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"Where Are We Now?" The Image Construction of Arabs and Muslims in Bodyguard

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"WHERE ARE WE NOW?" THE IMAGE CONSTRUCTION OF ARABS

AND MUSLIMS IN *BODYGUARD*

by

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ABSTRACT

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Over the past decade Arab and Muslim representations in the media have been either negative or overly simplified as a way to avoid criticism from watchdog groups. Arab and Muslim culture is viewed by the mainstream Western perspective as different, and inferior. According to Edward Said this divide and hierarchy between Eastern and Western comes through the process of Othering and is at the heart of *Orientalism*. This thesis investigates how Arabs and Muslims are Othered through a case study of the successful BBC television series *Bodyguard*.

Bodyguard presents the British government and police force attempting to stop various terrorist attacks in London by Arab Muslims. I analyze the representation of the four Muslim males and one female on the show in juxtaposition with the lead character of Sargent David Budd. Here, Budd is presented as the "white savior" in that he is trying to save the subservient, obedient Muslim wife of the terrorist (Nadia). I also heavily focus on the analysis of Nadia's character and highlight how she is "Othered" in different stages of her character development. Her Othering starts by representing her as passive, obedient, wears the hijab, and mostly silent, and ends with her being diabolical and evil. This representation, which I identify as the Duplicitous Arab or Muslim, may implicitly or explicitly present the idea that even when Arabs and Muslims seem trustworthy they are not.

To

my parents

my siblings

and especially my husband

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chapter I: Introduction

Growing up in the Middle East, I had little to no idea the impact my race had on my ethnicity. I had fair skin and light hair, but that did not mean much to my lived experience. I was racially white but it did not make me any less Arab or in my case Muslim. In Jordan most of the population comes from the Middle East, so the color of our skin and our complexion does not play a big role in identity politics. However nationalities and ethnicities were a big part of the lived experience and those were recognized through language and accent/dialect. Here I use the terms "ethnicity" and "ethnic identity" as belonging to a nationality and cultural group, and I use "race" as skin color and physical features. Western expatriates who worked and lived in Jordan were instantly recognized as such because they didn't speak Arabic. Arab expatriates would also be recognized by the Arabic accent/dialect[1] they spoke: the accent/dialect determined their ethnicity and background. When it came to my personal identity, I had a Palestinian accent and I always recognized that as my ethnic background. I knew my family's immigration story from Palestine to Jordan, where I was born a first generation Jordanian. I was a Palestinian Jordanian, and my lived experience till I was 18 was surrounded by my ethnic Identity.

Joane Negal discusses how ethnicity is constructed, and how culture and identity are building blocks for this construction. She writes, "Ethnicity is constructed out of the material of language, religion, culture, appearance, ancestry, or regionality. The location and meaning of particular ethnic boundaries are continuously negotiated, revised, and revitalized, both by ethnic group members themselves as well as by outside observers" (Negal, 1994).

Negal's statement reflected my experiences while living in the United States for both my undergraduate and graduate degrees. During these times, my race and accent became a more

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[1] In the Middle East, accents and dialect are very distinctive and regional. It is similar to British English and American English. We can tell where you are from through your accent.

integral part of the identity pushed on me by society, and how I negotiated my own self-identification. For example, every time I filled in an application in the United States, my only option was to check the white (Non-Hispanic) box. People I interacted with continually bombarded me with questions and comments like "But you look white", "Oh, you don't have an accent!" or "If you don't say anything people will just think you're white." Those experiences alienated me, not just from the ethnic culture I identified with but also from the Western culture of which I was now a part. When people saw me as white, they assumed it was my ethnicity. But it was my race they saw. So when they assumed my whiteness as my ethnicity, there was no room for my Arabic ethnic background and that made me feel frustrated. I felt like the "Other." I felt inferior as an Arab, as though the ethnic identity that I was holding onto was somehow inferior to my perceived white race.

I understood that my experience was dictated by the aftermath of the events of 9/11. Prior to 9/11, Arabs had been living in the States practically unnoticed to the public, and according to Schmidt, Arab-Americans were counted as "the most invisible of the invisibles." Schmidt adds that after 9/11 "these Americans now constituted the most visible subjects and objects of national discourse" (Schmidt, 2014). The events of 9/11 were planned and executed by Arabs from the Middle East, which explains the public's interest in understanding the people and cultures these terrorists came from and identified with. Schmidt continues, "The public and political attention, however, quickly shifted to Arabs living within the borders of the United States. Consequently, they became major targets of racial profiling, ethnic discrimination, and human rights violations" (Schmidt, 2014).

