. He regards all Arabs as his rivals including his own son, Ishmael, and his women as

possessions. The condemnation of Arab patriarchy; however, is voiced by Arab characters, Ishmael's narration and Ibrahim and other characters' monologues. Uris creates a parallel of narration between Ishmael as one of the story's narrators, and the omniscient voice that retells the historical events that led to the creation of Israel and the displacement of Palestinians and the content of Arab characters' minds and hearts. Instead of allowing Arabs to speak for themselves, Uris gives them voices only to agree with the hegemonic narrative of 'history' in the novel which condemns Arabs as self-destructive. Therefore, Ibrahim's anger and animosity are not directed against Jewish settlers, the Kibbutz, or the British but towards other Arabs. The novel's introductory chapter, narrated by Ibrahim's eldest son Ishmael, sets the tone and principles of Arab life as a homogeneous failure at the most basic of human connections. Sibling hatred, incestuous desires, oppressive patriarchy, poisonous yet highly erotic polygamy signify the inevitable destruction of Haj Ibrahim's family (loss of fortune, rape of his wives, honor killing of his daughter, Ishmael's madness, and Ibrahim's death at the hands of his eldest son) and of Arabs possession of their own statehood:

> We do not have leave to love one another and we have long ago lost the ability. It was so written twelve hundred years earlier. Hate is our overpowering legacy and we have regenerated ourselves by hatred from decade to decade, generation to generation, century to century. The return of the Jews has unleashed that hatred, exploding wildly, aimlessly, into a massive force of self-destruction. In ten, twenty, thirty years the world of Islam will begin to consume itself in madness. We cannot live with ourselves . . . we never have. We cannot live with or accommodate the outside world . . . we never have. We are incapable of change.

> The devil who makes us crazy is now devouring us. We cannot stop ourselves. And if we are not stopped we will march, with the rest of the world, to the Day of the Burning. What we are now witnessing, Ishmael, now is the beginning of Armageddon. (522-3)

Upon hearing these words, Ishmael enacts their inevitability and kills his father, the authoritative figure in his family and in the village as its *mukhtar*. He graphically describes to his father the gang rape of his mother at the hands of Iraqi soldiers. As Ibrahim kills his daughter Nada for 'dishonoring' the family, Ishmael avenges her death by retelling his mother's 'dishonor' and inducing his father's heart attack. While Arab men in the novel are consumed with hatred and resentment for each other, Arab women's subjugation and sexuality, represented as matter-of-fact, are used as destructive weapons against each other. Continuing its narrative structure that intertwines the fictional story of Ibrahim's family with 'actual' historical events leading to the 1948 War, The Haj narrates the destruction of this family as a translation of the fatalism of Arab and Palestinian nationalisms.

"So before I was nine I had learned the basic canon of Arab life. It was me against my brother; me and my brother against our father; my family against my cousin and the clan; the clan against the tribe; and the tribe against the world. And all of us against the infidels" (15). With these words, the first chapter in The Haj concludes. What is significant about these words uttered by Ishmael, one of the multiple narrators in the novel, is not only the way in which the Arab family is categorized as divided and lacking familial bonding that goes beyond strategic alliances (not least the absence of women in the structure of power) but more importantly the construction of the family as a

microcosm of society and the nation. The narration begins with the family as a prelude to an understanding of the history of the Arab society and the genesis of the conflict in the Middle East. The first chapter, which provides an introduction to a hierarchy of power within Ishmael's family is followed by a historical account of the social and political development leading to the 1948, war narrated this time by an omniscient voice. The narration, therefore, reflects the narrative progression from the personal/familial to the general/national. While Ishmael tells us about himself and his family, the authorial voice informs us of the historical development which will lead to the creation of Israel and the demise of the Palestinian nationhood and the potentiality of their nationhood and nation-state, according to the novel. Even though the storytelling in The Haj is constructed on a diversity of voices, the stories echo each other[34]. Uris builds spaces of self-condemnation by allowing Arabs to tell readers about these failures. The multiple narrators technique in the novel does not destabilize the centrality of a literary, historical, and social univocal narrative voice; on the contrary, it collapses facts and fiction into a univocal representation of the 'Arab mind' that is consumed with hatred for others and the Arab family as representative of destructive Arab nationalism. Uris gives Arab characters voices only to agree with the hegemonic narrative of 'history' in the novel which condemns Arabs as self-destructive. Therefore, Arabs in The Haj have no hope of redemption for the narrative relies on cultural and social monoliths to rationalize the genesis of the Palestinian Question as a consequence of Arab self-destruction and not Israeli occupation. The uniformity of the history in The Haj is constructed upon the stability of Arab patriarchy and gender roles within the Arab family. As in Full Circle,

[34] For a lengthy discussion of the way *The Haj* veils its univocal vision of the Arabs under multivocality, see Elise Salem Manganaro's "Voicing the Arab: Multivocality and Ideology in Leon Uris' The Haj."

Star, and Pet Sematary, the family is a metonymy of the nation; however, unlike these novels in which the American family is either the setting of tribulation and redemption (Full Circle and Star) or punishment and correction (Pet Sematary), the Arab family's unraveling is represented as the norm and the natural consequence of an inherent inability to build a familial structure (The Haj).

In King's Pet Sematary (1983), Louis and Rachel Creed move their family to a new home in a small town in Maine near a dangerous highway used by fast driving trucks. When the family cat Church is run over by one of the trucks, Jud the Creeds' neighbor, tells Louis about a magical cemetery, which used to be a Native American burial ground before the town children mistakenly renamed it 'sematary' and used it to bury their deceased pets. The cemetery has supernatural powers, as whatever is buried in it, regains life. Louis buries Church in the cemetery but when the cat returns from the dead, it comes in a deformed and evil form. The story takes a cyclical shape when Gage, Louis and Rachel's youngest child, runs off to the dangerous highway and is killed in a traffic accident, and his mourning father buries him in the supernatural cemetery from which Gage returns as a demonic creature. He kills Jud and Rachel before Louis kills him. After losing both his son again and his wife, Louis decides to bury Rachel in the magical cemetery and the novel ends with her entering home, as we hear her calling, 'darling' but do not see—though we anticipate—in what form she returns.

Louis, The father figure, has two conflicting representational aspects that complicate the story's moral resolution. As a strong critique of science that has abandoned morality, the novel presents Louis as the man of science who seems to be doomed by the nature of his rational position that pits him against moral decisions.

Therefore, when his son Gage dies, his scientific mentality prevents him from committing the moral action of accepting death as an eventuality. Instead, he buries Gage in a cemetery with a supernatural power that resurrects the dead. Consequently, the novel faces a dilemma in condemning an act of transgression against nature while maintaining the primacy of family reunion. The sudden death of Gage disrupts the family and while his unnatural return predictably yields horrific results, condemning its restoration threatens the construction of the family as nation. To resolve its dilemma, Pet Sematary locates the transgression outside the heteronormative American family, a tendency Steven Bruhm traces in popular fiction in his essay "Nightmare on Sesame Street: or, The Self-Possessed Child." He argues that popular fiction and movies often represent the demonic child as the creation of sources which are outside of the family such as Satan, aliens, and genetic engineering. This externalization of the evilness of the Gothic Child not only maintains the wholeness and wholesomeness of the family as an entity and institution but it is also an embodiment of xenophobia and homophobia (101)[35]. The American family is left, therefore, guiltless of the creation of the monstrous child, the unimaginable horror of which emanates from this paradox that seems to disrupt the naturalness of 'child = innocence'. Thus, its inception has to be equally unnatural and locatable outside American values of which the family is an emblem. By insistence on "the sanctity of the child," children were viewed as "being invaded – by ideas of communism and atheism in the 1950s, by feminism and homosexualism in the 1960s and

[35] In another essay, "Picture this: Stephen King's Queer Gothic" Bruhm looks at the use of homosexuality in King's The Shining (1977) in which a child is haunted in a demonic hotel designed by a homosexual couple.

1970s (not that any of these categories is so clearly defined)" producing the Gothic Child (100).

In Pet Sematary, the evilness of Gage the Gothic Child is associated with two Others, homosexuals and Native Americans. The cemetery's supernatural power emanates from its location on a Native American burial ground. It is this association that disrupts the natural cycle of life and death; therefore, once resurrected, Gage is engaged in a process of moral corrections and discipline which is aggressively heteronormative. He directly goes to Jud, their neighbor, who reveals to Louis the supernatural power of the graveyard that leads to the 'violation' of Gage. After taking revenge on the man who 'gave' him his second life, Gage kills the person who gave him his first life, his mother Rachel. The mother's death at the hand of her child threatens to disrupt the order restored by the first murder. Aware of this potential disruption, the narrative reintroduces order by reinstating Louis as the father figure who kills the son he has recreated. Bruhm recognizes the murder of Gage as a point that "returns [Louis] to the position of responsible father and keeper of order" (107). The second and final death of Gage redeems the corruption of the Creed family by its association with Native American magic. However, the novel does not conclude with restored order for Louis decides to bury his wife in the magical cemetery even with the knowledge of the form in which she will return. He believes that Gage was demonic because Louis waited too long before he buried him. His attempt to correct the mistake by instantly burying Rachel suggests Louis' reliance on scientific analysis of his actions rather than a belief in the immorality of his attempt to tamper with the cycle of nature. As a man of science, Louis can be interpreted as the embodiment of the questionable morality of science and Enlightenment

rationality; however, Jesse Nash argues that Louis' presumed rationality does not emanate from character construction but rather from King's insistence on imposing this rationality (156) in order to critique it. Louis' actions do not delineate any grasp of the simplest act of rationality: that is, of causality. Burying a deceased body in the supernatural cemetery results in the resurrection of demonic creatures, which are disconnected from their previous selves as evidenced by the experiment with Church the cat and Gage. However, Louis rejects this principle of cause-and-effect and repeats the same actions even when the data proves they will yield the same outcomes. The imposition of rationality serves the determinist and traditional aspects of King's writing which seeks to moralize and condemn. The need to place characters in moral categories satisfies the demand of the readers of popular fiction to create worlds in which punishment and rewards, condemnation and praise can be bestowed on characters clearly and unquestionably. The novel ends with the terrifying return of Rachel who lays a "cold hand" on his shoulder foreshadowing Louis' death by the monster he has created. The narrative punishes him for his inability to relinquish his scientific mentality and seek redemption. What Louis the science man is capable of is repetition of mistakes rather than arriving at a moral action.

While the Creed family is transformed into a site of retribution, the family in Steel's Star and Full Circle is where the heroines seek and attain redemption. Both women's lives are shattered by sexual violence as Crystal is raped by her brother-in-law and Tana by her future stepbrother. These acts of violence are not the result of unfortunate events but rather the climactic moments of their families' collapse following the deaths of their fathers and the failure of matriarchy. Jean, Tana's mother, is content to

be her boss' standby mistress, a life choice that earns her her daughter's resentment and strains their relationship. When her lover's son rapes Tana, Jean retreats into disbelief and denial that alienates her daughter and breaks the family. Crystal's relationship with a jealous mother worsens after the death of her father. Their relationship is plagued with the mother's incessant insinuations of incest between Crystal and her father before his death. These accusations are eventually realized when Crystal is raped by her brother-in-law, the man who assumes the role of the man of the family after the loss of the father. Unlike Tana whose trauma leads her to introversion and professional but not emotional growth, Crystal confronts her rapist in a violent standoff that ends with the accidental death of her brother and her half-voluntary departure from her home.

Even though both characters' struggle emanates from family failures, the urgency to restore what has been ruptured dominates the rest of the novels. Full Circle, like Daddy, has a deceptive structure. It focuses the narrative on the mother, Jean, implying that she will be the heroine of the story, only to shift emphasis to her daughter, Tana, (in Daddy the narrative refocuses on the husband/father). Jean marries young to Andrew and soon becomes a mother and a widow when he is killed in World War II. Unlike Oliver in Daddy, who dedicates his life to his children when his wife Sarah leaves the family to go back to school, Jean engages in a long-term relationship with a married man. This is the point in which we realize that Jean is not a Steel heroine. As a mistress who is content to be the other woman, Jean threatens the traditional family ideals of monogamy and the traditional feminine role of matriarchy. The consequences of Jean's choices traumatize her daughter Tana who is raped by the son of Jean's lover. In the rest of the novel, shell-shocked, Tana spends the first half of the novel rejecting intimacy, preferring celibacy

and a scholarly career. Instead of allowing Tana to deal with her internal wounds, the narrative introduces Sharon, Tana's African-American college roommate, who faces racial prejudice in the 1960s South, which limits her social life and romantic possibilities. As a young black woman in a predominantly white community, Sharon not only projects Tana's internal struggle but also her repressed desire for intimacy. Steel uses another 'Other' to highlight Tana's sexual and emotional deprivation in spite of her professional growth, this time in Harry, her best friend, who is half-paralyzed by a war wound. Despite the narrative's insistence that the injury has not affected his sexual competence, the possibility of any romance between the two (which has been sustained in the plot so far) is suspended after Harry's injury and subsequent disability. Instead, Tana's first openness toward emotional intimacy is with Harry's father in the first overt indication that it is the missing father figure in Tana's life, rather than the rape, that handicaps her emotional growth.

The shadow of the father grows bigger henceforth, as the title of the novel forces its heroine to regress to the narrative's starting point. Despite her professional success and ascendancy, Tana begins to take the same route as her mother's, entering into a relationship with a noncommittal married man. In a crucial turn of event, which coincides with her decision to abandon motherhood, Tana threatens to fulfill the circularity rather than the completeness implied in the title. When Tana thinks that career alone can be fulfilling, she is forced to walk on her mother's footsteps and repeating her mistakes. Only when she settles at the end of the novel in a monogamous relationship that yields a son and another pregnancy that she realizes that she has started "from a career and no man, no child, to having it all, the man, the career, and her son . . . having come full circle

in the end" (323). Unlike Louis in Pet Sematary, Tana breaks the vicious circle of repeated mistakes and disastrous results. Her turmoil ends with redemption when she meets the right man who answers all her anxieties over relationships and self-growth: a woman can have it all, a husband, children, and a successful career within a heteronormative structure of the family, which Jean's choices disrupted and Tana's restored. The death of the father, thus, is accepted as a natural progression towards the creation of a new family while the death of the child and the mother in Pet Sematary is resisted and the cycle of birth-life-death is disrupted.

Steel's Star (1989) also ends with the restoration of the disrupted family when Crystal is reunited with her lover and the father of her illegitimate son. Like Full Cirlce, the novel is set after World War II and Crystal, the heroine's turmoil begins with the death of the father and the neglect and rejection of her mother. The reunion with Spencer is triggered by the assassination of John F. Kennedy, a monumental moment in Americans' collective memory. The uncertainty following the death of the President is overshadowed by the unequivocal importance the novel gives to the American family whose restoration remedies the disruption of the larger national family caused by the assassination. Spencer's emotional uncertainty triggered by the assassination is 'crystallized' by the reinstatement of his role as the father. In moments of national calamity, Steel's protagonists unite to dispel any uncertainty, as the violent death of the president heals divisions.

Steel's Daddy (1989) continues the pattern of representing the family as a heteronormative entity that is recognizable and stable within clear gender roles. The Watson family is troubled when the mother Sarah decides to leave her family to enroll at

Harvard, relocating from New York to Boston. However, her decision is only symptomatic of her deep dissatisfaction with her maternal role. She views motherhood as stifling and her attempt to abort her last two pregnancies were unsuccessful when her husband, Oliver assures her that their growing family will not efface her individuality. However, if the first three chapters misguide the reader into believing that this is Sarah's story or that she is a Mrs. Dalloway or an Edna Pontellier, the reader is swiftly corrected. The narrative remains true to the title of the novel and we soon begin to see the monumental event that disrupts the family from the perspective of the father. Sarah's decision to detach herself from the family turns her into a stranger who has come to their home and abused the children emotionally (75). Daddy also continues the theme of the 'bad mother' who is either indifferent and self-absorbed (Tana's mother) or jealous and spiteful (Crystal's mother). While Star and Full Circle emphasize the destructive effect of distracted motherhood on daughters, Daddy takes a different approach that explores the effect of the unmotherly woman on her male partner who turns into the heroine of the story. Oliver's loss of his wife feminizes him. In order to remain familiar to the largely female readership of the romance and of Steel, Daddy reverses gender roles, if temporarily, to create the bond between female readers and Oliver. Thus, Oliver is unapologetically emotional, finding strength in crying in front of his children. He reacts passively to Sarah's decisions of taking control over her life. In his sexual life, he begins to assume 'passive' roles in his relationship with Megan, his first since the collapse of his marriage. He enters that relationship with virginal innocence, as he is stunned by the sexual possibilities, of which he was unaware. Being deserted by his wife erases Oliver's

former life and re-presents him to the readers, as Steel often introduces her heroines: virgin, innocent, powerless, and vulnerable.

