

**THE 'OTHER' IN THE GLOBALIZED DISCOURSES OF FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBINGS:  
GENDER, POWER, AND REPRODUCTION OF INEQUALITY**

Tanya Narozhna

Do not cite without author's permission.

***Introduction***

A female suicide bomber entered the stage of modern political violence nearly three decades ago. The seeming novelty of her violent act signaled the readiness of some women to move to the forefront of political violence. Yet, most explanations of female suicide bombings offered by Western experts displayed striking continuity with entrenched gendered stereotypes about women and femininity. She was reductively portrayed as a victim of cultural circumstances or a 'romantic dupe'; alternatively, she was presented as a feminist warrior embracing violence to achieve gender equality. In this paper I analyze critically mainstream Western academic discourses of female suicide bombings and expose the ways in which knowledge produced by this scholarship serves to sustain inequality in existing global power relations. I focus here on the collective dimension of women's experiences, as well as on the multiple ways in which broader social relations condition the responses of some women to political violence, particularly those engaged in suicide bombings. I do so in order to illuminate how a particular Western-centric articulation of sexual, racial and cultural difference in mainstream research reduces female suicide bombings to a single dimension of orientalised patriarchy and is complicit in (re)producing post-colonialism. A critical theory perspective, on the other hand, acknowledges up front that our understanding of female suicide bombings, and of the social realities that shape such activity, is largely constituted by the tightly imbricated discourses of gender, sexuality, religion, culture, race, and colonialism/imperialism (Kinsella, 2007: 227).

Thus, the objective in this paper is two-fold: first, I recognize the entanglement of the issues of sex, race, gender and colonialism in the occidentalist epistemology that weaves together the images, symbols, and representations of the Western Self and the Other; and, second, I disclose the essentializing nature of the constitution of alterity of Oriental societies in the mainstream representations of female suicide bombings. In other words, I reveal the deforming effects of mainstream discursive constructions of female suicide bombings and expose the ways in which they produce images of these women's socio-cultural contexts as the irrational, putatively oppressive, archaic, savage and violent Other in contrast with the rational, morally, culturally, racially and sexually superior Western Self -- with the United States being the dominant referent for the West (Brunner, 2007; Coronil, 1996).

I am mindful, of course, of the fact that female suicide bombers, even within particular cultural contexts, are not a homogenous category. Individual female suicide perpetrators do not experience general social and cultural conditions uniformly. There are serious internal differences, splits, discontinuities and fractures within their cohort, as mediating factors such as class, age, ethnicity, religion, marital status, etc., interfere with, intensify and/or mitigate in various degrees individual encounters with the cultural realities of these women. Despite their diverse experiences, female suicide bombers nonetheless share important similarities in how they are positioned in relation to the

centres of power, whether at the societal (patriarchy) or global (Western domination) levels. These centers of power are associated with various types of violence, which are inescapably intertwined in mutually reinforcing, synergetic dynamics. While mainstream Western scholars tend to look inside the female suicide bombers' societies and specifically emphasize gendered insecurity and male structural violence against women under conditions of indigenous patriarchy, critical theorists chip away at the monolithic Western-centrism of mainstream representations. They do so by drawing attention to the relationship between orientalized patriarchy and gendered/sexualized and racialized hierarchy in the extant world order. Critical scholars insist that we should not treat indigenous patriarchy and (post)-colonialism as two separate issues. As Said (1988: 9) notes, 'imperialism is after all a cooperative venture'.

I do recognize the crude inadequacy of the oppositional categories of 'Western' and 'Eastern/Oriental' -- however potent and important the political identities and racialized/sexualized boundaries of power they denote may seem to be. Indeed, I am acutely aware of the historical specificity and social complexity that these terms obscure and of the essentialism, homogenization, and preconceived totalities that they tend to embody. I am convinced, however, that a commitment to historical particularity should not preclude general theorizing. As Robbins (1992: 175) notes, we should eschew "easy generalizations", [but] we do need difficult ones'. Hence, I insist on retaining the general categories, without judging in advance the nature and scale of the 'worlds' to which they refer. My use of these terms in no way reflects a fetishism with the homogeneity, unity or naturalness of either Western or non-Western space. Rather, in spite of their seemingly slippery malleability, I use these categories to acknowledge the complex and ever changing heterogeneity within them, and to highlight the fact that there is more than one 'world' in each category and that these 'worlds' are contested.

In this paper I ask the following five questions:

- 1) How does the process of constituting identity unfold?
- 2) How does the mainstream literature on female suicide bombings represent cultural/racial/sexual difference?
- 3) What are the implications of such representations?
- 4) How do they affect the constitution of the identities of the Self and the Other?  
and
- 5) How do they relate to Western interests and global power asymmetries?

### ***1. The Politics of Mainstream Western Epistemology: Mapping the Discursive Field***

In the process of constructing a particular identity, social collectivities develop understandings of the Other; i.e. one that constitutes the Self through the production and reproduction of cultural representations of the Other. Discursive representations of the Other are thus encoded in social identity. The formation of one's subjectivity as a Self and the historical engraving of one's identity are accomplished 'by way of a detour through the other' (Yeğenoğlu, 1998: 1). The process of becoming a Self thrives on the carefully and skilfully cultivated imagination that connects individuals to each other and to a particular place. Although conceived by imagination, a Self and the place s/he inhabits are nevertheless real. The fictive character of a Self 'produces material effects by constituting the very bodies of the subjects that it subjects' (3-4). Moreover, a potentially

infinite process of reinvention, reification, and refashioning of one's Selfhood unfolds through a dialectical-dialogical relationship with the Other. Not only does one become a Self via the Other, but one's ongoing existence as a Self is inescapably underwritten by one's representations of the Other.

Much of the recent debate around the question of dominant discursive representations of cultural difference springs from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). Competing representations are frequently framed in dichotomous categories of Orientalism and Occidentalism. The former, as Edward Said (1978) explains, refers both to the study of the Orient by Western academics, as well as to the mode of thinking rooted in the epistemological and ontological distinction between contrasting entities of the 'Orient/East/periphery/them' and the 'Occident/West/center/us'. Significantly, Orientalism captures prevailing Western attitudes and biases towards the Orient. It invests Westerners with rationality, logic, peacefulness, liberal values, etc., while portraying Arabs-Orientalists as devoid of all of these characteristics. Said is critical not only of the separate and opposed entities generated by Western thought, but also of the essentialism vested in the image of the Orient as an unchanging closed system. The Orient-ness of the Orient is not given; rather, it is the product of the essentializing discourse of Orientalism. The Orient is Orientalized through Western representations that transcend historical time and place for ontological reasons. Therefore, the Orient can never be removed or modified.

While pointing to the economic, political, social and intellectual factors essential to understanding the development and implications of Orientalist discursive practices, Said also reveals a less tangible reason for the othering of the Orient. Such othering helps the Western mind 'to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is closer to it and what is far away' (1978: 55). Orientalism thus shapes and reflects a deep-seated Western sense of cultural and racial superiority. It exemplifies the partiality of Western discursive constructions as well as their intimate linkage with colonialism, racism and sexism.