The discourse surrounding Arabs in the United States dictated by the President George W. Bush's administration and the media was one of fear and hate, and quickly turned into a

binary rhetoric of "us" versus "them", "Good Arab and Muslim" and "Bad Arab and Muslim." This binary categorization and the demonizing of Arabs and Arab-Americans and those who were mistaken as such quickly became the new reality of America's public discourse (Schmidt, 2014).

I had realized that my experiences and my feelings of inferiority after 9/11 were symptomatic of the above stated new American/Western reality. Furthermore, these feelings made me begin to question the role the media played in constructing the narrative surrounding my experience.

This discourse of fear and anxiety was not exclusive to the US media alone. According to a meta-analysis of 345 published studies that examined the media's role in constructing Muslim identity from 2000-2015 in multiple countries, the authors found that the three leading countries focusing on media and Muslim identity were the United States (28.70%- 99 studies), the United Kingdom (20.28%- 70 studies) and Australia (11.16% - 39 studies) (Ahmad and Matthes, 2016). The qualitative content results of this analysis show that the image construction of Muslims was mostly negative.

According to Amir Saeed's article on Muslim representation in the UK, British Muslims are thought of and represented as un-British. Saeed suggests that the UK is similar to many mainstream Western media representations whereby the images of Islam and Muslims seem to be hostile and negative. In addition, Muslim portrayals on British shows represent them as "alien within" British culture. Saeed explains that over the past two decades 'new racism' has far removed itself from past notions of biological inferiority, and "forged links between race, nationhood, patriotism and nationalism" (Saeed, 2007).

Saeed puts forth the historic events that furthered the spotlight of Muslim minorities as "a criminal culture" in Britain, as the Salman Rushdie affair 1989 – when the Shah of Iran issued a Fatwah calling for the death of the Indian writer with his novel *Satanic Verses* – the Gulf war in 1991, and the events of 9/11. The author also explains how these events did not impact the South Asian community as a whole, instead it impacted the Muslim community only. Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in particular were represented as "separatist, insular and unwilling to integrate with wider society" (Saeed, 2007). Furthermore, the old stereotypical image of "Asian passivity" has been replaced by a more militant aggressive identity that is meant to be further at odds with "British secular society" (Saeed, 2007).

Knowing this I wanted to better understand the role of entertainment television in particular when it comes to the Othering of Arabs, be it American/British Arabs or Arabs from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and its role in Othering Muslims whether from an Arab background or otherwise. The "Other" is a philosophical theory of identity ethics, with a long history of debate. Informed by the work of Emmanuel Levinas, this binary term has influenced works in Feminist Theory, Political Science, and Media and Cultural Studies. Edward Said's work on Orientalism draws from Levinas's theory to highlight the relationship between The Oriental East and the Progressive West.

Using Levinas's and Said's theories of Otherness and Orientalism as a foundation, this thesis examines how entertainment media constructs the images of Arabs and Muslims. My review of the literature demonstrates that representation theory, which investigates how marginalized groups are presented in media content, has often dominated the study of how Arabs and Muslims have been portrayed in entertainment media. However, other studies have used framing theory to better understand how news organizations frame Arabs and Muslims in news

coverage where the persistent themes are war, terrorism, Muslim women and migration (Ahmad and Matthes, 2016).

I aim to use both theories to see how television constructs the images of Arabs and Muslims in entertainment programming today and whether these constructed images "Other" Arab and Muslim minorities. If the answer is yes, then is it through the continued use of outdated stereotypes, representations, and the application of frames similar to those used by news media?

In adopting this combined theoretical approach, I extend the work of Eli Avraham and Anat First. As they write in arguing for the benefits of a theoretical approach that combines the theories of representation and framing:

> At the core of both theories lies the constructionist approach, which is derived from the phenomenological approach and serves as their point of origin. Both theories are influenced by the input of social-political reality, as well as symbolic reality and the interaction between the two. Despite the two theories' similar origins, until now the research dealing with representation has focused primarily on the coverage patterns of minorities and marginal groups in the media content; research on framing, on the other hand, lately relates more to organizational levels (Avarham and First, 2010).