The feminization of Oliver allows the narrative to present him as a surrogate mother without questioning the gendered structure of the family. He can assume motherly roles without troubling ideal masculinity because the disruption of his gender role as the father figure is imposed by the 'cruel' mother's break of her assigned role. It is not a desired troubling of gender and familial structure. Additionally, before Oliver can 'act the mother,' he is emasculated emotionally and sexually. He is no longer the 'ideal man', as he embraces his new femininity, which is represented as a response to Sarah's rejection of her own. This characterization of Oliver is also consistent with the image of the new father that was celebrated in the 1980s.

Several studies suggest that despite the increasing visibility of women as independent agents in the 1980s, it is often contained within a traditional familial structure. In TV commercials, there is an apartment awareness by advertisers of women's importance as consumers; however, they were more likely to be shown as spouses and in a domestic environment than men (Bretl and Cantor 606). Men were more likely to be seen in commercials in career situations and "high-status occupations" than women (606). Commercials in the 1980s also maintained the gendering of spheres as women were used to advertise products used in the home (607). Another study shows that even though women in 1980s TV commercials were becoming increasingly represented as independent (a leap from 4% in the 1950s to 33% in the 1980s), the percentages of their depiction as dependent (35%), emotional (39%), and passive (40%) remained almost unchanged (Coltrane and Allen 53). Women were also more likely seen in the presence

of their husbands or male colleagues. The implication of the findings is that American women's independence in the 1980s was framed within untroubled gender roles. Men, on the other hand, appeared in commercials as consistently independent (74%), leaders (61%), and respected (65%). Notably, the quality of aggressiveness witnessed a sharp rise from 16% in the 1950s to 48% in the 1980s while their image as dependent and as followers saw a decline to a single digit percentage (Coltrane and Allen 53). Their depiction as being emotional saw a slight increase to twelve percent. This suggests that the decade saw tolerance towards male display of emotionality as long as it did not problematize the gender division of social and economic roles.

Therefore, Oliver's heroine-status in Daddy represents a brief intermission and serves as warning of the danger to the family when mothers places career and individuality over family, particularly that the novel dramatizes the traditional female dilemma between home and career and self and family. Oliver's experience does not compel him to reevaluate familial structure or the division of spheres, for when he meets Charlotte, the potential substitute for Sarah, he refuses to compromise his need for a woman who privileges her wifehood and motherhood over career. His prior experience taught him than mediation between the polarity of roles is futile. Eventually, Charlotte/Charlie, the popular TV personality and aspiring actress, turns down her dream job when she is offered a role in Broadway to remain with Oliver. The novel, thus, moves in the same circularity of Full Circle as the narrative and its readers return to the beginning of when a family was whole. Oliver regains his traditional role as the leader who aggressively defends family roles and ideals of recognizably separate spheres and

roles. The novel ends with the introduction of the familiar and traditional romance heroine, Charlotte, whose absence hovered over the story imposingly.

Conversely, in The Haj this familial restoration escapes its narrative ambition. Instead, Ishmael's family is built on deception and rivalry in which the mother pits one child against another. Even before the story begins, the fate of Ishmael's family is predestined by Biblical and Koranic allusions the writer imposes by the choice of names: Ishmael the son of Ibrahim (Abraham) and Hager (Hagar). In the Bible, Ishmael is the outcast son while in the Koran, Hagar and her infant, Ishmael, are abandoned by Abraham. Ishmael's family fulfills the destiny of their Biblical namesakes, as they descend into abandonment, expulsion, and brotherly rivalry.

It is not only that this Palestinian family, which the narration explicitly and consistently introduces as a representative of all Arabs, is incapable of familial affections but is also dominated by incestuous desires:

> I [Ishmael] slept with my mother, folded up in her arms, my head between her breasts. When my father and [his second wife] made love every night, my mother lay awake, only a few feet from them, forced to listen to them have sex, sometimes half the night long. When my father kissed Ramiza and groaned and spoke words of endearment to her, my mother's massive body convulsed with pain. I could feel her fingers claw at me unconsciously and hear her stifled sobs and sometimes I could feel her tears. And when I wept as well, she soothed me by stroking my genitals. (10)

The description combines an eroticization of pornographic nature of the sexuality of the Arabs with the fulfillment of polygamous fantasy haunted by incestuous desires. As the

father, Ibrahim, consummates his new marriage, Hager his first wife is forced to 'witness' it in an almost threesome whose sexual pleasure is projected on the little boy's awareness of not only what is happening in the other room but also his mother's massive body. This awareness is rewarded and fulfilled by her touching his genitals in an unusual "soothing" gesture. In another incident, Ishmael describes a doll his sister Nada made "and named Ishmael, after [him], and she would pretend to nurse it against her tiny nipples" (9). When a family is not built on a monogamous relationship, it is plunged into sexual confusion that leaves sons desiring mothers and sisters desiring brothers as forbidden familial lust is unrepressed. Teeffelen describes the tendency in some American fiction to exoticize the Arab family as a refrain from narrating "any form of stable domestic life or love relation among Arabs" (390). Whereas the family structure in Steel's three novels is reinstated and the Creeds' demise in King's Pet Sematary restores the naturalness of life cycle, Ibrahim's family in The Haj descends into death, madness, and revenge without any redemptive prospect. The death of Ibrahim and Nada and the madness of Ishmael have no transformative power but they are rather statements on the inherent dysfunctionality of the Arab family and its inevitable and natural unraveling that is symbolic of larger national failings.

Arab women and American women as symbols of nations

Both the American/white woman and the Arab woman are reduced to a signifier of a tightly controlled monolithic reproduction of their respective nations. To achieve that, such a reproduction has to dissociate the mythical from the real. The mythical Arab

woman is made real by a consistent, systematic, and collaborative representation that relies on repetition and selectivity. Cinematic, journalistic, textual, and novelistic depictions of the Arab woman's 'plight' has painted her as a veiled, victimized, and silenced creature disallowing any other reality. Fixated in one role as the victim of Arab patriarchy, the Arab woman is neither heard by a western hegemony that is equally patriarchal, leaving her doubly silenced.

The fictitiousness of the white American woman image at the center of the nationalist discourse relies on the mythologization of the Arab woman as a victim[36].. For only in juxtaposition, the narrative over the western woman as symbolic of the nation can function unquestionably. Like the Arab woman, the American woman disappears into an annihilating metaphor when compared to her foil, the Arab woman or when threatened by the male Other. In antebellum narrative, for instance, white woman's honor has been used as a pretext to warn against abolitionism in classic films, such as The Birth of a Nation and Gone with the Wind. Lynching black men for allegedly raping white women had been used as a mechanism to enforce racial hierarchy while regulating white women's sexuality. The most important aspect of lynching as a punishment, as Ida B. Wells argues, is its nature as a spectacle which works effectively in disciplining both black men and white women.

The female captivity narratives from colonial America to the present time are founded on white female honor. In 2003, Jessica Lynch, a Private First Class in the U.S.

[36] This dissertation focuses on the Arab and Muslim woman as the Other of the white American woman but does not exclude other racially othered women, such as Africans and Asians. However, under fast growing and increasingly prevalent globalization, it is a valid argument to make that the Muslim and Arab woman is imagined as the singular Other and foil for western women, but this discussion falls beyond the scope of this dissertation.

army, was captured as a prisoner of war by Iraqi forces. The fact that she was a blond white female, though not a civilian, elevated her story to a mythical level of national heroism. It also invoked both the stereotype of Arab men's uncontrollable desire to possess blond western women, which the American public repeatedly lived in numerous movies and TV series, and the stereotype of the helpless white female who needs to be rescued from non-white savages. The singularity of the media coverage of her captivity and subsequent swift rescue overshadowed the fact that she was not the only female soldier captured by the Iraqis, as Shoshanna Johnson, a single black mother, was also taken captive but received little media attention and was rescued two weeks after Lynch (Whitman 90). Another story of white female in Arab/Muslim hands is the capture of Faye Turney by Iranian forces in 2007. Turney was the only woman among fifteen British Royal Navy personnel whom Iran accused of illegally entering its water. The incident turned into a sensational media story particularly when Iranian authorities aired footage of the captives with Turney wearing a headscarf. She was immediately singled out from the other male captives as the victim of Iranian chauvinism and savagery. Forcing her to wear the headscarf was seen as a form of harassment at its lightest and an assault at its gravest. However, by singling her out, the western media exercised a similar case of sexism, as it failed to view her in the same light as other male captives and soldiers who all received the same training and preparations to carry out their military duties and face inevitable risks such as captivity. Like Arab women, Turney's identity was veiled twice, by the Iranians and western media which veiled her gender neutrality and its irrelevance to her duty as a member of the British Navy. Both Lynch's and Turney's identities dissolved into a symbol of West/East so-called cultural war and like

Arab women, their role in military conflicts is only conceivable as a victim. What unites the Arab and American women is that they have become metaphors for the nation. When their stereotyped images are juxtaposed, they (as women and metaphors of the nation) convey an irreconcilable cultural difference and connote a natural(ized) and inevitable clash between the two cultures[37].

Arab women and families are represented in popular media in the United States in ways that only reinforce this polarity between American and Arab cultures and interests. Thus, Arabs' images are often "inconsistent while consistently negative" (Suleiman 33) and antithetical to traditional American family. Arab men are poor desert dwellers or oil rich Sheiks who monopolize oil prices. Their religion, which is often depicted as Islam even though not all Arabs are Muslim, is "at times presented as a religion of fatalism and inaction, at others it is a religion driving its people to fanaticism, bigotry, mayhem and world terrorism" (Suleiman 33). One consistency in these representations is Arab men's obsession with sex and destroying the west (33) and when forcing themselves on American women, the two pursuits are seen as one. In his extensive and encyclopedic study of Arabs' image on American television and in films, Jack Shaheen found Arab men's lust for American, particularly white blond women, a recurring theme in sixty movies ("Reel Bad Arab" 181). He singles out the 1980s as "especially offensive" as they showed "desert sheikhs with thick accents threatening to rape and/or enslave starlets: Brooke Shields in *Sahara* (1983), Goldie Hawn in *Protocol* (1984), Bo Derek in *Bolero*

[37] The book Not without my Daughter is another relevant text to the narrative of female captivity, which was made into a movie shortly before the first Gulf War. In the book, Betty Mahmoody tells her real-life story in escaping Iran with her daughter after her Iranian husband decided to stay in his home country and not return to the United States. The book and the movie adaptation were criticized for their stereotypical representation of Muslims and for marginalizing the help Mahmody received from Iranians who helped smuggle her and daughter out of the country (Hoodfar 13-14).

(1984), and Kim Basinger in *Never Say Never Again* (1986)" (183). Ronald Stockton arrives at the same conclusion in his analysis of photographic and imagery representations of Arabs in popular American comic books:

> [T]he men are driven to the verge of madness by the beautiful women of our people. Sometimes this lust is rooted in a pathological desire to possess and despoil, sometimes in a primitive drive to have that which is higher on the evolutionary scale, sometimes simply by the beauty of blond hair. Almost always their relations with 'our' women have political overtones, the assertion of power, or a challenge to authority. (130)

Such a depiction of the Arab man-American/western woman relationship revives black-white politics of the ante and post-bellum America in which the white woman was used by white supremacists to fictionalize non-white desire to dominate other races and tamper with the national identity of the country. Stockton argues that the Arab archetype is an extension of earlier stereotypes of black men's sexuality and Jews' hidden desire to dominate the world and their inherent tendency to betray others (130). Since the American woman is depicted as a metaphor for the nation's honor (Nagel), the Arab man's persistence in 'acquiring' her reflects a fear of the Arabs' financial control of the United States which is another stereotype that emerged in the 1970s following the 'oil revolution' in the Arab peninsula and the oil embargo crisis. Shaheen demonstrates that Hollywood movies consistently warn against Arabs' scheme to "buy up America," which is an unfounded fear since studies showed that leading foreign investors in the United States were mainly Europeans, Canadians, and Japanese (Shaheen, "The Arab Stereotype

on Television" 4). In an Academy Award winning role in Network (1976), Peter Finch, as Howard Beale, (in)famously urges Americans to shout, "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore. I don't want banks selling my country to the Arabs." Though most iconic, the Network's scene is not a single example, as it had been recreated in several movies and TV shows in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States (Shaheen).

American media representation of Arab women is even more complex and paradoxical. Their sexuality is either underrepresented or exoticized. In films they are "bosomy bellydancers," "scantily-clad harem maidens," background figures "carrying jugs on their heads," "shapeless Bundles of Black . . . trekking silently behind their unshaven mates," "serpents," "vampires," and bombers (Shaheen "Reel Bad Arabs" 183-4). Stockton brilliantly juxtaposes two images of Arab women taken from American comic books which sum up the paradoxical western fascination with Arab women. In one, Arab women appear covered from head to toe except for their eyes. In the other image, one sees nude voluptuous women in seductive poses in what appears to be a Turkish bath. The juxtaposition highlights effectively the polarity yet interdependency of the two perceptions of the covered and bared Arab woman (132). Neil Macmaster and Toni Lewis interrelate the two in examining the colonial interest of Europe in North Africa and the Middle East which the United States inherited as the twentieth century imperial power. During European colonization of North Africa, there has been a systematic obsession with the unveiling of the Arab women.[38] Following decolonization and postcolonial era, European concerns shifted towards "maximizing the social, cultural and political distance between the 'West' and 'Islam' and conveying a sense of threat through

[38] See Fanon's A Dying Colonialism and Alloula's The Colonial Harem.

an inversion which emphasizes the most complete forms of female covering, a hyperveiling" (122).

This duality of the image of the Arab woman serves two purposes, to alienate her from western women's experiences, and thus to maintain the binary of us/them, and to use her as a metaphor of her nation and country. Whether veiled or bared, sexually suppressed or sexually accessible, the Arab woman stands as a foil to American and western women because she can only be seen as one of two extremes. This is the conclusion Lila Abu-Lughod makes in examining the ways Saudi women are seen in the West. She says Saudi women are either oversexualized or undersexualized. They are either wandering black cloaks or when unveiled, they are more like exotic dancers and prostitutes, professional in pleasuring their husbands (Abu-Lughod). More rigid than Arab media or literature, American media can only represent Arab women as it claims Arab patriarchy sees them. In "Middle Eastern Women in Western Eyes: A Study of U.S. Press Photographs of Middle Eastern Women," Karin Gwinn Wilkens found that the majority of pictures published in U.S. newspapers depict women in familial context, as mothers, wives or daughters, or in religious signification while Middle Eastern men are more likely to be shown in a professional background as laborers or workers (54). Middle Eastern women are also predominantly portrayed as victims or background figures, maintaining their roles as "passive figures . . . as observers rather than as active participants in their community, much like children who need to watch and learn from others" (57). Muslim and Arab women are often shown as responding passively to actions such as mourning the death of a family member. They seem to have no immediate involvement in or influence over the actions that caused the deaths such as Israeli

bombings (57). The writer suggests that these photographic depictions are consistent with a whole social and institutional body of expectations that goes beyond individual decisions made by the photographer (55).

Wilkins also found that two thirds of women in photographs published in U.S. newspapers are shown wearing the veil, which seems to have a singular meaning in western media as an indicator of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism (57, Macmaster and Lewis 128). Another study of the visual representation of Muslim and Arab women in U.S. media arrives at a similar conclusion. When these newspapers select images of protests against U.S. policies, they often show women wearing the headscarves or the veil, thus attempting to create a visual association between the veil and anti-Americanism (Falah 315). The implication of this association is that American media uses images of Arab or Muslim women to reflect on U.S. policies rather than on these women's status in their own societies and countries. During the Bush administration's rhetorical war against Afghanistan, U.S. newspapers ran articles on the topic, which were often accompanied by photos of veiled women even when the subject matter did not address issues pertaining to Afghani women (Falah 309). In National Geographic's documentary The Search of the Afghan Girl, the magazine photographer searches for an Afghan woman whose photo he took when she was at a refugee camp following the Soviet invasion. He attempts to relocate her following the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. However, instead of tracing and analyzing the woman's experience in between two invasions, the search turns into a documentation of the impact the Taliban regime had on the lives of women in the country (Jarmakani 142-2). National Geographic uses the image of the Afghan woman as a symbol of local and religious oppression rather than the destructive foreign military

interferences in Afghanistan, reiterating a western tendency to see Arab and Muslim women's suffering and victimhood only at the hands of local patriarchy rather than the result of western imperialism and colonialism or even a combination of the two[39].