Occidentalism, conversely, is frequently understood in simplistic terms to represent a dialectical response to Orientalism, an inverted construct that vilifies the Occident and reifies moral superiority of the Orient. Occidentalism, as explained by Buruma and Margalit (2004: 5), represents 'the dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies.' The Occidentalist picture conveys 'hostility to the City, with its image of rootless, arrogant, greedy, decadent, frivolous cosmopolitanism; to the mind of the West manifested in science and reason; to the settled bourgeois, whose existence is the antithesis of the self-sacrificing hero; and to the infidel, who must be crushed to make way for a world of pure faith' (11). The Orientalist and Occidentalist dialectical discourses shape the construction of alterity on the basis of mutual fear and distrust. Once internalized by the actors, these modes of thinking lead to practices of social alienation and political confrontation; treating the 'Other' as a threat. Moreover, insofar as the representations are not detached from power, these categories provide important insights into the understanding of global power dynamics.

Despite their frequently postulated opposition, however, the categories of Occidentalism and Orientalism share significant affinity in that they have originated within the Western intellectual tradition. Furthermore, subject to critical scrutiny, Occidentalism is not the opposite of Orientalism any more than the dialectical-dialogical

‘self-other’ are opposites (Roth-Seneff, 2007: 450). Occidental representations are not a simple reversal of Orientalism. Rather, Occidentalism is concerned with the stereotypical conceptions of the West/Occident animating representations of the Orient; it creates a racialized and gendered Western Self via Orientalist conceptions of non-Western Others (Coronil, 1996: 56-57). As Carrier (1992: 199) puts it, Occidentalism is ‘the essentialistic rendering of the West by Westerners’. Such an understanding of Occidentalism, as Coronil (1996: 56) rightly notes, ‘entails relating the observed to the observers, products to production, knowledge to its sites of formation.’ As a set of representational practices, Occidentalism creates images of the world, which ‘(1) separate the world’s components into bounded units; (2) disaggregate their relational histories; (3) turn difference into hierarchy; (4) naturalize these representations; and thus (5) engage, however unwittingly, in the reproduction of existing asymmetrical power relations’ (57). Most importantly, Occidentalism shifts emphasis away from the epistemological dualism set by Said between the ‘true’ Orient, on the one hand, and the Orient as the embodiment of a particular discursive production. Occidentalism refocuses our attention away from the problematic and incomplete nature of Western representations of non-Western societies to the unequal power relations that give rise to, and are sustained by, such representations.

Much of the mainstream scholarship on female suicide bombings (Victor, 2003; Bloom, 2005, 2011; Skaine, 2006; Zedalis, 2008) displays a pronounced tendency towards Occidentalism. Mainstream scholars tend to engage with societies in which female suicide bombers originate as the objects, rather than the subjects of research. Common in most mainstream works is a rather thinly veiled refusal to consider these societies on their own terms or to recognize their ability to represent themselves. For mainstream Western scholars, therefore, exceptionalism and essentialism are preferred to comparative, historicized approaches. Description and analysis of oriental societies are often based on biased journalistic, intellectual and literary sources, rather than on direct and impartial observation. Western epistemic constructions are presumed to capture adequately static and uniform orientalized patriarchal societies, ignoring, perhaps unwittingly, a constant process of the reconstitution of social (including gender) norms, relations, and boundaries, as well as the changing social self-images in each discrete society at different points in time. Even if unconscious, such orientaling methodologies and the discursive representations they produce are ideologically charged and overtly political. Distorted by cultural and political considerations, these representations do not merely reflect the objective, neutral knowledge of the Other. Rather, such practices of representation conjure up ‘a paradigmatic chain of conceptions of geography, history, and personhood that reinforces each link and produces an almost tangible and inescapable image of the world’ (Coronil, 1996: 52), perpetuating even more imbalanced power relationship in which weakness is a rudimentary element of Otherness. These essentializing representations are, in the words of Edward Said (1978: 204), ‘fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient’s difference with its weakness.’ Borrowing from Coronil (1996: 75), the mainstream approach ‘is not only about the truth of representation, but about the representation of truth. It is about the representation of power and the power to represent, about the truth of power.’

## ***2. Orientalized Patriarchy and Islam***

The most common mode of Occidentalizing othering in the mainstream literature on female suicide bombings draws on the notion of orientalizing patriarchy in its close conjunction with Islam. Mainstream scholars deploy their authoritative authorship to erase Muslim women as historical subjects by emphasizing their domesticity, lack of rights, freedoms and opportunities, while concurrently reinforcing the boundaries of orientalizing patriarchy. Bloom (2005), for example, begins her analysis of female suicide bombings by setting Western-centric referential terms of comparison. She states that the 'women's movement in the 1970s brought men and women in the first world to a level of relative parity in most areas of employment, status, and opportunities. However, in the rest of the world, the position of women remains seriously disadvantaged compared to that of men' (2005: 142).

There is much at stake in Bloom's dogmatic assertion. She explicitly refers to the second-wave women's movement in the West to contextualize the problem of female suicide bombings by juxtaposing the achievements of Western liberal feminism and the oppressive nature of orientalizing patriarchy. The notion of orientalizing patriarchy allows Bloom to blend together such culturally and historically diverse societies as Tamil, Sri Lankan, Chechen, Kurdish, Turkish and Palestinian. Bloom notes that even though the extent of women's participation varies from place to place, 'a patriarchal structure dominates all ... societies' outside the Western world (147).

Bloom's terms of comparison present the conditions of modern Western women as advanced, democratic, and emancipated in stark contrast to that of Oriental women who are drawn as backward, secluded, and oppressed. Her narrative is, at one and the same time, differentiating and exclusive: it makes the otherness of Oriental women an integral part of Western identity by turning them into an essentially different Other -- an exteriority against which the identity of the Western Self is defined. The Other should remain different as part of the production of the Self. As Yeğenoğlu astutely points out (1998: 102), such representation of the Western woman's status 'is contingent upon the representation of the Oriental woman as her devalued other and this enables Western woman to identify and preserve the boundaries of self for herself.' Dichotomizing and juxtaposing oppressive orientalizing patriarchy and liberating Western feminism helps Bloom to create a very specific context of meaning for female suicide bombings and for the particular political struggles of which these acts are part. The political agency of female suicide bombers is relegated to sexualized and orientalizing patriarchy, which depoliticizes these women's reasons for engaging in suicide bombings as well as the acts of bombings themselves (Brunner, 2007: 962-3).