Primarily Avarham and First conduct a qualitative analysis of television news that examines the image construction of the "Other" – their research focuses on the Arab population in Israel – by looking at the representations, stereotypes and frames used by the news media in Israel. The authors also examine the change in these constructed images over time. My approach for this thesis will be similar where I will be looking at the representations and frames that construct the image of Arabs and Muslims as the Other in entertainment television.

Avarham and First define representation as "using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent the world meaningfully to 'other people'" (Avarham and First, 2010). The authors argue that representation is an integral part by which meaning is constructed and shared by members of a culture. The authors also suggest that framing places "facts" or perceived "reality" into frames that allow audiences to easily comprehend events. Finally, they argue that use of framing and social-cultural codes turn uncommon, extraordinary events into "understandable media events" (Avarham and Frist, 2010.)

My goal for this thesis is two-fold: to showcase how a combined use of framing and representation theories that highlight the overall constructed image of Arabs and Muslims can better explain the Othering that occurs in entertainment media towards these minorities through a close reading of the television series *Bodyguard*, and use that research to suggest how television storytelling about Arabs and Muslims might be improved.

Chapter II: Literature Review and Methodology

In an attempt to understand how and why Arabs and Muslims are portrayed in *Bodyguard*, this chapter will review a range of literature. It will begin with a discussion about the idea of Others/Otherness. It will then discuss the role of media framing and its influence on readers. This chapter will review what previous studies have shown about how Arabs and Muslims are framed by the media. The final area will review what we know about media representations of Arabs and Muslims. The chapter will conclude with a description of this study's methodology and a brief overview of *Bodyguard*.

The Other/Otherness

The Other was an ethical theory put forth by Levinas after World War II to better understand and rationalize what had happened to the Jewish community in Europe. Levinas's work started as a critique of Western philosophy. His argument changed from his prior philosophical framework where he originally focused on the commonalities between people rather than differences. That is where the origin of the discourse surrounding the Other started. Levinas writes:

> The differences between the other and me do not depend on different properties that would be inherent in the "I," on the one hand, and, on the other hand in the Other, nor on different psychological dispositions which their minds would take on from this encounter. They are due to the I-Other conjuncture to the inevitable orientation of being "starting from oneself" towards the "Other" (Levinas, 1979).

Levinas's work claims that attempts to know and understand the Other results in "reductions of genuine Otherness" (Murray, 1998). Levinas notes in his work that in trying to

comprehend and understand the Other, the person attempting to accomplish this knowledge ends up dictating the relationship between the two (Murray, 1998).

Said draws from Levinas's work when discussing the relationships between the East [any country or region east of Europe] and West [North America and Europe] in his book *Orientalism.* Said defines Otherness and the Other as the identification of differences in people based on race, gender, ethnicity, and religion masked and disguised as "the exotic and strange" (FreeMan, 2010).

Otherness is considered by Said as a form of exclusion and marginalization. However, this form of subjugation is different from other types of oppression as it "explicitly calls to attention the power dynamics between the person/institution defining the 'Otherness' and the person/place experiencing the classification of 'Other'" (Said, 1978).

In *Orientalism*, Said focuses on academic disciplines and academics to critique how Western scholars stereotype "the East" in order to create images of the Other. His writings highlight and identify the classifications of the "rational West" and the "irrational Other" to emphasize the formation of a superior European identity and the inferiority of other cultures. He writes:

> Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and "the Occident". Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economics, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the orient, its people, customs, "mind", destiny and so on (Said, 1978).

8

When discussing the Middle Eastern Arabs and Muslims in this thesis, I will use Said's term "the Orient and *Oriental.*"[2] It is important to also note that these terms are intended to describe the discourse surrounding the Orient. Said focuses on the institutions that produce that discourse and highlights the principle of "binary opposition" where the West (Europe and the United States) always come out as being superior to the Other (Said, 1978).