More intriguing is when western media has to cover stories that show Arab and Muslim women as politically or militarily active, which troubles their stereotype as victims of local violence. In her fascinating study of western and Israeli media's attempt to explain the phenomenon of the female suicide bomber, Dorit Naaman unveils some surprising findings that show that they, like Arab patriarchy, are unable to see Arab women except within familial contexts. Naaman and Nagel underline the ways in which wars and military conflicts gender perceptions. Men fight. Women are either defended by men or fall victims. They mourn the death of their husbands, fathers, sons who are often fallen soldiers. Women's vulnerability is used by enemies to demoralize the male fighters (Naaman 934). Western rationalization of suicide attacks places Arab women within these gender categories. In a true Orientalist sense, the motivation for suicide attacks is reduced to the male bombers' aspiration to be rewarded with their own harem in heaven where they can enjoy their own 72 virgins. However, the female suicide bombers trouble the gendered representation of war on several levels. First, they perform an act, which renders them neither passive nor victim (except of their own attacks). Second, they do not fit the profile of suicide bombers as religious fanatics (after all female suicide bombers are not promised with 72 virgins). To normalize their acts, western and Israeli media

[39] Some studies indicate that modern Arab patriarchy is intricately connected with European colonialism. Some of the laws present in some Arab and Muslim countries such as the so-called 'honor crimes' law and the sodomy laws were introduced and enforced by the European colonizers and remained in those countries' legislation after independence. See Bruce Dunne's "Homosexuality in the Middle East: An Agenda for Historical Research."

probed these women's personal lives looking for explanations that maintain the gendered language and logic of war (Naaman 935-6). For example, in the case of Wafa Idris, a 27-year-old Palestinian woman who blew herself up in a 2002 suicide attack in Jerusalem, Israeli security forces blamed her attack on her husband who abandoned her because of her inability to conceive, leaving her "alienated by a conservative society in which marriage and children are the norm" (Fawzia Sheikh qtd. in Naaman footnote 5). Ironically, the Israeli explanation, while holding Idris' conservative society responsible for her decision to carry out a suicide attack, is in itself conservative and heteronormative. In her book Army of Roses: Inside the World of Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers, journalist Barbara Victor describes Darin Abu Aisheh, another Palestinian suicide bomber, as a woman who turned to militarism to avoid an arranged marriage that would have ended her academic career (qtd. in Naaman footnote 21). Naaman concludes that "In contrast [to male suicide bombers], a woman as a suicide bomber seems so oxymoronic that an individualized psychological explanation for the deviation must be found" (936)[40].

Examining the suicide attack by Ayat Akhras also reveals the difficulty in perceiving and representing women beyond the gendered perspective of war. Akhras was reportedly eighteen when she blew herself up at the entrance of a supermarket in Jerusalem in 2002 and killed two people one of whom was seventeen-year-old Rachel Levy. The bombing attracted strong reactions due to the young ages of Akhras and Levy. Newsweek's cover juxtaposed the photographs of Akhras and Levy, attempting to draw attention to their similar facial features and young ages. Bush used the attack to warn that

[40] Arab media's interpretation of female suicide bombers' actions is also gendered, as they are often described as 'brides' and the bombings as an act of birthing heroism (Naaman 945).

when “an 18-year-old Palestinian girl is induced to blow herself up and in the process kills a 17-year-old Israeli girl, the future itself is dying; the future of the Palestinian people and the future of the Israeli people.” Bush’s statement, however, gendered the roles of both women in the bombing, Akhras highlighted as the unlikely attacker and Levy as the typical victim, even though Naaman notes that she was about to begin her mandatory military service (939). The perceived abnormality of Akhras’ action (women as fighters/bombers rather than victims) was accentuated by Levy’s victimhood. Moreover, emphasizing their young ages as the cause of the death of the future and the demise of Palestinian and Israeli statehood, Bush resorted to a familial language that saw in the youth the future and associated women with nationalism and nationhood and futurism. Akhras’ ‘unnatural’ act of killing instead of creating lives and fighting rather than being a victim jeopardized the future of her own nation, the Israeli nation, and the two-state solution.

Naaman concludes that the way in which Western and Israeli media have attempted to comprehend and explain the emergence of Palestinian female suicide bombers relies on normative gendered language and engages in a debate that insists on the dichotomous nature of military resistance and fighting, assigning roles to women and men as victims and fighters respectively. By justifying those women’s actions as symptoms of personal problems (which are essentially familial) and their subjugation in a patriarchal society, these readings essentially depoliticize the women’s motives and return the discussion to its less problematic and more fathomable cultural context. The problematic nature of such a narrative is that it rewrites the female suicide bombers’ role as an active participant in the conflict whether as a martyr/killer freedom fighter/terrorist,

instead focusing on Arabs so-called cultural exceptionalism that victimizes its women. Moreover, it resists and corrects any abnormality of envisioning military conflicts as anything that cannot be interpreted within a heteronormative discourse. A woman who is 'naturally perceived' (and in the case of the Arab woman the misperception is doubly constructed as both culturally exclusive and gender instigated) as a creator of life and as a mother cannot be accepted in a role in which she does not only annihilate self but others as well. When such a culturally and gender deviant act is read within a society and culture which are seen as permanently patriarchal, the confusion is impermissible. Therefore, re-gendering the nature and motives of the Palestinian female suicide bomber works doubly to maintain the western discourse on gender and war/army and its discourse on Arab culture as dominantly and unforgivingly patriarchal.

Another analysis of the ways in which the American media deals with Arab women's political and military activism reveals that they marginalize their contribution as a reflection of the marginality of Arab progress and power. For instance, images of Jordanian women expressing condolences over the attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington DC were accompanied by a caption that acknowledges their sentiments but alerts American readers that they run contrary to the common belief among Arabs that Americans were responsible for what happened to them on that day. Falah reads this commentary as more than simple resistance to a change in the belief that not all Arabs are anti-American, but it also effectively marginalizes the women in the picture as incapable of representing their own people or expressing the majority's feelings (313). Falah also interprets U.S. newspapers' decision to publish photos of female Arab protesters (often wearing the veil) when reporting the declining popularity of

the United States in the Arab and Muslim regions as an attempt to gender the opposition to the United States and to "convey a view that Muslim societies are adversarial to their very core and that their anti-Americanism is somewhat irrational and unjustified" (315). In other words, these images of women who are actively involved in politics represents an aspect of Arab and Muslim women's lives which defies the strongly held and perpetuated stereotype of their marginality, passivity, and submissiveness. When the depiction of such an untypical activity is reported only in anti-American context, the U.S. media feminizes Arab animosity and defiance of the West/America. It also dismisses Arab women's activism as abnormal and inconceivable and, consequently, trivializes the opinions they are expressing in their protests against American pro-Israel policies, colonial ambitions in their regions, and the invasions of Iraq or Afghanistan. Falah also suggests that Arab and Muslim women's activism is often portrayed as a form of brainwashing. Therefore, the images of Iraqi women in military parades, which are believed to be a male sphere, both reflect the absence of these women's will while feminizing the credibility of Iraq's military threat. On the other hand, women's participation and visibility in what is normally viewed as male space in post-invasion Afghanistan are hailed as a form of liberation (315-6). The image of Arab women, whether as passive victims or political activists, symbolize conquered and feminized Arab nations and nationalism (Hamilton 179). They function as "the 'other' side of the same coin of the notion of progress" (Jarmakani 140). Their clothes and demeanor are "used as a sign of Arab backwardness and stagnation" (Steet 136) unless when they are liberated by western forces. Most importantly, the image of the Arab woman matters to the construction of the American nationalist collectivity because it "suggests an

irrationality that can be contrasted with the supposed order and rationality of western liberal societies" (318).

Because women matter a great deal to the construction of the national identity, their image within a nationalist-familial narrative has to represent stability and permanence. Any deviation from the stereotype of the white female captive destabilizes the femininity of the homeland, the masculinity of its defender (army), and the ability to exclude the Other as a threat to racialized national purity. Similarly, as representative of their nation and nationalism, knowledge of Arab women can only be reproduced within stable categories of the sexual suppression and containment and familial inferiority. Maintaining this image of the Arab woman allows it to be juxtaposed with equally stabilized image of the American woman. The relationship between the stability of the categories and the juxtaposition is circular however. The juxtaposition relies on the representability of categories (their homogeneity), while is simultaneously producing them. Homogeneous perceptions of Arab women and American women allow the juxtaposition to materialize (by the intentions and desires of the readers, authors, and the medium as I argued in chapter 1 and 2). Juxtaposing the images of Arab women and American women also produces their homogeneity. The effect, therefore, is double; it regulates sexuality and gender and renders dialectical relationships imaginable and producible. In my analysis of the way representations of Arab women and American women in formulaic popular fiction are juxtaposed, I intend to unpack their co-construction and co-dependence within a larger nationalist and colonialist narrative.

Arab women's sexuality in The Haj, Ken Follet's The Key to Rebecca, and Collins and Lapierre's The Fifth Horseman is negatively constructed within a binary

perception of Arab/America. In The Haj (1984), the narrative's attitude (whether through Ishmael as a narrator or the omniscient narration) towards women's passivity and silence is at best ambivalent. As the narration seems to lament the powerlessness of Arab women, the only female character that has a voice and is sexually assertive is Ibrahim's daughter, Nada; however, her sexuality seems mostly directionless and reactionary to her father's absolute authority. It never gains an independent meaning. When she is not rebelling against a patriarchal oppression, her sexual yearning is associated with the *fedayen*, the Palestinian equivalent of the Jewish-Zionist *haganah*. The aimlessness of her sexuality, thus, gains a political meaning, which prompts her brother to silence both her yearning for sexual and political activism (Manganaro 6). Ishmael scolds her support of *Fedayen*, who choose to fight Israelis to regain lost land, as meaningless and misguided:

> 'Time will show how brave [*fedayeen*] will become. Who do you think is going to get us out of Aqabat Jabar? Father? He is turning old before our eyes . . . only fedayeen will liberate us. They will return us to our true place.'
>
> 'What true place? Who do you think we are?'
>
> 'The Palestinians are the most educated, the most intelligent in the Arab World—'
>
> . . .
>
> 'Nada, you said you would listen to me. Please listen . . . . Who are these fedayeen who are trying to lead us? What do they know of government? What do they know of freedom? What do they know of reason, of truth? They steal from widows and cripples. They run the black market. They deal in hashish. So they wrap up their gangsterism in a flag of revolution. . . . They are sending boys my age over into Israel in suicide squads. . . . A boy goes into suicide squads because

> his family sells him for a hundred dollars or he is forced because he is pressured and his manhood is questioned. . . . The last three weeks before his mission he is sent to Nablus or Bethlehem to live with a whore and is kept in a stupor on hashish.' (477-8)

Neither does Nada argue back nor question her brother's vehement anti-nationalism, as she is subdued into silence and submission. She is made to comply with Ishmael's univocal political and social defeatism and the narration's retelling of the story of Palestine as one of nationalist impossibility and self-inflicted failures. Her sexuality is emptied of patriotic signification. When she finally fulfils her sexual desires with a *fedayee,* the relationship becomes self-serving and transforms Nada's intense sexuality into a mechanical and apathetic acrobatic exercise with whomever is available.

Nada's final scene of confrontation with her father when she affirms her right to choose a husband is emptied of meaning because it comes at a point when his position as a patriarch and a leader of his community has become merely ceremonial. Instead of revolutionizing the gender and familial structure of Ibrahim's family, her act of defiance is insignificant because his family and the readers know that he has lost all his authorities. When she couples her insistence on her right to have a voice with her revelation that she has lost her virginity, her rebellion is further reduced to an act of revenge she exercises on her tyrant father. In a story that is rife with stereotypical representations of Arab vengeance, Nada is not elevated above such tribalism. Her potential sexual liberation is read as part of the rest of the depictions of Arab sexuality in the novel, violent, destructive, and an instrument of vengeance and familial disruption. Not long before we finish reading about her murder at the hand of Ibrahim, revealed in two sentences, the

novel moves briskly to reveal the second act of sexual and familial vengeance this time by Ishmael. To avenge his sister's death, he narrates to his father the details of his mother's gang rape at the hand of his sworn enemies, not the Israelis but Iraqi soldiers. The sequential revelations associate Nada's sexual choices and agency with the multiple rape of the mother, both at the hands of the Iraqis and her son who graphically recreates the scene and the act of rape that has haunted him since he witnessed it.[41] Arab women's sexuality in The Haj does not recreate gender dynamic of relations but rather destroys the whole family. Their sexual rebellion does not liberate them or their family-as-nation but rather becomes a form of vulnerability. It becomes self-destructive.

In The Fifth Horseman (1980), Libyan leader Muamar Qaddafi recruits a group of Palestinians to carry out a nuclear attack against New York unless Israel, under U.S. pressure, dismantles its settlements in the West Bank and withdraws its army from that territory. One of the Palestinian 'terrorists' is Laila, who plays an important role in Qaddafi's scheme and the narration's structuring of sympathies. She is constantly seen through her purely physical relationship with Michael, which is denied the stability of a relationship. The insertion of sexual scenes in between crucial confrontations between the U.S. president and Qaddafi undermines both the sincerity of the Libyan leader's demand (to free Palestinian land) and her romance with Michael. The implications of this juxtaposition are made clear in one transition between these scenes: "While Muammar al-Qaddafi was delivering his threat [to attack New York City with a hydrogen bomb] to the President, one of the terrorist [Laila] he counted on to help carry it out if necessary was

[41] Ishmael's narration of the rape can be seen as the fulfillment of his oedipal desires to which the novel repeatedly alludes, particularly since the death of his father allows him to replace him as the patriarchal figure.

getting ready to make love in a bedroom in New York City" (306). Associating Arab woman's sexuality with Qaddafi's threats evacuates it from any intimacy and benignity. Laila's sexual liberty does not produce love but destruction and senseless death. The association also implies Laila's betrayal of Qaddafi who is not only her recruiter but also the mastermind of a plot, which aims to liberate the West Bank and provide Laila with a homeland. The sequence of the two scenes serves to deepen the contrast between the United States sincerity and Palestinian/Arab treachery since the president bravely expresses willingness to place himself as Qaddafi's hostage to save the eight million people in New York while Laila halfheartedly tries to convince her American lover, Michael, to leave the city to spare his life.

Further, the sexual representation of Laila borders on predatory as her love scenes are often emptied of gentleness and are at times physically coercive:

> She came back to the bed and threw herself on top of him. Her mouth flayed at his, her twisting lips driving his back against his teeth until they hurt, her belt buckle, the heavy buttons of her blouse, driving into his bare flesh. Finally she slipped a hand around his neck, clasped the hair over his forehead, and slowly pulled his head back down onto the pillow. For a moment, she lay there on top of him, staring down at his face with such intensity it frightened him. (165)

Laila's rough lovemaking and dominance over Michael is a sign of her masculinity that feminizes him. Since the homeland in nationalist discourse is feminized as a woman or a mother to be protected by the masculinized army, the association of New York with Michael also reverses these roles and compounds the Arab threat against America as 'unnatural' that emasculates 'our home.'

Sonja, in The Key to Rebecca (1980), completes the 'trilogy' of the Arab woman stereotype of the harem, the terrorist, and the bellydancer. Embroiled in the plot of Wolff, the German spy in Egypt to aid the Nazis into victory in the Second World War, Sonja, one of Egypt's most famous bellydancers, shows no political allegiance or conviction. She is motivated by lust and indifference. Wolff uses her as a sexual tool to lure an English major and she willingly submits to his will. Like Nada, Sonja's sexuality is emptied from nationalist involvement, making her the perfect ally of the devilishly conniving Wolff. She poses no threat to his power in the narrative and represents a passive Egypt in an English-German struggle. The scene of her recruitment is emblematic of the way in which formulaic popular fiction depicts woman's sexuality. A mildly resisting Sonja lies naked while Wolff exercises his dominance over her by shaving her pubic hair with a razor. The narration graphically describes the process that swiftly turns sexual as her 'no' is countered with his 'yes,' and is supposed to reveal her "perversion." However, what it invokes is a visually similar scene of female circumcision (89-91). Sonja's uninhibited sexuality is associated with sexual repression, symbolized by circumcision, and in both scenes, her agency is lost, as she is dominated by men. The scene is powerful because it encapsulates the difference between Arab patriarchy and western Orientalism, just a flick of a wrist.