Bloom's presumed, and unequivocal, standard entails a specific articulation, and hierarchical ordering, of the cultural difference. Equal rights and opportunities for men and women are set as a yardstick against which similarities and differences are judged. To be sure, the rendering of the difference does not actually mean its recognition. Quite the contrary, the establishment of the difference entails a disquieting, yet firm, refusal to accept it. Unsurprisingly, this standard is associated with the West as it represents Western feminists' achievements and reflects the conditions and rights of the modern Western women; but it is not considered 'Western' by Bloom. Rather, despite its origin and development in the West, Bloom presents this standard as universal. Conflating the 'Western' with the 'universal' effaces the particular and specific nature of the Western.

The Western is promoted as *the norm*, while the particularity of the ‘Others’ is demoted. Bloom’s narrative thus registers cultural difference by way of a specific hierarchical ordering of the universal and the particular. Secular, modern, egalitarian Western societies are represented as superior to the traditional, patriarchal, Orientalized ones. Within Bloom’s framework of oppositional and hierarchical ordering, gender inequality and the absence of women’s rights are interpreted as indications of general backwardness of Islamic culture and society. Such backwardness is then used to establish a temporal distance between Oriental and Western societies, relegating traditional Oriental societies to the past and eliminating their culturally distinct ways of life as a source of critical reflection on the West.

Indeed, Bloom’s temporalizing gesture is intended to demonstrate the irreconcilability of non-modern ways of life with Western models of progress and understandings of modernity. The categories of orientalized patriarchy and Western liberalism are deployed by Bloom as a means of creating an overall ideological message that privileges the Western perspective and legitimizes its civilizing mission as a benevolent act of liberation – an act that frees Oriental women from oppressive indigenous patriarchy and offers them a chance to participate in liberated Western universalism, concurrently reiterating their status as a distinct and separate ‘Other’ (Yeğenoğlu, 1998: 102). Being ‘Western’ implies a certain responsibility, even a duty, to universalize one’s particular accomplishments. Unsurprisingly, neither of the categories has fixed spatial coordinates, which allows for the fluidity and ongoing expansion and contraction of their boundaries, as well as the elision of any internal heterogeneity. For example, the discursive representation of the Chechen wars as part of the Global War on Terror, by Russia’s former President, Vladimir Putin, has enabled and legitimized closer links between Russia and the West (the United States, in particular). The discursive invention of a common enemy – ‘global terrorism’ – facilitated the image of Russia as a modern state with Western values and norms similar to that of the United States of America.

In the context of Bloom’s argument, the notion of orientalized patriarchy is ambiguously intertwined with Islam. On the one hand, the author is careful to differentiate between the religious and secular nationalist groups that utilize the practice of suicide bombings. Bloom also presents specific case studies of Palestinian-Israeli, Tamil-Sinhalese, and Kurdish-Turkish conflicts in an attempt to capture and explain specific conditions endogenous to each particular struggle. She notes, for example, that the role of religion in the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict in Sri Lanka has been rather marginal. So, the Tamil-Sri Lankan conflict ‘has never contained the ideology of war of all against all, as it has in Palestine’ (Bloom, 2007: 46). On the other hand, when devising a general theory of suicide terrorism, Bloom points to the role of ethnic, linguistic and religious factors in extremist organizations’ decisions to resort to the tactic of suicide bombings. She cautions about the possibility of a potential negative boomerang effect of targeting members of one’s own societal group. As an example of empirical evidence, Bloom points to the 2003 attacks by Al Qaeda in Riyadh and Istanbul and the 2004 Beslan school hostage crisis. She concludes that these attacks resulted in ‘significant Muslim casualties, ...demonstrate[d] that such “collateral damage” is unacceptable to the larger Muslim community; and that they caused a self-examination and a reconsideration of this type of violence throughout the Muslim world (Bloom, 2007: 80).

Discussing in more detail the consequences of the attacks in Riyadh and Istanbul, Bloom draws on quotes from ‘intelligence sources’ that state that ‘al Qaeda loses the war of public opinion in the Islamic world by targeting Muslim women and children’ (Bloom, 2007: 81). Against her own caution, Bloom conflates the heinous violence of suicide terrorism with a specific culture and religion, extending the barbaric nature of the former to Muslim culture and the religion of Islam -- both of which are considered by the author as disrespecting and devaluing the lives of ‘Muslim women and children’. In line with longstanding Western tradition, she deploys discursive representations of a uniform, monolithic, Islam (‘Islamic world’) and of cultural (Muslim) traditions in Oriental societies, as profoundly determining, in a negative way, women’s conditions and lives. Bloom’s one-sided account is deeply damaging in the sense that it blends non-Muslim societies (for example, Tamil’s mainly Hindu society) with Muslim ones; equates Muslim societies with Islam, ignoring their sizable Christian, Baha’i, Zoroastrian, secular and other minorities; and essentializes Muslim women, societies and Islam.

Along the same line, in an effort to explain female suicide bombings using a comparative perspective, Skaine (2006) clearly privileges the Palestinian-Israeli case and emphasizes the role of Islam in inspiring the female suicide attackers. When discussing the terminology, she notes that the label ‘suicide bomber’ is a misnomer and agrees with Raphael Israeli, a former Israeli army intelligence officer and professor of Islamic and Middle Eastern history at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, that ‘an Islamic frame of reference and diagnosis is necessary to comprehend this “unparalleled mode of self sacrifice”’ (Skaine, 2006: 11). Despite her observation that female suicide bombers of the LTTE were not motivated by religion (14), Skaine proceeds with a discussion/assertion of the ‘elements of the Islamikaze makeup’ (15). This move helps Skaine to diminish the role of non-religious motivations and to add an additional weight to the imbrication between Islam and female suicide bombings. An Islamic dimension of bombings is then extended to the society at large through the claim that ‘[r]eligion symbolically embodies society itself. It is a power greater than individual people. It gives energy, asks for sacrifice and suppresses selfish tendency’ (Skaine, 2006: 13). Hence, Skaine’s comparative framework is narrowly construed to blend in female suicide bombings stemming from various struggles with those of Palestinian case and with Islam.

Other mainsretam authors have also emphasized a link between Islam and female suicide bombings. Zedalis (2008: 50), for example, notes that ‘religious terrorism is a particular potent form of violence,’ and stresses the role of religious sanctioning of female suicide bombings by Islamic clerics as well as the blurring of the lines between nationalism and Islam in the escalation of this practice. In a similar vein, Nivat (2008: 130) posits that Chechen women are actively participating ‘in the separatist-turned-jihadist struggle.’ Cunningham (2008) has specifically focused on the evolution of women’s violence from secular to Islamic religious settings; especially female involvement in the global jihadi movement.

The paradigmatic link between the mainsretam constructions of orientalised patriarchy and Islamic essentialism warrants some further analysis, even though I cannot do justice to the complex debates generated on this issue. Many mainstream scholars blame the absence of gender equality and women’s rights in Muslim communities on the religion of Islam. Islamic practices, especially regarding women, are often claimed to be rigid owing to their Qur’anic authorization. Indeed, these authors, feminists and non-

feminists alike, attribute differences in understanding between the Western Self and Oriental Other concerning gender mainly to the Qur'an, Islamic tradition and holy law – a tendentious link considering that the extent and origin of gender inequality in various parts of the Muslim world is highly disputed. While there may be some truth to that, one can argue that there has also been ‘much breaking and bending of Quranic admonitions throughout Muslim history’ (Keddie, 1991: 5).