Said's argument of institutional Othering of the Orient and the *Oriental* can be applied to media institutions that create entertainment programming for today's television programs. For example, using Said's argument on Western conquest over the East, Jonathan Gray uses the theory of Orientalism, Othering, and postcolonial critique to showcase the global Othering that entertainment media creates. Gray analyzed the television show *The Amazing Race* and wrote:

> While everyday discussions about depictions and representation can often turn to
> noting the presence of "stereotypes" and to the rating of depictions as either
> "good" or "bad," one of Said's most helpful offerings was to remind us that much
> of the symbolic violence done to those being depicted begins when they are
> denied the right to speak for and of themselves and is exacerbated by the need to
> reduce complex, varied cultures of singular signs that take on the status of
> representativeness (Gray, 2013).

Taking Said's theories on how Western literature focuses on the differences in culture and how they are reduced to a "monolithic group" without attention to nuance and diversity (Gray, 2013), Gray puts forth the argument that media content producers make the same error and adopt the same techniques, which in turn creates Othering. At best these depictions are simply inadequate; at worst they are harmful and damaging to the

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[2]I am going to italicize Oriental when describing people from the East. This is to note that I am using the term as a descriptor of Western perception of these people rather than its derogatory intent.

culture and people being depicted as they belittle the understanding and diversity of these cultures (Gray, 2013).

Similarly, Avarham and First argue that media coverage of the Other represents a threat to the social order, and that these image constructions create an "us" versus "them" view for their audiences. They write:

> In addition, implicit in this coverage is the notion that minorities are to blame for their economic and social maladies – maladies that arise from the fact that they are different from "us". The description, coverage, and portrayal of the "Other" in the media, whether based on religious, national, ethnic or other differences, is accompanied in many countries by the widespread use of generalizations and stereotypes, and ignores the background, causes, and social-political context that have led to the difficulties and crises involving minorities (Avarham and Frist, 2010.)

The producers and writers who create these media texts may not be fully aware of the Othering they impose on the different peoples and cultures. However, they do place these narratives in chosen frames and representations, and in so doing, not only highlight Otherness by placing these people and cultures in the various contexts they wish to emphasize.

Media Framing and Readers

Framing theory is based on the idea that the media, and the creators/producers who create media content, focus their attention on specific events they wish to cover or highlight in the media texts and images they produce. Consequently these selected events are placed within a field of meaning known as "a frame" (Scheufele, 1999).

Framing theory is often placed within the broader theory of agenda setting, which may be briefly described as creating public awareness and concern surrounding prominent issues by the news media. However, Shah, *et al*., describe framing as more than just a simple extension of agenda setting. They write, "While framing and agenda setting involve a similar set of physiological mechanisms, the specific cognitive process underlying them differs considerably" (Shah, *et al*., 2009). Framing then can be described as the lens through which media institutions construct media messages, including images.

According to Reese, frames are "cultural structures with central ideas and more peripheral concepts – and a set of relations that vary in strength and kind among them. Some of the most powerful concepts in frames are: myths: are constructed realities, narratives and metaphors that resonate within the culture" (Reese, 2001). It is important to note here that these "myths/narratives" have symbolic power in society as they carry "excess meaning" and in turn gain power from wide-spread recognition as communication is dependent on shared meaning. Reese, writes of this idea: "Frames as a deep structure of a culture provide the unexpressed but shared knowledge of communication that allows each to engage in discussions that presumes a set of shared assumptions" (Reese, 2001). This is not to say that frames are good or bad or negative or positive, but it is merely to point out that on a social level, organizations and institutions wish to produce content that they hope will be interpreted in a positive manner by the audience.

Media frames then can be influential as institutions and creators of media texts intend the reader to view events through a certain lens. This lens places event messages and images "in" or "out" of a frame, with the intention that the reader will adopt or accept the intended meanings of these frames (Shah, *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, a frame's

influence is somewhat dependent on a reader's acceptance or adoption of the intended meaning of the media message. Moreover, as Stuart Hall suggests, audiences are not passive and often interpret media texts in different ways than the way content creators intend. Recipients of media messages decode messages in the context of their "social location and experience"(Hall, 2006).

According to Hall, there are three hypothetical positions for audience interpretations and the decoding of media texts. The first is the *dominant-hegemonic position*, where the audience accepts and adopts the coded messages/images from the media text. The second, *the negotiated code* where the audience uses a mix of adaptive and oppositional reading of the media text, and finally *the oppositional code* where the audience breaks down the intended media message and interprets it in an alternative or unintended framework (Hall, 2006).