To retain the wholesomeness of the family as nation, Steel maintain the definability of gender, underline chastity and monogamy, and recognize the characters' moral decisions only in heteronormative terms. Therefore, Steel's heroines Crystal and Tana reach personal completeness and tranquility after tumultuous journeys when they are in monogamous and stable relationships which are solidified by children. On the other

hand, Nada, Laila, and Sonja's sexuality is directionless and destructive. They are promiscuous and intentionally reject monogamy. As the familial structure is restored in Full Circle, Star, and Daddy, women's sexuality in The Haj, The Key to Rebecca, and The Fifth Horseman either destroy their familial structures or threaten western stability. They are denied redemption that Steel's heroines reap in the end of novels. The Arab family in the examined bestsellers are unredeemably dysfunctional, representing an inherent and natural incapacity to heal, thus requires no correction or retribution. Ishmael's family in The Haj reflects Palestinian society and nationhood and unlike families in King's and Steel's novels, its collapse does not reflect a warning sign but rather an inevitability.

Because family ideals are constructed and perceived as abstract (though they do tangibly regulate race and gender relations), they are conceivable in juxtaposition with equally idealational Arab family. This creates the paradox of western discourse that attempts to liberate Arab women while cannot perceive them outside of the stereotype. The western narrative has to veil the Arab woman to unveil her, and when she unveils herself, she disrupts the stability of the Arab family stereotype and is duly punished, demonized, or confined to the role of instrument of the unraveling of the Arab family/nation.

Chapter 4:

Queering the Arab Family

In November 2009, voters in the U.S. state of Maine and in Switzerland went to the ballots to say yes or no to same-sex marriage and mosque minarets, respectively, in two separate referenda. Fifty-three percent of Maine and fifty-seven percent of Switzerland said no to both. The two news stories seem unrelated, as no apparent collaboration occurred between anti-minarets and anti-gay marriage campaigns. In fact, the campaign to ban the minarets essentially aimed to mobilize the public against what they called the "Islamicization" of Switzerland. The anti-same sex marriage campaigners, who see themselves as pro-family crusaders, often rely on religious prohibition of homosexuality as unnatural. However, when one probes beneath the surface of these less troubling and one-dimensional arguments that only fundamentalist Islam is the target of such campaigns or that opponents of state recognition of homosexuals as citizens are Bible-holding and verse-reciting fanatics, points of commonality emerge. After all, the

status of women in Islam was a significant part of the rhetoric of the pro-ban campaign in Switzerland as evidenced by their use of an image of a Muslim woman wearing *burqa* as a symbol. On their official poster, the woman stands in front of a background consisting of the Swiss flag (which ironically is itself a large white cross on a red background) while several minarets are planted on the flag as if they were missiles. The poster nationalizes the anti-minaret campaign and sexualizes and genders the fight against the so-called fundamentalists. Similarly, the opponents of gay marriage represent it as an attack on family values and the stability of the family institution as a natural extension and reflection of the nation. The struggle is a "holy war" and a "cultural war" to defend a staple of progression that is the backbone of western history (Koons 2-9). The language combines both the religious with the cultural while emphasizing western exceptionalism and the exclusivity of the family-as-natural to western history.

As important is the simultaneity of the two national and nationalist campaigns. The two referenda seem as two separate events reflecting two different issues; however, their juxtaposition reveals an interrelation and a pattern that sustains a parallel in which they occur. The 2004 U.S. presidential election is another example in which war in Iraq and same-sex marriage, two seemingly unrelated issues, made most impact on the outcome of the election. According to political commentators, Republicans' decisive win in presidential and congressional elections was due to two strategies, "emphasizing the need for strong leadership to counter the threat of terrorism," and "mobilizing millions of evangelical Christians and other cultural conservative voters upset about gay marriage, abortion, and other threats to traditional values" (Abramowitz 1). Several scholars and writers beg to differ, contesting the widely circulating belief that the gay marriage issue,

which was put to vote in eleven states, helped George W. Bush win reelection (Lewis, Abramowitz, and Smith, DeSantis, and Kassel). In analyzing election data, they dispute the claim that putting the gay marriage on the election agenda and on the ballot helped boost turnout particularly among Evangelical Christians. In fact, in the swing states which were also voting on gay marriage, turnout was lower than the 2000 presidential election. Voters in those critical states did not come out in droves to vote for Bush or at least not more than they did in 2000. The gay marriage issue came second in importance to the Iraq War, as an opinion poll preceding the election showed that Bush's fate hinged on the voters' belief that the Iraq war "was worth it" which, based on the election results, a majority of voters believed it was (Lewis 195).

However, only when one looks at the two issues separately, same-sex marriage debate and subsequent vote seem less influential in securing Bush's reelection. The two strategies worked side by side in helping Bush to a second term. His 'strong leadership' in 'fighting terrorism' and securing the country's borders against 'attacks from overseas' was augmented by his strong support of the family. The defense of the family as unequivocally heteronormative paints Bush as the traditional family man, protecting his home(land) against outside threats and intruders (on marriage and on the country). It macho-masculinizes his image, thus deepens confidence in the strength of his leadership. As homosexuals are seen as 'foreign' to the family, so is the threat against America, which presents the 'war on terrorism' as existential. Thus, the juxtaposition works as a successful strategy to capitalize on American public fear of homosexual invasion of the family by associating it with strong and equally manufactured fear of 'global terrorism' and the Arab Other. Bush's campaign rhetoric constructs a juxtaposition that genders his

Middle East policies by feminizing, queering, and denaturalizing his proclaimed enemy, 'Arab terrorists' whose anti-western menace is embodied by the two super villains, Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden, while masculinizing the U.S. ability to defend itself. What the Swiss and Maine referenda and the 2004 election show is the way in which Muslims pose a queer threat to the (western) nation and its nationalist identity.

The argument of this chapter is that heteronormativity is key to the demonization of Arabs and their families in popular media and fiction. The queering of the Arab family and the feminization of Arab nationhood and nationalist aspirations are made possible by an associative approach which aligns Muslims and Arabs with the homosexual Other in the patterns of representation in the selected bestsellers examined in this chapter. The exclusion of homosexuals from traditional family ideals stabilizes gender as a definable category which allows the acceptability of the image of the Arab family as unnatural and naturally dysfunctional. The threat of homosexuality and androgyny in King's and Steel's novels are juxtaposed with the naturalized gender confusion in the Arab familial structure and the feminization of Arab maleness represented in popular novels in the same decade. The unquestionable masculinity of the American hero is in contrast with the emasculated Arab antihero. Gender distinctions in King's Misery, Pet Sematary, Steel's Daddy are restored while they remain troubled in The Haj, The Fifth Horseman, and The Little Drummer Girl. However, this dissertation acknowledges that the use of homosexuality in imagining and creating the Arab and Muslim villainy is complex and shifts dynamically. Western imperialist and Orientalist depiction of Arab and Muslim attitudes toward homosexuality has never been consistent and relied on the attitudes toward homosexuals 'back home.' In the nineteenth century, for instance, European travelers to North Africa

and the Middle East condemned the culture as immoral because of the visibility of homosexuals in public life. Nowadays, images of Iranian authority hanging gay men are used as testament to 'their' cultural barbarity and the colonizability of their region. The United States often criticizes Arab countries for failing to protect homosexuals from persecution while circulated in the press are images of American soldiers using simulation of homosexual sex as a torture technique against Arab prisoners[42]. The inconsistency, however, is due to American ambivalence toward homosexuality and the degree to which the state and social institutions are willing to recognize it. This dissertation is fascinated with juxtaposition as a technique in which meanings are only intelligible within a network of images and depictions. By juxtaposing the war on terrorism with the fight against gay infiltration of the family, the ban of the minarets with the ban of same-sex marriages, western hegemony creates meaningful associations without actually committing itself to any verbal explanation or commentary on its domestic sexual politics. Though fascinating, the inconsistency of American political and cultural discourse on Islam and homosexuality is beyond the scope of this research. It remains important in understanding the need for juxtaposition even when it is not the focus of this dissertation.

The 'Gay Bomb': Why is heteronormativity important in nationalist rhetoric?

In 2005, it was revealed that the U.S. Air force contemplated creating a non-lethal chemical weapon which discharges sex hormones. When used against enemies, it provokes in them sexual attraction towards each other. When their attention is occupied

[42] In Terrorist Assemblage: Homonationalism in Queer Times, Jaspir Puar takes a different view of the assimilation of queer subjects in nationalist discourse which is often projected on Muslim and Sikh bodies.

elsewhere, the enemy combatants will be neutralized (qtd. in "US Military Pondered Love not War"). The 'gay bomb' proposal, which was rejected by the Pentagon, represents an extension of a long tradition that uses homosexuality as the Other and homoeroticism as a way to maintain the racial hierarchy and exercise sexual dominance over the enemy. Since nationalism relies on a traditional familial structure, institutions and formations that connote power over the Other, such as the army and colonialism, have to display unquestionable and uncontested masculinity. The gay bomb also poses and entertains a scientific hypothesization of imagined and fantasized homoeroticism within enemy cultures and spaces that is simultaneously desired and denied by the colonizer. In this chapter, I unpack, in the context of the invention of the Arab villain, the construction of American (white) masculinity as unimaginable without the creation of an Other that is consequently feminized. Finally, in view of the constructed interchangeability of the homosexual and the Arab as the sexual Other in the American imagination, the public perception of homosexuality as apocalyptic and self-annihilating during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s has led to a parallel belief of the impossibility of Arab nationalism and nationhood.

Judith Butler deconstructs gender and more importantly sex as natural categories that lend shape to identities. Traditional readings of gender as the cultural manifestation of sex neglect to recognize that sex itself is a "gendered category" (Gender Trouble 11). Conceptualizing gender as a "cultural interpretation" of sex creates an illusionary stable binary that exclusively denotes masculinity or the construction of 'man' to the male body and 'woman' to the female (10). Rather, she reads sex and gender as "performatively produced" rather than a static state of being. Consequently, gender and sex are de-fixated

as identities and reconceptualized as a “doing”; however, not necessarily by the subject “said to preexist the deed” (33). They are rather regulated by a hegemonic system, which relies on the myth of the naturalness of sex and gender only within a binary construct. The understanding of sex as a natural category that preexists the culturally constituted gender naturalizes the binary itself.

Butler’s troubling of gender and sex as identities continues Michel Foucault’s theory of the way religious and political institutions repressed sex in order to maintain their own power to produce ‘subjects’ and regulate the way sexuality is produced and conceptualized. Individuals suppress and conceal their sexuality and sexual drives only to reveal them in Church/state monitored confessions. When people confess, they produce knowledge whose concealment and the subsequent disclosure confer on it the status of truth. In this act, the individuals are involved in a discursive ritual, which is believed to free them even if Foucault suggests that this liberating act cannot be achieved without the presence of the authority which has suppressed that ‘truth.’ Thus, sexuality as truth exists only discursively and is produced within a paradigm of power. Butler argues that patriarchy represses and denies sexual identities only to manage its reproduction.

One way in which hegemonic masculinity is produced is through negation. Joane Nagel relies on several definitions to conclude that masculinity is representable in “negative terms.” Being a man is *not* being a woman, a homosexual, a Jew, an Asian, or an Indian (“Masculinity and Nationalism” 246). Similarly, disability is also associated with negation, as the amputation of a body part often stands for castration (particularly in war narratives, which feminize soldiers who sustain disabilities and brings into question their masculinity thus their relevance to the nation). In the case of races whose men’s

sexuality is exaggerated such as blacks and Arabs, they are usually represented as threats to white women and their chastity, and they are contained sexually (lynching, castration or sexual incapacitation). This understanding and representation of masculinity constructs a hierarchical relationship between race, gender, disability, and sexuality. Its absolute authority emanates from the fictive naturalness of the sexual and gender binary that reads other categories of identities within sexual discourse. Thus, racial violence becomes inevitably sexualized, as it reasserts hierarchy in presumably natural terms and genders the inferiority of the racial Other. During Reconstruction era in the United States, white supremacy sexualized its disciplinary violence often transforming lynching into a ritual. Black male bodies are emasculated when they are transformed into a theater on which racial and gender hierarchies are reenacted. The public castration of African Americans represents a violent rejection of "masculine sameness" (Razack 353) and reaffirmation that what is different is not only "not-free" but also "not me" (Morrison 38). However, Foucault reminds us that what is repressed is sought as truth and is central to the subject-object structure of power. The repressed sameness is as essential to racial hierarchy as pronounced difference and it results in a cyclical repression/confession that allows the reproduction of hierarchy and violence. The lynching in the American South involved fondling by white men of black genitals which is expressive of envy and desire (Harris qtd. in Razack 352), one which Razack reads as a manifestation of "an intimacy to what it is forbidden to desire or to see as human" (352). The importance of the sexual nature of the violence is that it creates, if temporarily, homosocial and homoerotic enjoyment by white men, which the castration attempts to simultaneously repress and release.

Associating homosexuality with foreign enemies of western nationalisms has not begun with Muslims and Arabs. The Nazis persecuted Jews and homosexuals as enemies of its aggressively nationalist identity. The association helped stress the masculine superiority of the German race as it feminized Jews (Nagel, "Sexualizing the Sociological: Queering and Querying the Intimate Substructure of Social Life" 4). The same "fear of homosexuality" permeated Cold War McCarthyism which considered homosexuals among those who posed threats to the nationalist security of the United States "presumably because of their vulnerability to communist influence" (Nagel, "Queering" 5). Such a justification relies on the construction of nationalist militarism as masculine. Men who possess unquestionable manliness can defend the nation against foreign threats while homosexual men, it argues, are like women, and count as vulnerability. Moreover, the masculinity of the nation and the army relies on the emasculation of the enemy. Enemies, particularly men, are represented as either threats to white women (who symbolize nationalism) or are "sexual eunuchs" (Nagel, "Masculinity and Nationalism" 257), while "enemy women are more uniformly characterized as sexually promiscuous and available: sluts, whores, or legitimate targets of rape" (257). Attacks carried out by the enemy are described as heterosexual violence ("The rape of Kuwait") (Cohen qtd. in Nagel "Masculinity and Nationalism" 258). American 'retribution,' on the other hand, is often portrayed as homosexual violence. American soldiers during first Gulf War wrote messages such as "bend over, Saddam" on missiles before dropping them on Iraq. Images from Abu Ghreib prison depicted forced simulation of anal sex as methods of torture used against Iraqi prisoners while following

the 2001 Al-Qaeda attacks on New York, cartoons showed Bin Laden anally penetrated by the Empire State Building under the caption, the "Empire Strike Back" (Puar 1).

Family as nation: Who decides what the family is?

The government. Constructing the nation as family presupposes as it entails nationalist control over familial structure. In order to use family to sanction hierarchy, nationalist discourse has to delimit what threatens the 'natural' perception of the family. Opening the family to any gender structure that cannot be modeled on 'nature' allows the inclusion of the racial Other. For instance, miscegenation was viewed and represented as against nature since God/Nature did not 'intend' for the races to mix, thus it created them as different. Further, the family structure has to be read within a narrative that asserts it as an organic entity. It has to acknowledge its genesis as it heads towards a telos, hence, the dependence on the Biblical story of origin, Adam and Eve, and the centrality of the figure of the Child that ensures the continuous progression and the durability of the familial model and the nationalist formation on which it relies.

Lauren Berlant introduces her collection of essays, The Queen of America Goes to Washington, with a set of questions that centers on the figure of the child/fetus in a definitional relation with citizenship and nationalism. "[W]hy the most hopeful national pictures of 'life' circulating in the public sphere" she asks, "are not of adults in everyday life, in public, or in politics, but rather of the most vulnerable minor or virtual citizens—fetuses, children, real and imaginary immigrants—persons that, paradoxically, cannot yet act as citizens" (5). The answer, which Lee Edelman proposes, is the dominance of the figure of the Child limits the understanding of political discourse to a teleological

progression shaped by “reproductive futurism” (2). The figure of the Child thus “embodies the citizen as an ideal, entitled to claim full rights to its future share in the nation’s good, though always at the cost of limiting the rights ‘real’ citizens are allowed” (Edelman 11). The Child is “a notional freedom more highly valued than the actuality of freedom itself.” Any threat to the Child is a threat against the social order (11). The reproductive futurism relies on the exclusion of the queer Other that is not intelligible within such a narrative. The use of the child as a figural representation of the nation and citizenship centralizes familial discourse, naturalizes the exclusion of the Other as one against nature or against the figure of the Child (not the child him/herself) as an embodiment of “the telos of the social order and come to be seen as the one for whom that order is held in perpetual trust” (11). By using the Child as a corrective tool, the national rhetoric creates “coercive universalization” whose protection (Think of the children!!) maintains the social norms and naturalizes binary oppositions. Therefore, the creation of the myth that Arabs do not love their children, that they sell them to suicide squads (The Haj 478), locates them outside of history, universalized by a hegemonic and nonnegotiable supremacy of the interest of the Child. If reproductivity represents futurity, giving birth to “human bombs” negates the teleological signification of the Child and discontinues the teleological progression of the nation.