It is true that Islamist-influenced legislation and a series of practices based on Shari`a law and the honour code have been (re)introduced in several Muslim countries, including Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, Algeria, and Egypt. Integration of Islamic law into the state's legal system legalized such practices as stoning to death of men and women accused of committing adultery, equating a woman to half a man as witness to and for compensation in criminal acts, the right for to unilaterally divorce their wives, and the right of a man, or his family to claim custody of his children in the event of a separation or divorce from his wife. The honour code, in particular, presents a grave predicament for women in some parts of the Middle East. Historically not part of Islamic law, but of tribal origin, this code equates the honour of men with the purity of patrilineal female relatives, especially daughters, sisters, and wives (Keddie, 2007: 24). Even minor violations of the code – based solely on gossip about female immodesty or doubt about their purity -- could lead to so-called ‘honour killing’ – an unpunished murder of girls and women by their male relatives to restore the family's honour. However, the rise of the Islamist laws and practices in some societies should not be used to make generalized statements about the conditions of women in the ‘Muslim world.’

From the critical theoretical perspective, it is crucially important to interrogate the references to religion in mainstream analyses that situate the practice of female suicide bombings within the framework of Islam and imply a potential motivation for the actions of female suicide perpetrators. In line with the established Western tradition of pointing to the conditions of Muslim women in order to declare Western superiority, many mainstream academic works produce a flattened image of Muslim societies by drawing a direct link between women's precarious conditions and Islam. The analytical framework developed in these works downplays both the complexities of various discourses on women and gender issues within Islam, as well as the continuing process of reinvention of Islam through the confrontation between traditionalism and modernism. It blurs Islam as religion with the political use of Islam by and in the interests of particular social groups (Salime, 2008). In addition, it fails to probe how different interpretations of Islam have developed within particular Muslim communities; how collective responses to these interpretations evolved over time; and what the challenges and opportunities of intra-Islamic dialogue on matters of sex and gender are. Instead, it creates a perception of Islam as a fixed system of rules and practices grounded in the belief that there are natural differences between women's and men's capacities resulting in men being superior and having authority over women (Salime, 2008; Yaqoob, 2008; Keddie, 1999).

Scholars embracing a critical theoretical perspective, notably Barbara Stowasser (1994; 2001) and Kecia Ali (2006), have pointed out the tensions that surround issues of sex and gender in the interpretive tradition of Islamic revelatory sources. They show that much of the Qur'an has been misinterpreted. Fatima Mernissi (1991), a Moroccan sociologist, argues, for instance, that the Qur'an mentions the veil only as a divide between a married couple and an outside world, not as a barrier between women and



men. Barbara Stowasser (1994) provides a communitarian and gender egalitarian reading of the Qur'anic vision. These critical insights notwithstanding, the Occidental framework enables mainstream authors to settle a string of deeply contentious and complex issues regarding gender, agency, religion, morality and ethics in a simplistic summary fashion that privileges an unquestioned exceptionality of the Western Self vis-à-vis the Orientalized Other. Thus, much of the mainstream academic works in the West on female suicide bombings collectively convey condemnation of orientalised patriarchy and Islam. And condemnation, as Butler (2005: 46) notes, is 'the way in which we establish the other as nonrecognizable or jettison some aspects of ourselves that we lodge in the other whom we then condemn.'

### **3. The Veil**

Conflation of orientalised patriarchy with Islam in the mainstream analyses of female suicide bombings is solidified through the imagery of the veil. Here I refer to the veil as the marker of Muslim women's difference, rather than as a specific article of attire used by Muslim women. When discussing the tactical advantages of Palestinian secular militant groups in deploying female suicide bombers, Bloom casually introduces the image of a veiled Arab woman. She makes a plangent claim that the organizations' leaders are not 'gripped by a burning desire to see all females locked behind black veils' (144). In view of the opposition between the Western liberal Self and the Oriental patriarchal Other, which Bloom laid out at the beginning of her analysis, the implications of her assertion are far reaching. The mapping of Islam onto orientalised patriarchy extends the symbolism of the veil far beyond Islamic societies. Bloom's narrative suggests that all females 'in the rest of the world' are trapped behind the veils, both literally and metaphorically. The author may or may not have wished to push this inference, but the representational framework that blends orientalised patriarchy with Islam connotes and conditions such an extension. Bloom's reference to the veil is hardly incidental. In fact, it reflects the common tendency among problem-solving authors who write on the topic of female suicide bombings to evoke the imagery of the veil as a complex signifier of everything Oriental – it denotes a particular article of Muslim women's attire, represents the elusive and deceptive mysticism of the Orient, symbolizes Muslim women's oppression, etc.

Writing about the women of *Al Qaeda* and their indoctrination into the ideology of Salafi Jihad, von Knop (2007) notes that these women 'perceive the *hijab* (veil) not as repression, but as an act of liberation and faith that endows a female Muslim's life with honor, an aura of respect and dignity. It is also a symbol of power over their husbands as being a good Muslim who follows the "true" Islam' (409). But von Knop makes it clear in her narrative that the 'true' symbolism of the veil is not liberation at all, but repression. In doing so, she oversimplifies the condition of women in conservative Muslim societies. To amplify the 'truthfulness' of this suggestion, von Knop makes her statement about the *hijab* within the context of the discussion about religious girls' schools. Girls 'start every day [in these schools] with songs praising the glory of being a Shahid and by stepping on the flags of Israel and the United States' (410). In a similar manner, the conflation of the veil with oppression and Islamist militancy is bluntly put forth by Skaine (2006). While discussing the novel ways of online training and indoctrination of female suicide bombers, Skaine (2006: 19) quotes from the jihadist cyber-magazine *Al-Khansaa*: 'We

will stand covered by our veils and wrapped in our robes, weapons in hand, our children in our laps, with the Koran and the Sunna of the Prophet Allah directing and guiding us.’

These references to the veil within the problem-solving accounts may seem marginal, however their significance and symbolism should not be underestimated. As Yeğenoğlu (1998: 42) puts it, ‘there is always more to the veil than the veil.’ The veil is emblematic of the prevalent Western perception of the Muslim women’s invisibility in the public sphere – the invisibility conditioned by female inferior sexual status in orthodox Muslim societies either as totally repressed or as erotic objects. The veil, in other words, is perceived as determining a Muslim woman’s physical place and symbolic position within the structure of society and represents masculine power and superiority over the feminine. As such, it is central to the Occidental constitution of the Orient. The image of a veiled woman is used to demonstrate the extent of female victimization by sexist Islamic orthodoxy, as well as to reinforce racial and sexual othering of Muslim women and societies.