For the purpose of this thesis, I will be using the term "reader" rather than "audience" as it reflects ideas associated with theories of John Fiske and Hall. Fiske suggests that using the term "reader" means that the people who receive media messages are not a homogenous, mass group of people. They are not identical in lived experience, identity or ideology. As such, readers do not receive and interpret media messages in the same way, making them an active reader rather than a passive receiver of information (Gamson, *et al.*, 1992).

We can then say that frames are not all-powerful tools, but rather that content creators rely on frames to try to impose understanding and build meaning of the social and political world around them. These "subtle forms of social construction" only receive their meanings by being placed in a broader "system of meaning or frame" (Gamson, *et al.*, 1992). The images produced by media institutions are "reproductions of reality and sometimes a mental picture of something

12

not real or present" (Hall, 2006). By tapping into or relying on a dominant frame, content creators seek to have ideas appear as natural. However, this is a misconception, as these images and messages are simply a manifestation of the opinions and views of the institutions and individuals that produce them (Gamson, *et al.*, 1992).

The image construction of the *Oriental* uses narrative frames that arrange events and minority groups in a wider context. The use of verbal or written cues and graphic images concerning a minority group helps readers build perceptions of us vs. the Other. In building the Other, representations need to be built and located within narrative frames.

Representations are an essential part of the image construction process by which meaning is also formed. It is a process by which a culture and its peoples are constructed. These stereotypes shrink the diversity of a group into a limited number of simple characteristics as a blanket to describe them all, reducing, if not completely removing, any diversity that exists among those characteristics (Gray, 2013).

The use of these stereotyped representations by the media has tangible effects and research examining those effects varies in method and outcome. Avraham and First combine the use of frames, stereotypes and representation to better analyze the process of Othering that occurs in the Israeli news media towards Arab Israelis. The research shows that the construction of the Other is not only created by placing events/people in a frame, but rather is a process that utilizes both image construction (representation) and framing (the lens through which the reader sees the constructed image). They write:

> The symbolic reality, within which the representation process occurs, consists of various methods of expression, among them literature, art, and media – including the news, the central site in which our political/social/economic agenda is constructed. Symbolic reality

is also influential in two respects. First, the various news channels present a multitude of images. Second, the very process by which the news is constructed, including media routines and processes for encoding information (*e.g.*, who covers the 'Others', who interprets their actions), impacts on the end product (Avraham and First, 2010).

<u>*The Framing of Orientals*</u>

Research focusing on the framing of Arabs and Muslims dates back to the 1980s when two events heightened the interest of scholars: the oil crisis of 1973 and the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979. In the aftermath of the first Gulf war, a clear image of the Arab as the enemy was being formed. Empirical studies surrounding Arabs and Muslims increased again after the events of 9/11 (Schmidt, 2014). In looking at multiple framing studies, Schmidt identifies the dominant media frames when it comes to Arabs and Muslims.

The Binary Thinking Frame: Orientalism

While Said did not give a universal definition of Orientalism, Orientalist and the Orient, for the purpose of this research, Schmidt picks the following passage for the purpose of his research to better elaborate the ideological frame. Here is the passage from Said that Schmidt uses from *Orientalism*:

> Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse to identify Orientalism. My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period . . .. Not only is the Orient accommodated to the moral exigencies

of Western Christianity; it is also circumscribed by a series of attitudes and judgments that send the Western mind, not first to Oriental sources for correction and verification, but rather to other Orientalist works. The Orientalist stage, as I have been calling it, becomes a system of moral and epistemological rigor. As a discipline representing institutionalized Western knowledge of the Orient, Orientalism thus comes to exert a three-way force, on the Orient, on the Orientalist, and on the Western 'consumer' of Orientalism (Said, 1978).

This passage is used as a starting point to explain Orientalist discourse in the media age, and uses Orientalism as a framework of interpretation for the media ideological frame that surround Arabs and Muslims. Schmidt argues that this approach of binary thinking is a key element in understanding the Orientalist frame. This binary approach comes with a two-part ideology: first, the division of the world to Western and non-Western, and second, the importance of dominance and value judgments.