Edelman suggests that those located outside teleological recognizability should recognize that their dislocation is not of what one does (the homosexual sex or the socio-political one of coming out, for instance) but rather of what one is. The shift from doing to being (even while Edelman incessantly inserts his argument in a landmine of identity politics jargon without planting his thesis in any of them) underlines what Janet Jakobsen

describes as bodies as carriers of values (58). The impregnation of bodies with values is the result of "double discourse[‘s]" of "the materialization of the immaterial" (57). Therefore, the child and the fetus are central to the national insistence on embodiment as the social mode by which people are (made) identifiable as citizens and their contribution in the production of these bodies and their visibility is instrumentally associative with those bodies of values. By the same mechanism of inclusion, those who are (self)-alienated by this process of producing bodily citizenship are as much part of this national creation as they are bodies emptied from these values[43].

The implication of the insistence on the recognizability of citizenship within bodies creates spaces in which queerness has been conflated with what poses threat to nationalism, namely foreign terrorism and illegal immigrants[44]. Jakobsen interprets this in "the ways queers are frequently told to ‘go back where they came from’" (61-2), a retort often reserved for immigrants and aliens. She situates this conflation in the role ‘family values’ plays in the "reconstruction of American citizenship that regulates and distinguishes those Americans who deserve the rights and benefits of citizenship from

[43] It is not clear, however, whether Edelman makes a clear distinction between the social and the national. Does the placement of queerness in permanent oppositionality in relation to the social order automatically suggest that it can only occupy an identical position in the construction of nationalism? Can’t and hasn’t the queer figured prominently in the formation of a collective national identity whose focal point is not only Benedict Anderson’s emphasis on collectiveness anchored in imagined commonality but also its affirmation of what other nations lack or negate? If one moves the center of the pole, wouldn’t its political gravitation shift as well? Edelman rightly universalizes the figure of the Child, as one can argue that the status of this figure, the heteronormativity that produces it, and the futurity it reciprocally maintains, are universally focal to the social order everywhere. The invocation of the child is the best starting point to address issues of global concerns such as the environment, global poverty, and war. However, the national is not universal even when it is trans-ified or globalized. Nationalism is centered on borders and boundaries and what both imply of exclusiveness; of keeping someone out and making sure they stay out.

[44] The conflation between illegal immigrants and Arab ‘terrorists’ helps construct an exclusive national identity of citizenship. Often anti-immigration activists use Al-Qaeda’s attacks in the U.S. on September 11, 2001 as a pretext for tightening control over southern borders and deporting illegal immigrants. In a documentary on Virginia’s Fairfax country’s campaign to deport illegal Mexican workers, one resident counters such a claim by pointing out that the hijackers in the September 11 attacks were all in the United States legally, concluding that some confuse 9/11 with 7-11 (9500 Liberty).

those who do not—whether they are actually US citizens or not." Thus, when integrating family values whose focality is the Child in the creation of the concept of citizenship, the national and social come together in "the anxieties about immigration and so-called illegal aliens, who threaten the borders of the United States even as those boundaries are weakened (and penetration is welcomed?) by a queer subversion from within" (61). This is a central theme in the debate over gay marriage, which Judith Butler underscores in her discussion of kinship, queerness, and heteronormativity. In reading the implications of the passing of the 'pacts of civil solidarity' in France, she interprets the conditional support the bill received which excludes the right to adopt children or use reproductive technologies as indicative of "anxieties about cultural purity and cultural transmission" (22, 23). Denying homosexual couples parenthood indicates that "the child figures in the debate [over gay marriage] [is] a dense site for the transfer and reproduction of culture, where 'culture' carries with it implicit norms of racial purity and domination" (22). Intertwining procreation with queerness is analogous to miscegenation, where racial purity and social purity are thought interchangeably and conveniently so in the context of nationness.

In Imagined Communities, which has become the unavoidable point of reference in nationalism and nationness discussions, Benedict Anderson aligns nationalism with kinship and religion rather than liberalism and fascism (5). His approach does not depoliticize nationalism since the former two are inevitably political, but this move personalizes one's perception of his/her location in relation to the nation. This is evidenced by his assertion that "in the modern world everyone can, should, will 'have' a nationality, as he or she 'has' a gender" (5), an equation that does not only presuppose the

nonchoice of having both gender and nationality which Anderson identifies as the physical manifestation of nationalism[45], but also renders the personal and national inseparable. The inseparability between the two makes any threat against the national identity one that is directed against the personal, reflected in the way home fences become a microcosm of the walls and wires that demarcate borders[46]. The conflation between the personal and the national is the underlying force behind the resistance in the United States of the alteration to the constitutional and social conception of marriage as between a man and a woman. The other implication of Anderson's analogy of gender and nationality is also relevant to the positionality of the queer in relation to the social and the national, which is pertinent to the construction of the Arab villain.

Anderson's proposition that everyone will have nationality as s/he has gender creates spaces where no 'no gender' and no 'no nation' exist, spaces of stability which Butler tried to trouble. Interconnecting nationality (as a manifestation of nationalism) with gender, even in the form of allegory, also posits the gender ambiguity of those who do not have nationality or a state. Charlie in The Little Drummer Girl, for instance, is entangled with gender confusion when she develops sympathies for the stateless Palestinians. The conflation of gender and nationality, the personal and the national might suggest that the four are in constant fluctuation only when they are all reduced to abstraction which is the argument Berlant makes in analyzing a 1985 Times' article proclaiming the immigrant as the new face of America. She sees the importance of the

[45] Which is a polemic assumption since there are several groups, which view themselves as nations and have national and patriotic sentiments without having a nation-state such as Palestinians and Kurds.

[46] This is quite evident in how the Israeli and US media refer to the wall Israel is building to segregate Palestinian towns and villages from each other and from Israel and Jewish settlement as a 'security fence.' This is not only a euphemism but also a mode of expression in which the personal is invested in the national.

immigrant in the construction of citizenship in economic terms only. The immigrants are important as "an energy of desire and labor that perpetually turns America into itself" (199). This does not only suggest the commodification of the immigrant as a movable property in the production mechanism but also the changeability of 'America' only "into itself." The implication is that it is the new citizen who will change to enable America to continue to be itself, the industrial and capitalist power that it is. This leads Berlant to conclude that "if the masses of immigrants are necessary to provide the proletarian and creative cultural energy of the nation's well-being, the essential nation itself must be untouched by the changing face of America, must be a theoretical nation where success is measured by civic abstractions and moral obligations" (199). Consequently, the assessment of the potential citizen's contribution to the nation's 'well-being' will be determined by the state in whose criteria as Roderick Ferguson and Jakobsen illustrate, heteronormativity plays a central part.

In his discussion of the state-immigrant citizen relationship dominated by capitalist needs for sustainable provision of labor, Ferguson underlines the ways the opening of borders does not perfunctorily affect the removal of boundaries. In fact, it is the need capital has for "transgressing the boundaries of neighborhood, home, region" that propels the state to "position itself as the protector of those boundaries" (17), which creates the split that Berlant refers to between an essential nation and a theoretical one. The latter allows the flow of capital without tampering with the shape of the former. Ferguson argues that as 'community,' 'family,' and 'nation' are the social categories made most vulnerable by the inclusion of the immigrants as labor into the country, they are "[re]normalized in terms of race, gender, sexuality, and class." Therefore, through

heteronormativity, the state controls immigrants' indoctrination into the essential nation. By highlighting their heteronormative intelligibility as family men and mothers, the state sets the boundaries that regulate their racial visibility. Only within the family and through the Child, the racial Other can be assimilated and become the 'new face of America' as both a productive force and site of normative stability. Jakobsen, on the other hand, looks at how these same categories of 'normalization' are used to alienate the illegal immigrant. She suggests that "shifting the site of the nation, away from the state [as state-nation], which can take care of business [of overseeing borders while maintaining flow of capital and labor], and toward the 'family', as an apparent site of nationalism" reinforces the signification of the body as a marker of citizenship and norms, therefore, those who are perceived and need to be perceived as locatable outside the family, can be also excluded from the nation (58). Under this perception of nation as family made more accessible by Anderson's gender/nationality equation, homosexuals and illegal immigrants are alienated as threats to the futurity of the family/nation and the economic income of the 'real' American family respectively.

Queer apocalypse: Heterosexuality and homosexuality under the AIDS crisis

Foucault was one of the people who refused to believe that the 'new' epidemic was a 'gay plague,' that a virus can develop consciousness and intelligence to select its own victims. The sentiment, however, was reflective of the American and western public reaction to the mysterious disease which initially was circulating among gay men, wiping out communities in the 1980s. Despite the circulation of the stigmatic interpretation of AIDS as 'God's punishment,' the panic among heterosexuals over the transmission of the

disease suggests a bewilderment over what seems to be a selectivity of the virus' mobility[47]. The mystery surrounding the disease, compounded by its namelessness in the early stages of the epidemic and lack of adequate scientific response and explanations, consigned it to the realm of the fantasy and science fiction, evidenced by some of the post-AIDS novels that described a world on the verge of extinction and depopulation. In P. D. Harper's Children of Men (1992), the world faces a global and inexplicable epidemic of infertility that creates a collectivity without a future. In Amin Maalouf's The Century after Beatrice, also published in 1992, the world faces a similar fate when the wide circulation of a drug that allows people to have only male babies, imbalances the distribution of the sexes and jeopardizes the race's future. The AIDS novel, Peter Zingler's The Plague (1989) recreates Nazi conditions in post-AIDS Germany in which people diagnosed with HIV are interned in concentration camps. I read Stephen King's It and Pet Sematary as also post-AIDS novels, in which the unknowbility of AIDS constitutes greater fear than death itself.

Besides the mysterious rise of the virus initially against scientific explanations, the association of the new fatal disease with male homosexuality augmented its representation as apocalyptic. The irrecognizability of homosexuals within a teleological discourse placed them outside of history and the association with AIDS reimagined them as anti-historical. Part of the fear of AIDS is one that emanates from the fear of homosexuality, particularly towards gay men who negate patrilineality, which is synonymous with the continuity and futurity of the familial line. This unintelligibility

[47] For instance, my mother described reactions to the disease in Kuwait where our family was living in the 1980s as collective hysteria. People would not touch doorknobs or telephones without using pieces of cloth. There was the belief that the virus was infesting the air, which was stronger than the belief that God was punishing homosexuals for their sexual 'digression.'

within national-familial discourse predated and anticipated AIDS as a social interpretation of homosexual fatalism. The recognition of homosexuality as a psychological illness and as a crime bolstered the belief that homosexual sex itself was AIDS (Padgug 206). It explains initial scientific explications of the cause of AIDS, which centered on the sexuality of the risk groups and responded to social definitions of proper sexual conducts. Some of these theories suggested that anal sex caused the disease because the vagina has thicker walls than the anus making it designed to withstand the trauma of penetration. Similarly, it was also argued that the spread of the virus among heterosexuals in Africa was due to their unnatural and aggressive sexual intercourse that ruptured the vagina causing the transmission of the virus (Treichler 37-9). These interpretations are nothing but a reproduction of hetero-racial normativity and regulation of sexuality and racial hierarchy. They revive the stereotype of African men as excessively and violently sexual. The scientific language that permeates the history of the emergence and continued fight against AIDS could induce amnesia over the real genesis of the disease in western collective consciousness. HIV/AIDS did not emerge from medical labs but from within a hegemonic regulatory system that assimilated the disease in rendering it first invisible (by refusing to name it) and then assigning it meanings (after naming it) that do not trouble its social and national hierarchy. This is what Phillip Brian Harper warns against in post-epidemic era, the euphoric rush to declare victory over the virus while admitting that racial minorities in the United States and millions of Africans still have no access to the medical treatment that allegedly cures AIDS. Rushing over those who were left behind because those who matter (white and western) are safe is just a reenactment of the 1980s. Cindy Patton, in her study of the globalization of AIDS as a

colonialist tool, rightly notes that "It is easy to imagine that 'AIDS' came first, that it was a narrative beginning instead of an ideological end" (8).

Even in the early stages of the epidemic in the 1980s and before the spread of the virus in Africa, the western construction of AIDS as an alien intruder aims to locate the cause and threat of the virus outside of the white heteronormative family and its 'borders'. The spatial nature of perception and medical and official response to the spread of the HIV virus makes it analogical to nationalist demarcation of citizenship which is part of the alienation of the queer Other and the racialization of his/her otherness. The appearance of the virus in gay communities and cities associated with queer spaces such as San Francesco and New York imposed actual and cultural quarantines to isolate the mysterious and deadly virus outside 'our' borders. Thus, the language that described the virus was essentially nationalist and colonialist. There were "colonies" in which the virus circulated freely, maps that graphically describe the density of the virus population in the United States and globally, the American bisexuals were described as "diasporic" figures traveling between 'colony' and home (Patton 72). The efforts to educate the American public on the new virus were consistent with the geopolitical perception and production of AIDS that while humanized sick gay men, they did not complicate normative sexuality or troubled racial hierarchy. Two examples are the films An Early Frost, the first television movie to depict and address AIDS and And The Band Played on, one of the first movies and cinematic narratives to document the emergence of the epidemic.

An Early Frost was aired on NBC in 1985. According to screenwriters Ron Cowen and Daniel Lipman, it was the first movie ever made in the United States to deal with AIDS. It was the top rated show of the night beating Monday Night Football and

was watched by 32 million viewers. The film came out in the middle of the AIDS crisis to describe and speak to a time of panic and anxiety. On the DVD commentary track, Cowen and Lipman say that when they were writing the screenplay, the HIV virus had not been isolated yet and lead actor Aidan Quinn remembers that during rehearsals they heard that Rock Hudson "came out." Thus, the film attempts to be an info-film that educates the public by personifying the disease in the character of Michael Pierson (Quinn), a closeted gay lawyer from a middle class family who discovers he has AIDS in the "prime of his life." His story is of coming out to his family as a gay son and an AIDS patient. However, the film makes no illusions that while Michael is the lead character, this is the family's story. The film comes at a time when the virus has crossed borders into the heterosexual family and is no longer just a gay disease. However, before it attempts to humanize Michael, the film first assimilates him into sexual normativity by painting his relationship with Peter, his partner of two years, as homonormative. Michael does not fit the category of the homosexual Other/villain, the promiscuous, the androgynous, the drag queen. Rather he is a man whose 'masculinity' is unquestionable, in a stable relationship and is the victim of his partner's infidelity. The film also includes a foil in the character of Victor, a flamboyant and outrageous gay man with AIDS. The writers say that in the fourteen drafts they wrote, NBC wrote notes on all the characters except Victor. When they asked NBC executives, they were told it was because Victor dies in the film and that "he gets his punishment." Additionally, Victor does not pose a threat to the heteronormative family. Even though the most interesting character in the movie, Victor is represented as the way gay men existed in the nationalist consciousness in the 1980s, theatrical, effeminate, without a family, and dying alone.

Such a representation of gay characters occurred under the watchful eyes of NBC whose censors were “hovering” on the set to ensure that no physical intimacy between Michael and Peter is allowed into the living rooms of America (Quinn). When minimum physical contact occurs between the gay couple it is usually manipulated by the film’s score which switches to quirky, innocent, and Disney-like music whenever Peter touches Michael (who is rarely seen initiating the contact). The film’s writers reveal that NBC insisted that the story should have “balance” and that any contact between Peter and Michael should be balanced out by contact with his family. Michael’s recognizability, thus, is allowed only within the family and to a limit. NBC executives objected to a scene in which Michael kisses his grandmother and only when actress Sylvia Sidney, who plays the grandmother, threatened to walk out that they relented. However, NBC successfully pressured Cowen and Lipman to write off a scene in which the grandmother tells Michael she likes his ‘friend’ after meeting Peter. Their reasoning is that they did not want the family matriarch to sanction homosexuality, indicating the fine line mainstream media was treading between the admission of the reality of the disease as an American crisis and maintaining homosexuals outside the boundaries of normative sexuality and the family. The presence of borders, which Patton underlines as central in the construction of the social and scientific narrative around AIDS, is indicated by the writers and producers’ choice to locate both the Piersons and Michael outside queer and ‘AIDS spaces.’ Michael works in a law firm in Chicago while he returns to his family in the suburb of Pennsylvania. At the end of the movie, and under Cowen and Lipman’s insistence, Michael does not die. After the family recovers from the trauma of AIDS when all members resume their roles as caring and caretaking parents and siblings, Michael rides a

taxi back to his ‘space’ outside the family home. The last image we see of Michael is of his face with a lovely and content boyish smile on his face as he utters his last words, “I love you.” However, the last scene in the film is of his taxi driving into the dark to his unknown/known fate, leaving behind his parents who look on with a grim expression on their faces.