At times, the very names coined in reference to female suicide bombers betray the racialized nature of Occidental practices of representation. A number of scholars highlighted the racist overtones in the vague term ‘black widows,’ popularized by the media, academics, and allegedly the Russian Federal Security Service (the FSB) (Banner, 2006; Eichler, 2006; Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007). That term ostensibly refers to the Muslim Chechen women veiled in traditional black Muslim dress, who carry out suicide bombings to avenge the deaths of male relatives at the hands of Russian military and security forces. It may also have originated in the notion of the ‘black Arab’ (Banner, 2006: 239), in which case it conveys the perception of black widows as the double Other, being Muslim and non-white. The term, thus, reflects conventional racialization of Chechens in the history of the long-standing Chechen resistance against Russian imperial domination. Discursively, Chechens have long been racialized by Russians as ‘chernye’ (blacks), their skin colour being associated with lawlessness, criminality, and more lately terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism (Eichler, 2006: 499; Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007: 93-4).

Thus, the veil becomes a marker of double othering – veiled women are other-ed vis-à-vis Western women and vis-à-vis men in their own culture. The symbolic meaning of the practice of veiling extends far beyond the mere reference. The veiled woman is the metaphor for the Oriental culture, a signifier of cultural difference. It enables the Western subject to ‘postulate a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base... while simultaneously erasing the very process of this production’ (Yeğenoğlu, 1998: 41).

The mainstream academic discourse in the West deploys other discourses of gender, race and religion to portray women wearing the veil as little more than slaves of patriarchal aggressive and misogynistic Islamic conservatism. Clearly concerned with conveying the ‘truth’, this discourse popularizes sensationalist and essentialist assumptions about ‘alien’ cultural practices and generates, perhaps unwittingly, racist hostility towards Muslim societies. The constructed imagery of the veil is evoked to truncate our understanding of its cultural significance and its complex political effects. Critical theoretical approaches wrestle unapologetically with the modalities of the mainstream research. Critical scholars have long argued that the biased and deforming discourse of orientalized patriarchy equates Islam with women’s oppression and produces generalizations on the basis of an ahistorical cultural artefact – the veil. Many of them

have pointed out that mainstream scholars' assertions about the invisibility of veiled Muslim women are simply the result of incomplete knowledge of the importance of Muslim women's domestic power, as well as their social and political activism - ignorance, which is 'a one-way privilege' (Chow, 2006: 13). Critical scholars have attempted to reinstate Muslim women as historical and political actors. Zakia Salime (2008: 202-3), for example, argues that shifting the conceptual focus to Muslim women's agency allows the researchers to re-conceptualize their nodes of oppression 'as terrains of struggle and powerful sites for women's collective identity.' Islam can be seen as both a major site for justifying women's oppression in Muslim societies, as well as the source of their empowerment. Critical scholars demonstrate the complexity and diversity of Muslim women's reasons for wearing the veil, ranging from fashion and pragmatism to religious conviction on to overt coercion (Secor, 2005).

To resist essentialist constructions of the veil, a vigorous body of scholarship created a space for discussing Muslim women's experiences and agency on their own terms (Ho and Dreher, 2009). Nikki Keddie (1991: 2) reminds us that against the backdrop of a long history of hostile confrontation between Muslims and Westerners, 'the home [and the veil representing woman's place at home] has become a last line of defence against a West that has won out in political and economic spheres.' She also notes that traditionally the most veiled, urban middle- and upper-class Muslim women are more likely to enjoy Qur'anic inheritance rights, holding and managing any amount of property. This shatters the myth about disadvantaged veiled women having no or fewer rights (Keddie, 1991: 6). A growing body of critical scholarship grapples with the question of increasing women's involvement in Islamist movements (Sabbagh, 2002). Others question the applicability of the twentieth century dichotomous categories of public and private, Westernization and Islamization, in analyzing the current revival of veiling in the Middle East, as well as the pertinence of these concepts to the historical and cultural contexts that determined the meanings of the veil. Elizabeth Thompson (2003), for example, argues that the conceptual framework of public and private did not appear in the medieval and early modern Middle Eastern women's history and that the topography of women's experiences is more adequately captured by the terms of seclusion and mobility.

Some critical scholars have argued that seeing the veil as the symbol and tool of gender oppression in Islam belies diverse practices of veiling and obscures the fact that many Muslim women do not veil at all, either because they choose not to or because they are not allowed to do so in public spaces, as is the case in Turkey. Nancy Hirschmann (2003) stresses the plethora of historical and cultural meanings of the veil as well as the broad scope of social norms pertaining to women's decision to veil. She notes that in some contexts, for example in Afghanistan under the Taliban, the practice of veiling signified serious restrictions on women and was intertwined with the power politics of patriarchy; but in other contexts or within other temporal limits women upheld and defended the practice of veiling voluntarily. Even within the same Afghani context, during the Soviet occupation and Western 'liberation', many women embraced the practice of veiling as a symbol of resistance against forceful de-veiling, especially by foreigners. Therefore general statements about "veiling in Islamic countries" is admittedly problematic, for the universalism such terminology seems to endorse denies

these cultural variations and specificity' (Hirschmann, 2003: 171). It is not the practices of veiling, but rather the Western reaction to them that appears 'fairly universal' (175).

Critical scholars caution against seeing all local practices in necessarily negative terms and point out that the custom of wearing the veil may, but does not have to, be as harmful and denigrating as it appears to outsiders. If studied in proper context, the veil may be discovered to have a positive side. Nikki Keddie's work (2007, 1999) demonstrates how in the Iranian context wearing a traditional dress has expanded women's personal autonomy and their ability to forge a space outside the private sphere. In particular, Keddie illuminates the complex and contradictory dynamics within Islamism regarding women's status and rights, arguing that Islamism is both a reaction against women's violation of traditional gender roles and a way for traditionally dressed *bazaari* women to enter into the public life.

Examining women's status in Iran in the aftermath of 1979 revolution, Keddie (2007, 1999) notes a considerable resurgence of women's activities in the media, literature, education, arts and a far broader participation of Iranian women in the labour force than in several other Middle Eastern countries that do not have Islamist governments. Fundamentalists, as Keddie (1999, 27) astutely notes, 'commonly accept many contemporary, and even Western-oriented, changes in women's status, including education, companionate marriage, and, de facto, a place in the workforce. Their family ideal is often only a few decades old.' Indeed, for fundamentalist Muslim women in Iran participation in religious political organizations loosened overt family control to the point where they could attend the mosque unescorted or even reject marriage partners proposed by their parents. Some women claimed greater respectability and pride from devoting their lives to family and home; others embraced the opportunity to work outside home. Perhaps, in light of Keddie's work, the results of the survey conducted by the Union of Women of the Don Region (Russian Federation) in 1999 are not so wholly surprising. The poll revealed that two out of three Chechen women favoured the idea of establishing an Islamic state in Chechnya and one in four respondents supported Shari'a courts (Joseph and Najmabadi, 2005: 601). To some Chechen women, the veil represents a sense of, and membership in, community, identity and faith; to others – it is a mark of agency and resistance.