Schmidt argues that this binary approach through the lens of framing theory creates an Orientalist ideology rather than just an Orientalist media frame where Arabs and Muslims are represented. He writes, "It becomes clear that Orientalism is not limited to any specific cognitive frame level impacting the way in which Arabs and Muslims are represented in public discourse. Rather, Orientalism constitutes an overarching 'belief-system' and thus an ideology" (Schmidt, 2014).

Schmidt goes on to explain the importance of language in creating this binary thinking. He points out that language creates the stories and visions that dominate the Oriental frame, with the most prominent binary terms being East versus West. While these terms primarily define the geographical divide of the world, they have several other constructions such as culture,

individuals living in these cultures, and the superiority of the West. Schmidt gives an example to support this claim, he writes, "A prominent term in this respect, which draws particular attention to the normative superiority of the West, is reflected in the use of the adjective 'Westernized'" (Schmidt, 2014).

Schmidt gives a list of categories of the binary terms used in the coverage of Arabs and Muslims in the media and public discourse from empirical research codebooks that cover studies after the Iranian crisis, the Gulf war of 1991, and the events following 9/11, and the Arab Spring.

Orientalism	Occident	Orient
Agent	American/European	Arab/Middle Easterner
	Us	Them
Location	West	East
	Here	There
Race	White	Black
Ideology	Enlightenment	Eastern Thought
Social Order	Democracy	Totalitarianism
	Secularism	Religious Authority
	Rule of Law	An Eye for an Eye
Economic Order	Capitalism	"Camel Trade"
Religion	Christianity	Islam
Orientalism	Occident	Orient
Other collective values	Progress	Backwardness
	Civilization	Barbarism
	Power	Weakness
	Maturity	Immaturity
	Rationality	Emotionality
	Stability	Instability
	Modesty	Exoticism

Figure 1. Binary Vocabulary of Orientalism[3]

The Political Frame

Schmidt describes the everlasting war on terror as a meta-frame with multiple frames within that help create images of Arabs and Muslims. From the 1967 Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the 1973 oil crisis and the first Gulf war, Schmidt highlights the use of binary terms that separate East and West, showcasing the framing of Arabs and Muslims as aggressors who are both violent and inferior. With continued conflict between Israel and Palestine, these frames

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[3] Source: Table 2, Schmidt S. (2014) *The Framed Arab/Muslim: Mediated Orientalism*, (Re-)Framing the Arab/Muslim: Mediating Orientalism in Contemporary Arab American Life Writing.

continue to dominate discourse surrounding the Middle East. While terror and terrorism frames had been used in the past, the events and magnitude of the 9/11 attacks shifted the dominant frame to the "war on terrorism" (WOT) frame. According to Schmidt, with the magnitude of the 9/11 attacks and the feeling of vulnerability thereafter, the terrorist frame did not meet the discourse the public needed to unpack and understand events. As a result, a new frame emerged: the War on Terror. That is why when President George W. Bush declared a "war on terrorism," the media appropriated the term and expanded its use as a frame to interpret events and justify military and security actions taken by governments.

Multiple studies on US news media showed that the WOT became the dominant frame when covering the Middle East. Schmidt further demonstrates how the WOT frame was adopted by European media and worked both in a local and global landscape to target Arabs and Muslims as Enemies of the World (Schmidt, 2014).

Race, Gender and Religion Frames

Schmidt also identified issue frames related to race, gender, and religion. The race frame shows that Arabs were blackwashed to a degree and were stereotyped as the ultimate racial Other in the media. He argues that this frame helps to classify Arabs and Muslims. This classification allowed government agencies to racially profile Arabs based on their "black appearance" (Schmidt, 2014).

However, Schmidt explains the history of how race and ethnicity were constructed historically in the USA for Arabs, where his findings show that in the 2000 census 80% of Arabs self-identify as white. However, news and popular media have framed them as the "black Other" (Schmidt, 2014).

Finally, Schmidt identifies a gender frame of veiled womanhood where he argues that the image of veiled women became synonymous with Arab women. Schmidt traces the history of the image of women and showcases how the veil separated Western women and Eastern women. The Hijab became a polarizer concerning the feminist cause and placed veiled women as victims. However, after the events of 9/11, the image of the veiled woman was coupled with the WOT frame to produce an image of the veiled terrorist (Schmidt, 2014).