If An Early Frost draws borders within home, And The Band Played on demarcates national borders that expels the genesis of the virus to abroad. The film opens with the lead character, the young doctor’s visit to an African country in which he witnesses decay and death as ailing and dying bodies lie around. The sick Africans are not dying of AIDS but the film insists that the African scene was ominous of what to come (to the West). The film opening reiterates western attempts since the emergence of the virus to locate the disease outside the United States even though the first known case was discovered there. Patton reads the myth of Africa as the source of HIV as a continuation of a colonialist binary of civilized us/primitive them. Consequently, the World Health Organization divided the emergence of the disease geopolitically into three categories. Pattern 1: North America and Europe, risk groups: homosexual men and IV drug users. Pattern 2: Africa, risk groups: heterosexuals. Pattern 3: Asia, late arriving AIDS (xi-xii). Patton interprets these patterns as a scientific translation of cultural, racial and gender hierarchies and demonology. It also connects the dots on an AIDS map that imagines the existence of the disease only among western homosexuals and African heterosexuals while maintaining western heterosexuals (while rendering African homosexuals nonexistent) and their sexuality outside the realm of the disease. Such divisions demarcates the African heterosexual family outside western ‘normalcy’ by

associating it with a domestic Other whose sexual identity is perceived as unnatural and diseased. They affirm the wholesomeness of the white heterosexual family in the west by making AIDS a homosexual disease and 'African AIDS' a heterosexual ailment. The association is more enunciated in the film when in the Africa scene one of the 'bodies' clutches the American doctor's arm in what is read within the construction of the narrative as a warning to 'western civilization' of the imminent doom. The film closes with a reenactment of the scene when images of a dying AIDS activist, someone who has been advocating safe sex even before the outbreak of the epidemic, deliriously clutches the doctor's arm. The two scenes conflate the African (presumably) heterosexual and the American homosexual bodies, all outside the hetero (white) normative American family.

One can also read Stephen King's IT (1986), the bestselling novel in the United States in 1986, as a metaphor of HIV/AIDS. It centers on a monster who takes many forms, a clown, a spider, apparitions, his victims' worst fears, but what is most frightening about it, which encompasses its monstrosity, is its 'itness.' The narrative is fraught with fear of the 'it,' the unnamed and the ungendered monster. IT appears to George, one of the first victims to whom we are introduced, as "a clown, like in the circus or on TV. In fact he looked like a cross between Bozo and Clarabell, who talked by honking his (or was it her?—George was never really sure of the gender) . . ." (12). George's inability to tell gender is established from his first conversation with his brother Bill, one of the novel's heroes who attempt to stop the monster. "It's your boat, really," George says of the paper boat Bill makes for him. "She," Bill responds with his usual stutter, "you call a boat sh-she" (11). The stutter, which has isolated Bill in his childhood and made him the target of bullying, hushes the boat's gender, the one six-year-old

George is unable to recognize. It is also this boat, genderless in the imagination of the child, that leads him to his death, as it drifts to a stormdrain where the monster-It lures him in and kills him. The clown manages to create a sensuous mirage of a circus underground to win the boy's confidence as a harmless clown. But once the monster reveals his fangs, the clown is transformed from a 'he' to an 'it' again (12-13).

The narrative continually emphasizes the association of gender unintelligibility with the monster and its monstrosity. The monster, which goes into a remission after each kill, reawakens in 1984 and claims the life of Adrian, an openly gay man in Derry, a small town in Maine the hometown of the heroes. Adrian is chased by three young men who throw him off a bridge despite his pleas that he cannot swim[48]. However, one of his attackers and his boyfriend see the monster in the form of a clown who picks Adrian from the water and bites his armpit.

However, the narrative maintains an ambivalent attitude towards Adrian as the victim. This is apparent in the paradoxical use of AIDS as a form of retribution for gay hate crimes. Responding to the brutal murder of Adrian, Assistant District Attorney Tom Boutillier hopes that "if I hear [his murderers] got their puckery little assholes cored down there at [prison], I'm gonna send them cards saying I hope whoever did it had AIDS" (36). In fact, the way in which the bulky novel details the complicated life cycle of the monster and histrocizes IT's reappearances can be interpreted as an allegory of AIDS. Blood appears as dominantly as the monster and its fear inducing effect is as powerful. It is featured in the novel's covers of the majority of its editions, as the name of the monster, IT is splattered in blood. The monster mainly targets children, particularly

[48] The episode is based on a real hate crime that took place in Maine also in 1984. Twenty-three year old Charlie Howard, a gay man, drowned after he was thrown off a bridge into a stream by three teenagers.

the novel's heroes who all come from dysfunctional families or have endured unhappy childhoods that marred their lives and complicated their love lives and relationships as adults. Presenting the monster as danger to the family and heteronormativity reflects the environment of fear in 1986, when IT was published, and of the vulnerability of the family to the virus which initially attacked the gender-troubling homosexuals.

A contextualized reading of King's Pet Sematary can also locate it within anxieties over the troubled naturalness of death. The novel was published in November 1983, a year after the disease was renamed from GRID to AIDS, widening its circle of threat from the gay community to everyone else, and six months after the Pasteur Institute in France announced that it might have isolated the virus that caused AIDS. As one of the most widely read novels of 1983 (New York Times placed it third on its bestselling fiction list of that year), Pet Sematary speaks to the atmosphere of fear that was sweeping the United States in the early stages of the epidemic when AIDS was prematurely and inexplicably ending the lives of many people, particularly men, in the prime of their youth. Similarly, Louis Creed, the family man and the physician, was dealing with the senseless and preventable death of his infant son who is killed by a traffic accident on a dangerous highway near the Creeds' home. Warned repeatedly of the dangers of the highway by his neighbor and later by the death of their pet Church, Louis is unable to see the signs and prevent the family tragedy. He resorts to supernatural power to break the cycle of life-death by reversing it and resurrecting his dead son. The result is a horrific reversal of the death/horror and life/joy formula, and death becomes a desired relief from a living deformity. The moralization of the tampering of nature does not only naturalize death, thus releasing it from the unnaturalness of its unknowability (what

happens after death), but also shifts emphasis from the uncertain and unknown to the knowable (the certainty of the evilness of the resurrected), and consequently creates the comfort of familiarity and certainty. This comfort, Jesse Nash suggests, is one of the reasons behind the novel's enormous popularity, as it employs a defense mechanism that replaces the fear of death with "the fear of the return of the dead" (159). To dispel any uncertainty about the naturalness of death, the novel employs repetition (three resurrections) to prove the unnaturalness of Louis' endeavor to resist death. The defense mechanism Pet Sematary arguably creates and its moralization of the enforcement of life and death and the clarity by which death is morally understood in comparison to life-brought-from-death should be historically contextualized in the frightening uncertainty of AIDS.

The moral in Pet Sematary in the context of early era AIDS can be read as a re-imagining of death as a redemptive rather than destructive force. The transgression against nature (homosexuality) is corrected by restorative act of nature (death). The message is more explicit in the scene in which Gage, the resurrected child, kills Jud, the Creeds' neighbor. Before killing him, Gage who now has gained previously inaccessible knowledge, confronts Jud with his shameful past of infidelity and promiscuity. But more importantly he reveals secrets about Jud's deceased wife whom he has met in hell and who was "a cheap slut" who "fucked every one of your friends," and "let them put it up her ass" which is "how she liked it best" (345). Gage appears triply frightening: in the graphic language he uses which is inconceivable by a one-year-old child, the unearthly knowledge he possesses, and most importantly by the reference to a sexual act which is deemed 'perverse' and futile in reproductive terms. It is made more perverse by having a

child who cannot be conceived by it to describe it. Jud's wife's 'immorality' that lands her in hell is compounded by her violation of the 'natural' sexual intercourse and in her preference for anal sex, which is associated with male homosexuality, unreproductivity, and in 1983 AIDS era, with death (Bersani). Therefore, the unnaturalness of the Gothic Child, the resurrected Gage, is softened by the moral indictment he makes which restores what the human access to supernaturalness and association with the Native American Other, through their supernatural cemetery, disrupts.

In King's Misery (1986), there is no supernatural cemetery or force from which demonic creatures emerge to threaten the normalcy of life and social order. The source of terror is Annie, whose masculinity and botch-appearance, which Kathy Bates embodies in an Academy Awards-winning performance of the adaptation of the story, troubles gender roles. The novel is named after Misery, the heroine of the protagonist, Paul Sheldon's bestselling romance series. Misery makes him a rich writer and a celebrity but also a critical failure, an author who is not taken seriously. The events of the novel accelerate when Sheldon decides to kill off Misery and begins writing a new novel about a gangster car thief and soon afterward is involved in a car accident that almost kills him. He is rescued by number one fan, Annie who does not only revive him and nurse him back to recovery but forces him to resurrect Misery, the woman on whom she builds her own fantasy life and develops an obsession that can be read as a reader-character lesbianism. What unfolds is an explosive and dynamic conflict over gender roles and creative (in)dependency in the motifs of resurrection and rape which gravitate power centers throughout the novel.

After the accident, Annie resuscitates Sheldon by performing CPR which is described as rape: “She had forced [her breath] into him the way a man might force a part of himself into an unwilling woman” (5). The conflation of life-saving with rape suspends the divisive gender perceptions which view rape as a “male prerogative” and an exclusive tool of power to be exercised by men over women (Lant 102). Annie’s physical dominance over Sheldon forces a reversal of these roles and triggers his bitterness, fear, and hatred for Annie. Lant sees in this perception of rape not only a violation of Sheldon by “Annie’s presence and her power;” but also “her forcing him to accede to her version of reality. She chooses that he will live, and he lives; she chooses that he will eat, and he eats.” This leads to the intensification of the conflict between the two because “now she begins to impose *her* story on *his* experience” (102). This hijacking of the narration operates on two levels: of Sheldon’s life and his writing, as Annie does not only demand that he resurrect Misery but dictate his creative and aesthetic production when she edits his writings and rejects them. As Lant notes, Annie holds the bread for bed-ridden Sheldon literally and figuratively as his nurse and as his reader. Sheldon is dependent on her for his own ‘bread-earning.’

Misery, therefore, deals with the oppressive relationship between author (of popular fiction) and his ‘constant readers’ who turn into critics damning any detours in his generic style. Sheldon’s killing off Misery is a disruption of the comfort zone the genre creates which antagonizes Annie. In her antagonism; however, she does not only suspend the passivity of readership while she dictates authorship, but also gender roles and gendered creativity. The death of Misery disrupts the predictability of popular fiction within whose world the normalcy of our world is contained, maintained, and sheltered.

And as in Gage's resurrection, Annie's attempt to revive Misery encroaches on the naturalness of family roles (active males and passive females) and author-reader relationship. Annie does not only transgress the limits of her role in the literary creative process but also her gender passivity, and this transgression as in Misery's killing disrupts the familiarity and traditionalism of the popular fiction genre which needs to be rectified. Ironically, as Annie tries to resurrect her beloved Misery, she herself becomes the heroine of a romance novel whose attempt to break the gender boundaries is contained. Also ironically, while King tries to challenge the genre and his 'constant readers' expectations which have literarily entrapped him, his punishment of Annie at the end restores and maintains the wholeness of the genre. The novel begins with Annie's 'rape' of Sheldon but ends with his threat of raping her and his actual rape in the form of stuffing the Misery manuscript in her mouth which does not only symbolize the forcing of a man's part into an unwilling woman but also a literary rape, a restoration of Sheldon's manhood which was literally and figuratively threatened by Annie. Sheldon might have rejected the romance genre in his abandonment of Misery but his final act of aggression against Annie holds together the essence of romance and popular fiction; that is of maintaining gender roles and protecting the recognizability of the narrative. The imposed revival of Misery by Annie undermines the man-woman and author-reader division of roles. Both aggressions on the familiarity of social norms and literary modes are rectified by the restoration of both Louis and Sheldon's masculine roles as upholders of norms.

In his novella Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption (1982), King also uses rape to re-gender the all-male environment in the Shawshank prison and staves off any

homosocial bond that Andy, the story's protagonist, and Red, its narrator, develop. Andy, who is imprisoned after being falsely convicted of killing his wife, is targeted by a group of inmates nicknamed 'the sisters.' The sisters are sexual predators who find pleasure in physically and sexually dominating their victims. They are like the heterosexual rapists in life outside prison, Red tells us, who could have had it "for free" if they wanted but they rather lust for asserting their power over their chosen preys (21). Their victims' bleeding resembles "menstrual flow" (22), an analogy that reconstructs gender differences and hierarchy in the prison world (recipients as women). However, despite recognizing their physical and sexual dominance, Red insists on calling them 'the sisters,' as the story steers away from troubling gender as a social manifestation of anatomical difference and sexual preferences. Their exercise of power might appear to be masculine but the narration, by calling them sisters, emphasizes the 'femininity' of their sexual preference (desiring men). It also preserves Andy's masculinity, as he persistently resists the sisters, which lands him in the infirmary several times. The narration tries to disrupt the homosocial bond that Andy and Red develop, leaving their masculinity intact; Andy by fighting the sisters and Red by assuming the authoritative narrative voice. Even as the sisters recreate gender hierarchy, their homosexuality is villainous and in contrast to the sincere and 'brotherly' love between the two good characters in the novella, Andy and Red.

On the other hand, the restoration of gender roles is absent in representing the liberal Arab women in The Haj and Charlie, the Arab-sympathizing western female, in The Little Drummer Girl. As I argued in chapter 3, when Arab women in popular fiction are represented in a way that disrupts the stereotype of a harem woman or a bellydancer,

they are made the villains of the story, either as allies of anti-western leaders (Laila in The fifth Horseman) or Nazis (Sonja in The Key to Rebecca) or are associated with failed Arab attempts to construct a viable nationalism or nationhood (Nada in The Haj). Thus, these characters are either promiscuous (Nada, Charlie) or prostitutes (Sonja) where their sexuality is depicted as instrument of hostility rather than a form of agency.

As in the masculinization of Annie, which dehumanizes her and disrupts the familiarity of the narrative structure of popular fiction, Charlie's gender and sexual morality in The Little Drummer Girl are constantly compromised and left ambiguous. It is not only in her gender-bending name that Charlie's femininity is destabilized but also in her position as the protagonist of a spy novel as Brenda R. Silver suggests in her reading of the story. She argues that "For a woman, then, to be the 'hero' of a detective/spy fiction would be to become a man," as the conventional structure of the genre is founded on the bonding between male writer and male reader through the male hero (24). Charlie disrupts this bonding and the recognizability of the genre—of man saving the world and woman—however, this narrative and the gender-based order are restored in her self-prostitution as her promiscuous relationships[49] throughout the novel with most of the key adversary male characters substitute for the lost male bonding. Charlie is a young British actress who is recruited by the Israeli intelligence agency, the Mossad, to infiltrate a Palestinian group which targets Israelis in Europe. However, her mission goes beyond the simple spy agent's. She is to disguise herself as the fictitious mistress of Michel, the brother of Khalil, who is the head of the targeted group. Michel

[49] In the context of both Charlie's masculinization and her association with Arabs, her promiscuity can be read as a form of polygamy since she often emotionally and sexually displaces her desires for Joseph and Michel simultaneously in the form of prostituting self.

was killed by the Mossad after being interrogated. In order to make the love affair plausible, Joseph a Mossad agent disguises as Michel and lives with Charlie duplicating a couple's life. Unlike the resurrection in Pet Sematary, which breaks the Creed family and disrupts the naturalness of human relationships and natural cycle of life, the resurrection of Michel holds the prospect of establishing a meaningful and stable monogamous relationship. However, since this resurrection is only meaningful in its fictitiousness and reliance on the spectral construction, it fails to provide the solid structure which monogamy and couplehood are expected to support. Charlie falls in love with Joseph but she is haunted by the ghost of Michel. She simultaneously desires both men even when she is with another man in one of her passing affairs:

> [S]he was appalled to find herself imagining it was Michel inside of her, and Michel's face gazing down at her, and Michel's olive body bearing in on her in the half dark—Michel, her own little killer boy, driving her to the brink. But beyond Michel there was another figure still, Joseph, hers at last; his burning, locked-in sexuality finally burst loose; his scarred body and his scarred mind hers. (259)

The prospect of a stable relationship seems to diminish not only with the persisting spectral presence of Michel with whom the fulfillment of this desire is impossible, but also in the conflation of the physical figures of the two men and her yearning for both. It is not only her fantastical desire that disrupts the romance between her and Joseph but the polygamous nature of this physical and spiritual union that has no place in the moralizing structure of popular fiction.