Historical specificity and contextual sensitivity do not offer some privileged access to 'accurate' knowledge, but they do provide a useful starting point for research, as they allow for a more nuanced understanding of how ideas and practices function within their respective contexts. Making space for discussing these contexts in an intellectually honest manner presents a double challenge. On the one hand, it entails producing fuller and more complex understandings of the veil as a symbol with various cultural meanings. On the other hand, it means moving away from the specific focus on *Muslim* women, societies and religion to the complex intersection of broader questions of gender, race, religion, and power in the discursive representations of female suicide bombings. Responding to the first challenge, Decker's (1990-91) excellent investigation of the use of terrorist violence as a political strategy in the campaign for decolonisation in Algiers emphasizes the agency of the Algerian women in their revolutionary struggle. His work conveys the extraordinary capacity of the Arab women to manipulate the veil for political ends and sustain resistance of both women and men against the colonizer.

Drawing on Frantz Fanon's 1959 essay 'Algeria Unveiled', Decker moves beyond the essentialist image of an Arab woman as a victim of Muslim orthodoxy. Based on Fanon's 'historic dynamism of the veil' (Fanon, 1967: 63), Decker distinguishes three stages in the Algerian revolutionary struggle, each characterized by a different form of indigenous resistance in response to various French strategies of colonization. The first stage is marked by 'the cult of the veil' (Decker, 1990-91: 190), i.e. the tighter covering of Algerian women in the veil as a reaction against France's efforts to remake Arab women through unveiling and conversion to the European value system. Celebrating the veil was perceived by Algerian women (and men) as a liberating response to the colonizer's sexist culture. The tightening of the veil symbolized resistance against the common colonial formula, which prescribes victory over the women as an inevitable precondition for successful colonization (Decker, 189). During the second stage, the veil disappears and Algerian women actively join the public struggle. This 'coming-out process,' driven by strategic considerations, is 'a radically *anti*-essentialist gesture that allows the Arab woman to lift the veil of colonial uniformity and to exercise a potentially heterogeneous form of power' (Decker, 1990-91: 191). The veil appears again during the third stage of the struggle due to the colonizer's overwhelming suspicion that everybody is involved in terrorist activity. In response, the Algerian women re-veil themselves, which allows them to evade detection while remaining actively engaged in the revolutionary struggle. Reclaiming of the veil during the third stage of the revolution manifested unabated resistance against the invasion of Algerian culture and conscious determination to preserve cultural authenticity. The manipulation of and control over the veil sustained Algerian resistance, enabling the Algerian women to become the historical agent who, even if only temporarily, transformed the conventional notion of femininity in Algerian society and contributed significantly to the unsettling of colonial order.

Decker's analysis expands conventional Western understanding of the veil and its complex effects on the revolutionary struggle of Arab women by demonstrating that the veil can simultaneously be oppressive and liberating (185). The veiled space is at once the signifier of power and a site of oppression. It is oppressive in that it positions Arab women in a subordinate position against the centres of patriarchal and neo-imperial power. Yet concurrently, it is liberating in that it brings out the revolutionary agency of Arab women that disturbs the dominant orders of patriarchy and neo-imperialism. A veiled Arab woman is both concealed/invisible and visible, which in Decker's words (1990-91: 188), 'gives the simultaneous and undecidable effect of power and lack, presence and absence.' Decker's complex and nuanced account of the veil within the context of Algerian revolutionary struggle not only reinstates Algerian women as an important revolutionary agent, but also restores what has been skilfully erased from Western historical memory, i.e. the link between terrorist violence and successful decolonisation campaigns.

The case of the Algerian women utilizing cultural norms and gender expectations to participate actively in nationalist struggles is not an exception. To many women in Palestine, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq and Sri Lanka, their hijabs, niqabs, dupattas, chadors, burqas, purdahs, and saris have provided an opportunity to preserve their cultural authenticity and certain constancy in the face of external instabilities and pressures. Some of these women have used gender and cultural stereotypes about appropriate behaviour and dress to assert actively their agency by smuggling ammunition

and fake identity cards, collecting intelligence, and even gaining access to enemy targets as suicide bombers. A famous example of using traditional dress by female perpetrators to evade detection is a 1991 assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by a female LTTE member 'Dhanu'. Dressed in a new white dress usually worn by pregnant women, Dhanu had a harness of six grenades on a belt strapped snugly around her stomach. As Prime Minister Gandhi walked by, Dhanu knelt to kiss his feet as a sign of respect. She activated the bomb as the Prime Minister reached out to raise her up, killing them both instantly. Photos of her severed head were on the front pages of national newspapers the day after the incident (Cutter, 2005). Chechen and Palestinian female suicide bombers are also known to have manipulated the veil to take advantage of the stereotypical profiling, traverse through checkpoints and successfully carry out their missions. For example, Chechen women participating in the 2002 Moscow theatre hostage operation were dressed in the Middle Eastern style burqa attire. Note that a year later, two Chechen females who blew themselves up at the Tushino rock festival near Moscow wore Western-style t-shirts and short skirts.

#### ***4. Post-Colonial Subjectivity***

The second challenge, as mentioned earlier, is to move away from the specific focus on *Muslim* women, societies and religion to the complex intersection of broader questions of gender, sex, race, culture, religion, and power; especially how they pertain to the construction of (post)colonial subjectivities. The discursive dynamics within much of the mainstream literature on female suicide bombings reproduces a dualistic, categorical distinction between the West and the Orient – a distinction that is constitutive of the hegemonic colonial identity with its multiple and cross-cutting determinants. Mainstream narratives position women in non-Western societies as faceless, voiceless, helpless victims in need of Western intervention in order to gain their rights. Such discourse implicitly upholds a familiar dichotomy that pits 'tradition' against 'modernity', and relegates women's domesticity to the realm of conservatism/tradition. It focuses on the conditions and rights of women to support Western interventionism and militarized masculinity. Some critical scholars have noted that mainstream analyses tend to be written from a Western perspective, more specifically from the perspective of US counter-terrorism, and 'are better characterized as counterterrorist literature' (Brunner, 2007: 957).