Silver suggests that the complexity of this triangle also threatens Charlie's autonomy. Silver borrows Eve Sedgwick's theory of the homosocial to reconstruct the relationships in the novel between men. Sedgwick locates the homosocial space in a reworking of Rousseau's triangular desires between wife-man-mistress/husband-wife-lover in which the forbidden homosexual desire is consummated through the heterosexual relationships. The woman/man becomes the link in the woman-woman or man-man desires to whom s/he are having the sexual relationship simultaneously; therefore, s/he is the site on which homoeroticism and homosexual yearning is projected. Silver suggests that in The Little Drummer Girl these forbidden relationships between the Israeli and Palestinian men are carried through Charlie whose body translates those affinities which politics disallows. Since the two sides do not communicate their differences, Le Carre sacrifices Charlie, as a body and a person, to create the common space in a novel that is trying so hard to reconcile differences and place itself in the middle of the oppositional sides of the conflict. Towards the end of the novel, Charlie predictably begins to unravel. When the Palestinians discover that she is an Israeli agent and they ask her what she is, she replies, "nothing" (420). In the absence of any prospect of restoration which is offered in Misery with the simulative rape of Annie and the reinstatement of Sheldon's masculinity, her reduction to nothingness is where the narrative refuses to give a familiar structure in a genre that is based on one. Toine van Teeffelen clearly situates this otherness of Arabs in the formula of the genre: "Given that popular literature tends to metaphorically understand political and social life through the experience of persons and small groups, this departure from norms of family life and sexual behavior constructs an image of Arabs, especially Palestinians, as fragmented, individualized, and in fact

without a society" (390). Therefore, in the context of popular fiction whose thematic structure seeks to introduce the family and heteronormativity as sites of stability in defining the nation and the collective self and read in juxtaposition with conventional romance novels such as Steel's, Nada and Laila's sexuality and Charlie's gender ambiguity are far from empowering as they fragment the wholeness of the Arab society, which unlike Misery's conclusion, is not restored.

While Annie is punished and the social order is reestablished, Charlie is left disintegrated denied wholeness. At the end of the novel, the echoes of her admission: "I'm dead" leaves her in uncertainty the narrative refuses to dispel (429). This is significant to the thesis of this dissertation because the social and emotional stability sought within the American family and social system seems to be denied Arabs and those who are associated with them. The punishment of Annie and the killing of Gage both realign the American self with the familiar perception of family values (children who kill their mothers are killed and women who attempt to 'act manly' are reduced back to their position of passivity). This resolution and the restoration of the familiar, however, are denied the gender-bending, promiscuous, and Arab-sympathizing Charlie.

In maintaining the heteronormativity of the American family, King's and Steel's novels uphold gender boundaries, resisting and punishing any transgression. In Full Circle and Star, Tana's and Crystal's independence and professional success never threaten their femininity, if not heighten it. On the other hand, Misery's Annie, The Fifth Horseman's Laila, The Little Drummer Girl's Charlie, blur feminine/masculine distinctions which lead to their downfall and punishment. Instead of being signs of rebellion against a repressive social system, their gender unintelligibility transforms them

into villains as in the case of Laila, Annie, and Nada or victims of foreign corruption that Charlie endures and ultimately manifests.

What this chapter argues is that the mechanism of feminizing the Other (whether Arab, Jew, Asian) needs the permanence of the queer Otherness on which the nationalist narrative as familial relies. What queer theory destabilizes is gender as natural (Butler's troubling) which is why excluding homosexuals from the family (as husband and husband or wife and wife but not as sons and daughters as evidenced by the way the message in Early Frost was carefully constructed) is central to nationalism. How can Arabs be feminized if femininity as a marker of difference is in itself ambiguous? Further, representing the queer body as foreign to the family-as-nation and nation-as-family, a double and mutually constituting exclusions, conflates global 'terrorism' with homosexuality within a nationalist discourse. The geopolitical nature of the AIDS narrative that began in 1980s and has not ended (replacing the American gay men with Africans) also relies on borders and spatial delimitation. Therefore, George W. Bush's juxtaposition of 'war on terror' with 'defense of the family' during the 2004 election redraws borders along the family lines, delimiting both Arabs and American homosexuals from intelligibility.

Afterthought

In 2004, I was teaching a novel course in the Department of English at the University of Jordan in Amman, Jordan. It was right after I had finished reading Said's Culture and Imperialism. Influenced by his argument over the need to contextualize the novel as a genre in its colonial past and present, I redesigned some of the readings to incorporate themes of colonialism. It was a year after the U.S. occupation of Iraq, so the debate over the cultural construction of colonial thought was of crucial relevance. One of the assigned readings was Robinson Crusoe, a story Arabs were quite familiar with as it was adapted to many dubbed animation series in different formats, either faithful to the original story or rewritten as the tale of a family stranded on foreign land. It was a story many of us were exposed to whether as an abridged version of the novel or adapted in films and television series. In the final exam, I asked students to discuss the colonial context of Robinson Crusoe, relying on Said's theory of the novel as an imperialist vehicle. Most of them wrote excellent essays displaying a coherent and perceptive

understanding of the way in which Defoe represented European conquest of Africa as a humanitarian mission and racial hierarchy as natural and evolutionary.

It was students' responses to another question; however, that evoked my interest and surprise. I asked them whether they identified more with Crusoe or Friday. The majority of students said it was Crusoe they felt closer to, justifying their answers by emphasizing his characters' strength and resourcefulness and distancing Friday from themselves as weak and subordinate. Because of the extensive discussion we had over the colonial context of the novel as a genre and Defoe's novel in particular and the current events happening in both Iraq and Palestine, I expected that students would respond by reading the allegorical meanings of Crusoe and Friday's characterization as relevant to Arabs' current vulnerability to American colonialism. They would recognize similarities between the way Crusoe justified his colonization of the island and enslavement of Friday and the argument the Bush administration put forward in justifying the invasion of Iraq as a liberation mission and the helpless and powerless of its people. They would see in Friday the stereotypical Arab whose grasp of 'western' concepts of democracy and civilization is underdeveloped and in need of American guidance.

The students did not respond to the deceptively neutral question I presented them with the way I anticipated nor did they read the question within the essay they had just finished writing on the colonialist tone of the novel. That experience was the beginning of six years of research that concluded with the writing of this dissertation. I began with the question of why my students, who were all Jordanian, were unable to relate to Friday. I posited several explanations, one of which was that when the students were faced with what seemed to be a casual question with no ulterior academic motive (a question mainly

about their perception and enjoyment of a story) unlike the question on Said and the novel, they decontextualized and depoliticized Robinson Crusoe. This is a conclusion of multiple implications of the distance that exists between theory and literary appreciation and political contextualization, which often posed difficulties for me as a student and a teacher. As an undergraduate student, I was not able to see the theories within an applicable context until I read Said's Orientalism and Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth, two influential books which motivated me to pursue my doctoral research. Also as a teacher, I had faced resistance or indifference from students when we were examining theoretical texts or approaching literature historically. I recall that in their evaluation of a nineteenth century English literature course, they often described it as unnecessary against all my attempts to make it relevant.

As a graduate student in the United States, I noticed a similar perception of humanities as irrelevant in terms of its contribution to human development. This is reflected in the diminishing funding that goes to arts and humanities and debates over whether humanities really matter. I was surprised to realize that the situation in Jordan was in reverse, that more funding was going to humanities, particularly the education research field. A friend who works in education development explained to me the disparity between appreciation of humanities in the United States and in Jordan. The majority of funding that goes to humanities research and development projects in Jordan come from American sources such as USAID or the World Bank. Often Jordanian Nonprofit Organizations come under attack for being influenced by these foreign sources whose roles exceed just financing research and attempt to influence its outcome. Consequently, NGOs produce findings, which affirm some western homogeneous

preconceptions and representations of Arab reality and identity. The field of gender studies suffers most from this stigma, as its contributions to local communities are tainted and compromised by foreign interference that expect their research not to trouble the stereotypical representation of Arab women's realities. What seems apparent is that humanities do matter, in fact a great deal, to the United States but only when it contributes to the production of knowledge in regions of American colonial interests. However, when the U.S. government plans for the invasion of an Arab country, it does not change its underestimation of the relevance of human sciences in the United States but rather revives books such as The Arab Mind as an informative text on how Arabs think. One then can view the devaluing of arts and humanities in the United States as a deliberate act within a neocolonial context which aims to stabilize American perceptions and reproduction of self and Other, while simultaneously diverts funding to humanities research in Arab countries within an agenda to monopolize the production of certain knowledge that rehashes and internalizes Arabs' cultural inferiority and political immaturity. I here stress the simultaneity of the two projects and attitudes because I believe that their realizability is unthinkable without their co-occurrence.

I also refer deliberately here to the United States rather than the U.S. government because one of the realizations, which motivated this research was the need to associate the U.S. public rather than dissociate it from its government. My use of 'public' refers to a real collectivity which supported the war on Afghanistan and Iraq, was silent for years over the establishment of the military prison of Guantanamo Bay whose location outside the United States was clearly motivated by the license it would grant the military to enforce unlawful interrogation techniques and illegal incarceration. There does exist a

public that helps produce rather then merely consumes the cultural and media products that culturalized the conflict with Al-Qaeda and manipulated the representation of Arabs to maintain the binary of us and them. This conclusion returns me to my students of the novel course. Another assumption I made for their inability to see Friday as a familiar figure is the implication of locating themselves in the narrative. In order to enjoy literary products which are problematic, one has to dissociate oneself from the text. As Robinson Crusoe presented Friday as the epitome of inherent African servitude, my readers were able to de-racialize the narrative by distancing themselves from its political context. They reduced it to a story empty of ideological implications and saw Crusoe and Friday as just fictional characters which can be described with neutral adjectives such as 'weak' or 'strong' and 'clever' or 'dumb' without injecting race into this production. The same can be said about the popularity of movies such as True Lies and TV series such as NCIS and 24 in the Middle East despite the overt racist tone that typecasts Arabs as terrorists. I remember the annoyance which my mother expressed when I asked her how she could watch NCIS without being offended by it. My question implicated her as a participant in the creation of popular cultural products and transformed them from mere entertainment into producers of serious and relevant connotations. Guilty pleasures, thus, are not as guiltless as we have thought.

I acknowledge that popular culture products operate differently in the United States and Arab countries, and that the mechanism of response to a movie such as Rules of Engagement in each location differs even as they collaboratively construct the hierarchy of power between the United States as a colonizer and Arabs as colonized. For instance, Arab viewers' use of dissociation as a mechanism to enable them to enjoy

cultural products despite their offensive representation[50] of Arabs leads to a duality of perception of America as a land of opportunity and as a colonial force. Thus, Arab viewers process American superiority emphasized in these Hollywood movies as an abstract, void of a political context, an America that is different from the one they see on Arab news channels vetoing U.N. resolutions that attempt to protect Palestinians. I tried to explore in this dissertation, American readers' investment in popular fiction as cultural products that produce ideological and dialectical meanings and contribute to the creation of the binary of the American/Arab.

Above all, I do think we should annoy readers and viewers of popular art. We should disrupt their collective comfort zones and invade them with postcolonial analyses of the signification of their selection and enjoyment of popular art and fiction.

[50] A reaction that can be contrasted with those of Arab-Americans who living in the United States cannot afford to suspend association.

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Appendix

1980

Selected bestsellers:

The Fifth Horseman by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre

The Key to Rebecca by Ken Follett

Historical events:

In 1980, CNN was officially launched as the first all-news U.S. network, providing 24-hour news coverage. It was the last year that saw a Democrat president in the White House until Bill Clinton's election eleven years later. Under Jimmy Carter, the United States was testing water in its confrontation with the Soviet Union, boycotting the summer Olympics in Moscow and suspending grain sales to the Soviet Union in response to Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Carter was dealing with a standoff with the Iranian government in the hostage crisis that erupted in 1979 when 53 Americans were taken hostage at the U.S. embassy in Tehran. The failure of a small-scale rescue operation further humiliated Carter and weakened his presidency. Carter would later lose election to California governor and former actor Ronald Reagan who would take credit for ending the hostage crisis when Iranian and American officials reached a deal in the following year. Egypt and Israel established diplomatic ties after the 1979 Camp David peace treaty, effectively ending large-scale wars between Arab states and Israel. The Israeli government passed the Jerusalem law that stated that Jerusalem, which Israel annexed in the 1967 war, was Israel's eternal and undivided capital. The United Nations respond

with a resolution that nullified the law and called on members to withdraw embassies from Jerusalem. The resolution passed unanimously while the United States abstained.

In 1980, American networks revealed that the FBI carried out a sting operation in the late 1970s, in which some of its agents, posing as Arabs, offered several Congressmen bribes in exchange for a number of favors. The operation, Abscam or Abdul Scam, perpetuated the stereotype of Arabs as wealthy shady characters who were trying to buy America or corrupt its morality, an image seen frequently in many movies and TV shows.

The Fifth Horseman by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre

- Date of publication: September 1980
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestsellers list: 73[51]
- Reviews and reception

Larry Collins, one of the authors of the novel, said the first idea that crossed his mind while writing this novel was that it could actually happen. Many of the book reviews agreed, as they emphasized the plausibility of the novel's plot of a nuclear attack against New York masterminded by a maniac Arab. The villain in the novel is Libyan leader Muamar Qaddafi. The heroes are an unnamed U.S. president and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. The weapon is a nuclear bomb. The victims are the people of New York (and all Americans, the President claims, if he succumbs to Qaddafi's blackmail and force Israel to withdraw from the West Bank). Peter Andrews in New York Times called the plot "terrifyingly simple" but "plausible," praising the writers' skills in accurately constructing details from "the inner circle of the White House to the rabbit

[51] All information on the numbers of weeks the bestsellers stayed on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists is taken from Keith L. Justice's Bestseller Index.

warrens of whacko Arab extremists." In The Washington Post, Richard Helms warned that readers should not be led to believe that there was an element of truth in the novel while Joseph McLellan spent his whole article detailing the ways in which the authors collected their information and sources and molded them into a well-researched novel. One of their techniques was researching "several attempts by Qaddafi to purchase nuclear capability." The author Larry Collins maintained that his novel might be fiction "but every line has to be believable; we build our fiction on a solid foundation, using a high proposition of fact" (qtd. in McLallen). One of these methods, Edwin McDowell told us in his review, was basing Qaddafi's lines and dialogue on a collection of his actual speeches but in different contexts.

The Key to Rebecca by Ken Follett

- Date of publication: September 1980
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists:92 (17 weeks as number one)
- Reviews and reception

If authenticity was The Fifth Horseman's strength, it caused The Key to Rebecca legal problems. Shortly after The Key to Rebecca's ascent to the top of bestselling fiction list, its author Ken Follett was sued by British author Leonard Mosley for allegedly plagiarizing his nonfiction account of the events that inspired Follett's novel. The novel is an espionage story centered on real-life German spy John Eppler (Wolff in The Key to Rebecca) who was half Egyptian and tried to steal secret files from English officers in Egypt. In the novel, Wolff is aided by an Egyptian bellydancer who begins an affair with an English officer and lures him to her place in order for Wolff to steal secret documents

from his bag. Beside its legal woes, The Key to Rebecca received some admonishing reviews. New York Times called it “stupid” and a “mechanical” adaptation of an otherwise exciting real-life espionage tale (Andrews).

1982, 1983, 1984

Selected bestsellers:

Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption by Stephen King

Pet Sematary by Stephen King

Full Circle by Danielle Steel

The Little Drummer Girl by John Le Carre

The Haj by Leon Uris

Historical events:

In 1982, United States imposed an embargo on Libya but it was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon that dominated Middle East media coverage in 1982 and 1983. It was an unpopular war that sent 400,000 Israelis to the streets in protest, particularly after the Sabra and Shatila massacre, which drew intense western media coverage and global condemnations. In the Israeli-controlled section of Beirut, pro-Israel Phalangist militiamen entered the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila on a revenge mission following the assassination of Lebanon’s president-elect Bashir Gemayel. Thousands of Palestinian civilians were killed. A 1983 Time magazine cover story, “Verdict on Massacre [is Guilty],” elicited strong responses from readers in their letters to Time and prompted Ariel Sharon, who was Israel’s defense minister during the

massacre, to sue the magazine for libel. Uris Leon was one of the character witnesses who testified in support of Sharon (Hornblower and Kennedy 2). Both The Haj (1984) and The Little Drummer Girl (1983) should be read within the historical context of the conflict over sympathies that Sabra and Shatila massacre heightened and brought to public debate in 1982 and 1983.