A close reading of the mainstream literature reveals that the representations of sexual, racial and cultural difference are potently mapped onto each other in recreating (post)colonial subjectivity. In other words, mainstream analyses of female suicide bombings are intimately interlocked with the West's will to power. They justify (post)colonialism and function as an element of (post)colonial domination. For example, Christine Sixta (2008) deploys Occidentalist discourse in her analysis of female terrorism in developing countries. She grounds her argument within a comparative framework in which contemporary women terrorists in Colombia, Kurdistan, El Salvador, Sri Lanka, Chechnya and other 'developing societies' are judged against American 'new women' from the first wave of feminism. While arguing that today's women terrorists are the 'new women' of developing societies, Sixta notes an important distinction, i.e. that these women 'do not want to throw open the gate of Western modernity to their traditional societies' (263). She finds their position 'ironic', because 'Western imperialism would

most likely bring Western democracy and Western capitalism to their countries' (283). This, in turn, would lessen patriarchal grip over the lives of women in developing societies. What is striking in Sixta's framework is her pronounced emphasis on Western modernity, which serves to reiterate the distinction between the Western Self and the non-Western Other, as well as her overt defence of Western imperial expansion. The emphasis on Western modernity is embedded in the Occidentalist practices of representations. Dichotomization of identities allows Sixta to introduce the Western perspective as the only normatively acceptable and desirable option. The author cautions that 'for humanity's sake, we must find ways to stop the violence. ... While Western democracy is not appropriate everywhere, most western capitalist democracies have succeeded in reducing terrorism' (Sixta, 2008: 284).

The critical theoretical perspective reveals the complicity of allegedly objective mainstream analysis, such as Sixta's, in reproducing (post)colonial subjugation of the Other. The discursive and political realms of (post)colonialism are inseparable. As Yeğenoğlu (1998: 16) notes: 'the production of the knowledge of the Orient and the process of its subjugation by colonial power do not stand in an external relation to each other.' Western power, understood in a Foucauldian sense, induces mainstream discourse and knowledge. However, the process of knowledge production and the very act of representing is concealed by claims of objectivity and epistemological superiority. Assuming 'truth', morality, authority and legitimacy, mainstream authors exercise important productive power to construct meanings, including those of gender that reflect and reify Western interests and power. They '*create* not only *knowledge* but also the very reality they appear to describe' (Butler, 1993: 94). The perspectives and interests of the women these authors purport to represent, if noted at all, are dismissed 'as false consciousness, the final effects of patriarchal colonization' (Hirschmann, 2003: 171). The body of knowledge produced by mainstream authors generates material effects when it is put in the service of (post)colonial expansion and domination, as in the recent Global War on Terrorism, in which one of the justifications for invading Afghanistan, for instance, were the deplorable conditions of Afghan women.

A close reading of mainstream literature on female suicide bombings reveals the entanglement of the questions of colonialism, gender, religion, race and sex. These authors implicitly deploy discourses of sex and gender to conflate developing societies with femininity, reduce Muslims societies to the religion of Islam, delegitimize Islam, and synthesize/confuse race with claims about religion (Brunner 2007), even though many female suicide bombers may act on behalf of secular nationalist organizations and in pursuit of secular goals. Mainstream narratives are not only dichotomizing (as discussed above), but also hierarchizing in that they solidify certain power dynamics (Chow, 2006: 80) that point to the persistent legacy of colonialism in the formally post-colonial world. Mainstream analyses of female suicide bombings explicitly emphasize the global dimension of this phenomenon, the threat it posits to the West, and assume a Western, or more specifically a US counter-terrorist, perspective. Skaine (2006: 8), for example, is explicit about her preoccupation with US counter-terrorism, when she states that 'the United States needs to include the possibility of a female suicide bomber attack on the scale of 9/11.'

The knowledge that mainstream scholars produce conceals critical information about the political struggles in which these women engage, detaches female suicide

bombings from specific local and regional conflicts, brushes over the specificity of geopolitical space, and reiterates narrow links between the veil, female suicide bombings and the 'inevitable' clash of civilizations. Individual conflicts are thus positioned at the interstices of global spatial scales, while their local and national dimensions remain obscure. The struggles of the stateless peoples of Palestine, Kurdistan, Chechnya and Tamil land, whose claims to national self-determination remain unrecognized for unique reasons of their colonial past, are all subsumed under the single category of 'global terrorism'. Zedalis (2008: 50), for example, is particularly concerned about the global expansion of female suicide bombings and the possibility that they were being supported, financed and directed by a global network of extremist Islamic Jihadi groups. Mainstream epistemology is, thus, directly complicit in sustaining global power asymmetry by way of reiterating gendered/sexualized/racialized representations of female suicide bombers (Brunner, 2007: 958).

Critical scholars crystallize the sexual and cultural modes of differentiation that underwrite (post)colonialism and reveal ways in which mainstream discourses stabilize and sustain gendered/sexualized racial hierarchy in (post)colonial global power relations. In many crucial respects colonialism in the classic sense is a thing of the past; yet, it persists in various guises through intellectual, financial, economic and strategic control. Pettman (1996), for example, has analyzed how the practices of European colonialism that rested on the appropriation of the bodies, especially women's bodies, labour and land of the colonized, spread alongside capitalist economic relations and continue to shape the contemporary (post)colonial world. The popular analogy between women's oppression and colonization serves to underscore the feminine character of the dominated and the masculine nature of the colonizer (Decker, 1990-91; Pettman, 1996). Symbols, imagery, codes and representations in mainstream works on female suicide bombings not only connote women's oppression outside the Western world, but also signify the Orient as feminine, concealed behind the veil, out of control, and threatening. Mainstream discourse produces essential equality between the nature of the feminine and the nature of the Orient, 'creates a chain of equivalence in which woman is the Orient, the Orient is woman; woman like the Orient, the Orient like the woman, exists veiled' (Yeğenoğlu, 1998: 56). At the same time, the binaries of mainstream representational model constitute the identity of the Western subject in antithetical terms as masculine and imperialist. Borrowing from Yeğenoğlu's observation made in a different context but highly relevant here, the imagery of the veil, for example, marks the production of an 'exteriority', a 'threat' (41). This threat, as well as the fear and hostility associated with it, persists in mainstream inquiry into the female suicide bombings.

In their endeavours to '*explain the unexplainable*' (Bloom, 2007: 17, original emphasis) and by posing the questions, as Bloom (2007: 1) does, 'Are they scared, are they angry, do they fully understand what they are about to do?' and 'How bad must your life be if you think that it is better to be a sacrifice than to live?', mainstream scholars betray their fear of and latent hostility toward cultural, racial and sexual difference. Viewed through the gendered/sexualized lens, the imagery of the veiled Muslim woman enables us to see the complexity of the discourse of the imperial masculine Western Self, as well as the interplay between text and context. The veil obscures transparency, stands in the way of control. Therefore, unveiling opens up access to reforming and controlling the Orientalized feminine Other.



I have noted earlier the emphasis on modernity in mainstream representations of cultural difference. Modernity is associated with a particular form of institutional governance based on transparency. From the colonizer's perspective, the literal unveiling of Muslim women and the symbolic unveiling of Oriental societies through the establishment of transparent forms of governance are an integral part of the conquering and reforming of the country and people, in general. This political doctrine has not changed since the French colonization of Algeria. Ironically, such a doctrine often results in the strengthening of indigenous patriarchy, as the recent Western attempts at the 'liberation' of Afghanistan and Iraq amply demonstrates.

### ***Conclusion***

Marilyn Friedman (2008: 193) once noted that 'something important about women's agency as *terrorists* seems particularly threatening to some observers and this is what they try especially hard to downplay.' Given the social nature of knowledge production, it is important to ask why there is such a persistent effort, in mainstream literature on this subject, to discount the agency of female suicide bombers; and in what ways the knowledge produced by mainstream scholars can be considered powerful. Since words and concepts are not simply reflections of 'objective' reality, but fundamentally constitute the reality of the agents that use language to make sense of the world around them, the preoccupation with particular epistemic constructions extends far beyond the questioning of its conjectural nature. Such preoccupation also entails important moral and political questions. There exists a reciprocal, constitutive relationship between the research activities and their respective socio-political contexts. Mainstream rationalizations of the practice of female suicide bombings embody implicit notions of the world order based on Western moral, cultural, racial and sexual superiority. They intertwine discourses of race, sex, and religion in the differentiating and hierarchizing articulation, constitution and ordering of difference. The notion of orientalized patriarchy occupies a central position within this process of othering. It marks the boundaries of difference and denotes a specific inscription of the relationship between West and East that is grounded in the persistent colonial legacies and power imbalance. The critical theory perspective scrutinizes discursive representations, value biases, driving knowledge interests, and political orientations that are found within mainstream analyses. It illuminates the tropes of sexual and cultural modes of differentiation, and reveals tight imbrications between Western power and mainstream practices of representation.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Ali, Kecia. (2006). *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications).
- Banner, Francine. (2006). "Uncivil Wars: 'Suicide Bomber Identity' as a Product of Russo-Chechen Conflict," *Religion, State and Society* 34(3): 215-53.
- Bloom, Mia. (2005). *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press).

- Bloom, Mia. (2007). "Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend," *Daedalus*, vol. 136 (1): 94-102.
- Bloom, Mia (2011). *Bombshell: The Many Faces of Women Terrorists* (Toronto: Penguin Group).
- Brunner, Claudia. (2007). "Occidentalism Meets the Female Suicide Bomber: A Critical Reflection on Recent Terrorism Debates. A Review Essay," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32(4): 957-971.
- Butler, Judith. (2005). *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press).
- Carrier, James. (1992). "Occidentalism: The World Upside Down," *American Ethnologist* 19(2): 195-212.
- Chow, Rey. (2006). *The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and Comparative Work* (Durham and London: Duke University Press).
- Coronil, Fernando. (1996). "Beyond Occidentalism: Toward Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories," *Cultural Anthropology* 11(1): 51-87.
- Cutter, Ana. (2005). "Tamil Tigresses: Hindu Martyrs," (22 May), at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/PUBS/SLANT/SPRING98/article5.html>, accessed on 1 May 2010.
- Decker, Jeffrey Louis. (1990-91). "Terrorism (Un)Veiled: Frantz Fanon and the Women of Algiers," *Cultural Critique* 17 (winter): 177-195.
- Eichler, Maya. (2006). "Russia's Post-Communist Transformation," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8 (4): 486-511.
- Fanon, Frantz. (1967). *A Dying Colonialism*, translated by Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press).
- Friedman, Marilyn. (2008). "Female Terrorists: What Difference Does Gender Make?" *Social Philosophy Today* 23: 189-200.
- Hirschmann, Nancy. (2003). *The Subject of Liberty: Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press).
- Ho, Christina, & Tanja Dreher. (2009). "Not another Hijab Row: New Conversations on Gender, Race, Religion and the Making of Communities," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11(1): 114-125.
- Joseph, Suad & Afsaneh Najmabadi. (2005). *Encyclopaedia of Women and Islamic Cultures* (Leiden: Brill).
- Keddie, Nikki. (1991). "Introduction: Deciphering Middle Eastern Women's History," in Nikki Keddie & Beth Baron (eds.), *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 1-22.
- Keddie, Nikki. (1999). "The New Religious Politics and Women Worldwide: A Comparative Study," *Journal of Women's History* 10(4): 11-34.
- Keddie, Nikki. (2007). "Iranian Women's Status and Struggles Since 1979," *Journal of International Affairs* 60(2): 17-33.
- Kinsella, Helen. (2007). "Understanding a War That Is Not a War: A Review Essay," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33(1): 209-231.
- Mernissi, Fatima. (1991). *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, translated by Mary Jo Lakeland (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley).

- Pettman, Jan Jindy. (1996). *Worlding Women: A Feminist International Politics* (New York: Routledge).
- Robbins, Bruce. (1992). "Comparative Cosmopolitanism," *Social Text* 31/32 (Third World and Post-colonial Issues): 169-86.
- Roth-Seneff, Andrew. (2007). "Occidentalism and the Realism of Empire: Notes of the Critical Method of William Roseberry," *Critique of Anthropology* 27(4): 449-462.
- Sabbagh, Suha (ed.). (2002). *Arab Women: Between Defiance and Restraint* (New York: Olive Branch Press).
- Said, Edward (1979). *Orientalism* (New York: Random House).
- Said, Edward. (1988). "Yeats and Decolonization," in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*. A Field Day Pamphlet, 15.
- Salime, Zakia. (2008). "Mobilizing Muslim Women: Multiple Voices, the Sharia, and the State," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middles East* 28(1): 200-211.
- Secor, Anna J. (2002). "The Veil and Urban Space in Istanbul: Women's Dress, Mobility and Islamic Knowledge," *Gender, Place and Culture* 9 (1), 5-22.
- Sixta, Christine. (2008). "The Illusive Third Wave: Are Female Terrorists the New "New Women" in Developing Societies?" *Journal of Women, Politics and Policy* 29(2): 261-288.
- Sjoberg, Laura & Caron Gentry. (2007). *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (London and New York: Zed Books).
- Skaine, Rosemarie. (2006). *Female Suicide Bombers* (North Carolina and London: McFarland and Co).
- Stowasser, Barbara. (1994). *Women in the Qur'an: Traditions and Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Stowasser, Barbara. (2001). "Old Shaykhs, Young Women, and the Internet: The Rewriting of Women's Political Rights in Islam," *The Muslim World* 91(1/2): 99-119.
- Thompson, Elizabeth. (2003). "Public and Private in Middle Eastern Women's History," *Journal of Women's History* 15(1): 52-69.
- Victor, Barbara. (2003). *Army of Roses: Inside the World of Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers* (New York: Rodale).
- von Knop, Katharina. (2007). "The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 5 (May): 397-414.
- Yaqoob, Salma. (2008). "Muslim Women and War on Terror," *Feminist Review* 88: 150-161.
- Yeğenoğlu, Meyda. (1998). *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Zedalis, Debra D. (2008). "Beyond the Bombings: Analyzing Female Suicide Bombers," in Cindy Ness (ed.), *Female Terrorism and Militancy: Agency, Utility, and Organization* (London and New York: Routledge), 49-68.