The Little Drummer Girl by John Le Carre

- Date of publication: March 1983
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists: 94 weeks (36 weeks as number one)
- Reviews and Reception:

The Little Drummer Girl garnered great public interest and strong response from the media in the United States and Israel but should also be read in the aftermath of the extensive press coverage of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the Sabra and Shatila massacre. There was no dispute over the novel's popularity, as it leapt to number one on New York Times bestsellers list upon publication. Its publisher Alfred A. Knopf provided 350,000 copies as a first print and by the end of March printed another 100,000 copies (Harmetz). Warner Bros. was quick to buy the movie rights at an estimated $750,000. A cinematic adaptation, starring Diane Keaton as Charlie, began filming in 1983 and was released the following year to capitalize on the novel's enormous popularity. The movie poster tagline read: 'She will become their most deadly weapons. As long as they can make her fall in love."

The novel polarized newspapers reviews, as New York Times came to Le Carre's defense, lauding the novel as balanced and profound in broaching a complex subject such

as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while The Washington Post criticized its simplistic approach that tended to romanticize Palestinian 'terrorists.' In a New York Times review, Anatole Broyard said The Little Drummer Girl represented a departure in style for Le Carre, particularly in depicting female characters, which often were the "Achilles heel" for his Bond-like George Smiley, the hero of Le Carre's enormously popular spy trilogy on the Cold War. The review noted the shift in the geopolitical interests of Le Carre, moving from discussing themes of Cold War to Middle East politics, as if "he feels that neither Britain nor the Soviet Union is at the hot center of things anymore." As for the debate over the novel's impartiality and bias, Broyard declared history as the true villain in the story. In another review in the New York Times, William F. Buckley Jr. described The Little Drummer Girl as the "most mature, inventive, and powerful book about terrorists-come-to-life" he has ever read. He praised the novel for being balanced in its representation of Israelis and Palestinians even if the former triumphed at the end. The Palestinians' view was present in The Little Drummer Girl, which Buckley saw as a rare achievement that needed to be acknowledged. Newsweek review agreed, calling The Little Drummer Girl one of the first novels that "without condoning terrorism, […] makes the reasons for it understandable" (Gelber and Behr).

Book reviewers in The Washington Post, on the other hand, were critical of Le Carre's depiction of the conflict. In "Le Carre's Unreal Mideast," George F. Will called the novel "unsatisfactory" and "polemic" and unrealistic in its representation of some elements of Palestinian plight. "A novelist whose specialty is supposed to be verisimilitude," he charged, "should not retail rubbish." He criticized the romanticized depiction of Palestinian characters in the novel comparing it to a Harlequin romance

while calling it anti-feminist in presenting its heroine, Charlie, as "passive" and "plastic." Jonathan Yardley described The Little Drummer Girl as "thoughtful" and "provocative" yet "implausible" ("John Le Carre's Mata Hari of the Middle East"). In another article in response to Le Carre's excessive appearance in the media in promotion of the novel and its point of view, Yardley criticized Le Carre for implying that the plight of people in poorer places such as the Palestinians should reduce those living in the rich West to guilt and contempt ("Poor Little rich Man"). Le Carre wrote a response to The Post accusing Yardley of misquoting him and shelling him with random accusations as the Israeli army sometimes shelled Palestinian refugee camps ("Le Carre in his Defense"). Peter Osnos, also in The Washington Post, noted Le Carre's "visibility" in the media circuit as the author attempted to explain the sympathies of his novel and his experience writing it. Ornos suggested that Le Carre was both addressing the pro-Palestinian critique leveled against his novel but was also preparing his readership for the shift of style from his Smiley spy novels which relied on a clear and unambiguous formula of heroes-vs.-villains to the complex world of Middle East politics. He referred to the extensive research Le Carre did before writing The Little Drummer Girl and acknowledged that it was written and published during and in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, giving the novel a "greater urgency." Some of the Israeli media were critical of the novel's representation of the conflict. Ma'ariv, one of Israel's most widely read newspapers, called the book "anti-Israeli" ("Israelis Upset by Spy Novel").

The Haj by Leon Uris

- Date of publication: April 1984

- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists: 72
- Reviews and reception

Uris' latest novel elicited some reactions but hardly a debate over its bias. There was less fervor over its depiction of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict than the one The Little Drummer Girl provoked. The Haj's stereotypical representation of Arabs and Palestinians was treated in a matter-of-fact manner in New York Times and as plausible and legitimate by The Washington Post. The Washington Post described the novel as "social journalism" (Schott). Even as it admitted the polemic nature of the novel, the Post review consistently praised Uris for "work[ing] history most successfully, integrating it into the lives of its characters" and moving "his giant construct of history as religious madness and racial greed from United Nations conferences and Moslem conspiracies to successive Arab assassinations and the disastrous defeat of Egypt by Israel in the Sinai desert in 1956." The Post's review, thus, affirmed rather than questioned the one-sidedness of The Haj 'construct' of history, placing the blame consistently on Arabs and Palestinians while exonerating Zionists in British-mandated Palestine. New York Times directed its criticism against Uris' manipulation of history (Broyard). Newsweek review, "The Unchosen People," suggested that The Haj is populated with "Uris Arabs, a species familiar to readers of Uris's early epic 'Exodus.' In intellect, the difference between a Uris Arab and his camel is not great and in morality the camel wins by a furlong" (Adler 1). It described the book, particularly its structure of narration that forces its Arab characters to incessantly self-condemn as "a book that does not strike a single convincing note in a vast symphony of sound." In Canada, however, reactions to the novel were stronger with The Globe and Mail review calling the novel racist (Heller) and the

Canadian Arab Federation moving to ban the book from public libraries ("Libraries won't Ban Uris Book"). American libraries reported strong demand for The Haj and Steel's Full Circle (Hatten).

Full Circle

- Date of publication: May 1984
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists: 80 (12 weeks as number one)
- Reviews and reception:

Full Circle does not venture outside the Steel formula. It begins with family disruption by the death of the father in World War II and the mother's neglect of the needs of her daughter. It courts but never fully delves into sensitive political and social issues such as race relations. The focus remains on the white heroine and her ability to avoid her mother's mistakes and find happiness in a heteronormative and stable family. There is no conflict of choice between career and family in Full Circle since the narrative personalizes that imbalance in the heroine's life as a response to her traumatic experience when she was raped and the instability of her mother's relationship. The New York Times review recognized Full Circle's conformity to the formula that still made it a "good read" even as it relied on clichés (Ramsey). United Press International was less 'forgiving,' branding the novel a "moneymaker," "soap opera in print" and an indication of the lamentable state of the "American literary taste." The Steel formula remained popular in 1984. She had more books on the bestseller lists than any other writer (three

on paperback fiction list and one on hardcover list) (McDowell 1 “Top Sellers among Books of 1984”).

Pet Sematary by Stephen King

- Date of publication: November 1983
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists: 105 (32 weeks as number one)
- Reviews and reception

The Washington Post described the novel as King’s most frightening, with characters “so familiar that they may as well have lived next door for years” (Winter 1). Annie Gottlieb in New York Times, similarly, used words such as “accurate” and “realistic” in describing the novel’s depiction of characters and “parenthood.” Christopher Lehmann-Haupt wavered between praising the strength of King’s storytelling and lamenting its waste on unserious fiction before admitting in the end of his review that regardless of his own standards of good literature, he was still gripped by one of the most horrifying novels King had written to date. What runs common in newspapers reviews of Pet Sematary was its ability to create characters and situations, which were familiar and plausible, despite the gothic and supernatural nature of the story.

Different Seasons (1982)

- Date of publication: august 1982
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestsellers list: 89 (3 weeks as number one)

- Review and reception

Different Seasons contained four novellas, two of which were turned into successful and classic movies: The Body (Stand by me [1986]) and Rita Haworth and the Shawshank Redemption (The Shawshank Redemption [1994]). Rita Haworth and the Shawshank Redemption is one of the few fictions, King wrote in the 1980s, which was neither horror nor science fiction. The story involves the intimacy between Andy, who is falsely convicted of killing his wife, and Red, the narrator, in the Shawshank prison. There are elements of fear, as the innocent-minded and idealist Andy face the cruel reality of the prison world, one of which is rape. The novel has suspense as Andy digs his way slowly out of Shawshank. But mainly this is a story of love and infinite admiration Red and Andy have for each other. Unlike the movie, the novella does not end with the reunion of the two 'friends' but leaves Red riding to meet Andy without providing a future for their relationship[52]. Reviews of Shawshank Redemption focused on that relationship whose 'warmth' New York Times concluded was a welcomed "departure from the genre that made its author famous" (Cheuse). Christopher Lehmann-Haupt's review spent little time on the novella, simply describing it as a "clever and triumphant account of prison escape." The Washington Post review called King the literary equivalent of Stephen Spielberg (that is pre-Schindler's List Spielberg) as "popular phenomenon represented accomplishments and impulses our culture has no need to be ashamed of" (Gifford 2). Interestingly, none of these reviews questioned the platonic nature of Red and Andy's relationship.

[52] Another difference is that Red in the novella is white while in the movie adaptation he is black.

1986, 1987

Selected bestseller:

IT by Stephen King

Misery by Stephen King

Historical events:

President Reagan mentioned 'AIDS' in public for the first time. The National Academy of Science criticized the U.S. government's response to the epidemic and called for two billion dollars instead of the $70 million Congress allocated for AIDS research in 1985. AZT, the first drug used to treat AIDS began trial. Gallup opinion poll showed that 57% of Americans opposed legalizing homosexuality (a rise from 47% in 1985). The Iran/Contra in which U.S. government sold arms to Iran in order to fund the Contra rebels in Nicaragua, was made public. The first Palestinian Intifada against Israeli occupation erupted.

IT

- Year of publication: September 1986
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller list: 120 (18 weeks as number one)
- Reviews and reception

IT is one of King's most popular novels of the 1980s. The Washington Post named it one of the bestselling fiction of the decade. Its publication was preceded by big publicity as King's masterpiece of horror he spent seven years writing. New York Times review called it a condensation of all fears and nightmares that was "too damn complicated," as

"it reaches too much" and it "tries too hard" (Lehmann-Haupt). The Washington Post review, on the other hand, described it as "massive and mesmerizing odyssey" while noting a pattern in King's novels in which he selected disadvantaged but average and familiar children to be the victims of horror and supernatural forces (Cormier). The San Diego Union-Tribune review concluded that IT fell short of the hype and was "too inept to be frightening" (Rowe). The reviews had not affected the public reception of the novel, as it went straight to the top New York Times bestselling fiction list and remained there for fourteen consecutive weeks, the longest a King novel had spent as number one then (Bear 203).

Misery

- Year of publication: June 1987
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists: 95 (18 weeks as number one).
- Reviews and reception

Misery, like Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption and unlike IT and Pet Sematary, creates a different kind of horror that does not rely on supernatural forces and fantastical creatures. While IT, its predecessor #1 bestseller, was encyclopedically long and populated with many characters fighting a multi-formed monster, Misery has two characters, Paul Sheldon the writer and the hero, and Annie Wilkes, the fan and the villain. Sheldon wants to kill Misery, the heroine of his bestselling romance series, and Annie wants him to resurrect her. Sheldon's resistance to and rebellion against Annie's wishes cost him a foot and thumb. The horror in Misery is built on a forced intimacy

between Sheldon and Annie and the switching of gender roles of dominance. It has the "gross out factor" that characterizes Annie's appearance in Sheldon's mind and ours as his (and King's) readers (Banks). In the 1990 movie adaptation of the novel, Kathy Bates embodies the gender-bending and the gross-out element that terrify Sheldon. Her interpretation earned her an Academy Award for best actress. Reviews of Misery the novel acknowledged the refreshing new direction King took in creating horror in his latest bestseller. It might be one of his less terrifying novels, but it was his best as a blooding metaphor for writing and maintaining control over the creative process (Lehmann-Haupt). John Katzenback found Misery a break from the demon-inhabiting formula of King's novels that "creates strengths out if its realities." David Brooks in Wall Street Journal read the story as "not-too-subtle slam at his audience, which only wants lightweight output." If Misery was intended as an implied critique of his readership, then it must have passed unnoticed as with a first print of a million copies, Misery continued to attract sales and attention among readers.

1989

Selected bestsellers:

Star by Danielle Steel

Daddy by Danielle Steel

The Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie

Historical events:

Major events of 1989 were the protests on Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the U.S. invasion of Panama, and the rise to power of Colin Powell who was appointed as U.S. army Joint Chief of Staff, the highest military rank held by an African-American. Colin would later be the major architect of the first Gulf War against Iraq in 1991 and, as Secretary of State, the diplomatic advocate for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The Soviet army began pulling out of Afghanistan after unsuccessful ten years of war. In December, a self-proclaimed anti-feminists gunman shot and killed fourteen women in Canada in what came to be known as the Ecole Polytecnique Massacre.

The most significant and iconic event of 1989 was the fall of the Berlin Wall which was the official end of the Cold War. The event concluded a decade of escalated arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, which U.S. president Ronald Reagan had made the central issue of his presidency. A few months before the fall of the Berlin Wall, The National Interest published Francis Fukuyama's essay "The End of History?" (1989). In the essay, which he would later expand into the book The End of History and the Last Man (1992), Fukuyama predicted that the demise of the Soviet Union as a superpower and the end of the Cold War would end history as a socioeconomic evolution. The world would move to a single mode of governing, that is of liberal democracy. He anticipated that states would either adopt liberal democracy as a political and economic model of governing or they would disintegrate. The essay elicited strong response and critique, some of which counter-predicted that 'Islamic fundamentalism,' epitomized by the Iranian regime, would become the next adversary to (American) liberal democracy. A year after the publication of "The End of History?", Bernard Lewis warned that what the western world was facing was "a [Muslim] mood

and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations" between the West and an angry Muslim World ("The Roots of Muslim Rage" 26). He referred to the controversy over Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses earlier in the year as an example of unrestrained and violent Muslim rage. 'Clash of civilization' would become the term on which Samuel P. Huntington would base his theory, proposed first in a 1992 essay and later in his book The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order (1996), that post-Cold War conflicts would be ideological and over religious identities.

Bestsellers:

Daddy (1989), Danielle Steel.

- Publication date: November 1989
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists: 61 (17 weeks at number one)
- Reviews and reception:

Daddy presents a slight departure from Steel's novels in the 1980s, as the novelist focuses on the experience of Oliver, a single father whose life is disrupted when Sarah, his wife, decides to leave the family to pursue an education and a career. The themes in the novel remain, however, consistent with those in her previous bestsellers, focusing tension points in the story on family crises and intertwining their resolution with restoring the family. Whereas Sarah loses her French lover in an accident, Oliver finds Charlotte, a successful TV personality, who is willing to place family first. Reviews of Daddy either emphasized the rarity of the perspective Steel brought to the novel, that is of the single father (Davis) or a perceived anti-feminism (Stumpf).

Daddy is also one of Steel's most popular novels of the 1980s. The Washington Post listed it as one of the ten bestselling fiction of the decade.

Star, Danielle Steel

- Publication date: February 1989
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists: 59 weeks (17 weeks at number one)
- Reviews and reception:

Star follows the same formula of Steel's previous bestsellers in the 1980s: the young virginal heroine who is traumatized by the death of the father and rape at the hand of a close family member (brother-in-law). There is the shadow of a war (Korean War) that causes separation between lovers as it heightens the masculinity of the hero and nationalizes the sacrifices of the heroine and the importance of the success of the love story. There is the presence of socially ostracized nonwhite characters (Japanese friend) with whom the heroine can identify, and historical events (election of John F. Kennedy and then his assassination) that provide an emotional frame for the love story. Reviews of the novel underscored the predictability of the plot. Kasey Jones in The Sunday Oregonian noted Steel's recent tendency of "toning down the sex" in her novels. The United Press International recognized Star as an uncharacteristically mature novel presenting a "powerful saga in which Steel shows the relentless drive of several characters while they strive to achieve their goal." On the other hand, The New York Times review criticized the one-dimensionality of the novel's characters, which are either evil or good, and the lovers are often "too ambivalent" (Kellerman).

The Satanic Verses

- Date of publication: March 1989
- Weeks on New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller lists: 49 weeks (18 weeks at number one)
- Reviews and reception

It is important to read the reception of The Satanic Verses within the aforementioned historical context of extending western history as an evolution of confrontation (a Hegelian progression). Shifting the conflict from its military and economic nature that characterized the Cold War to the ideological ensured the continued formulation of western progression as hierarchical over a contrary and antithetical force without obstructing the transnational flow of commodity and capital (Iran can be demonized ideologically but remain accessible to economic ventures). Reviews and receptions of the controversy surrounding The Satanic Verses emerged as they perpetuated that West/Islam divide that would come to dominate U.S. military and foreign policies for the next two decades.