The images of Arab Womanhood in the West had become increasingly politicized, especially with respect to the feminist cause. Representations, therefore, shifted from *Oriental* exoticism (harems and belly dancers) to images of veiled women as victims of oppression (Schmidt, 2010). Schmidt moves on to further explain how the "differentiation of feminist studies and the emergence of third-wave feminism" changed the ethnocentric view of Western feminists, and how "Feminist Orientalism thus gave way to Orientalist Feminism": a more culturally relative way to liberate women from the Arab World. However, Schmidt also argues that oppression remains synonymous with veiled women when he writes, "Despite these efforts to move away from ethnocentric views of feminism, the veil continues to be read as a sign of oppression within feminist discourse" (Schmidt, 2010).

Schmidt also addresses some of the changes that occurred post-9/11 to the image construction of *Oriental* women. He notes that post-9/11, there was an uplift of images of veiled *Oriental* women in media discourse. He further argues that what makes constructed images of *Oriental* women different to those of other minorities are the multiple stereotypes attached with these images. There are at least two main stereotypes. The first is that Muslim women are the suppressed and oppressed women as a "passive victim." The second is Muslim women as potential threats, with bombs under their burkas. Schmidt writes, "News reports like the one

above underline the empirical finding that the contemporary discourse on Arab identity, particularly as it is framed in US media, and largely revolves around veiled Arab Women. The gender frame thus becomes a central point of reference, not only for the definition of Arab and Muslim Women but for Arab identity as a whole" (Schmidt, 2010).

Schmidt argues that while reality dictates that women in the Middle East are agents of political change and social influence—especially in light of the Arab Spring, the media seem to continue to employ Orientalist frames when producing stories and attempting to interpret the Arab and Muslim World to Western viewers. He writes:

> The veil, which was originally meant to protect the woman from the view of any outsider, has come to symbolize the barrier between the *Oriental* woman and the *Western* gaze. The media presence of veiled women therefore matters beyond gender concerns with the veil representing one of the most intractable signs of cultural difference. Orientalism is the legacy from which this cultural binary derives and it remains highly gendered. Hasan reveals a "double Orientalization" in which the power structure of Orientalism victimizes women as colonized and gendered. Feminist scholars of the postcolonial era therefore claim that gender and sexual differences are genuine components of Orientalism as a theoretical concept (Schmidt, 2010).

Scholars other than Schmidt have also looked at how media frame Muslim identity. A 2016 study tracks the findings of 345 framing studies that examine the role of the construction of Muslim identity. The study uses qualitative and quantitative methods and analyzes the themes emerging from empirical research surrounding Muslims and Islam. The results of this study are similar to the frames identified by Schmidt. Ahmad and Matthes find reoccurring themes when it comes to the image construction of Islam through their review of studies spanning 2000-2015.

These themes include pre- and post-9/11, terrorism, Muslim women, migrants, public opinion, and Islamophobia (Ahmad and Matthes, 2016).

Ahmad and Matthes identify 9/11 as an important influence on the framing of Muslims. They write:

> The findings from US studies suggest a change in the patterns of representations of Muslims and Islam in the mainstream media since the attacks of 11 September 2001 . . .. Post 9/11, media portrayals of Muslims and Islam worldwide were mostly negative, with Muslims and Islam being framed within the context of religious extremism and a clash of civilizations and cultures . . .. These findings corroborate studies of visual frames in major American news networks and written frames in CNN message boards, that reinforces that Islam is represented as a sexist religion spawning terrorism, incapable of rationality (Ahmad and Matthes, 2016).

The gender frame was also present where their findings show that veiled women have no place in Western societies. The studies show how the veil changed from being eroticized to the hijab becoming a form of oppression and Islamophobic gaze (Ahmad and Matthes, 2016).

The hijab is a highly visible way for Muslim women to practice their religion and therefore is an outward sign of the differences between Muslim women and Western women. This high visibility of difference makes women easier victims of Islamophobia (Zempi and Chakraborti, 2012).

Muslims as migrants was another theme identified by Ahmad and Matthes. Their review of the literature found that Muslim immigration stories were framing Muslims as a cultural Other, where Muslim migrants were presented as a threat to national culture. The study found that stories in the popular press surrounding Muslim immigrants focused on the lack of

assimilation by Muslims of the culture of which they were now a part. In Germany the press focused on honor killings and forced marriages, while in France and New Zealand the mainstream media resorted to discrimination and suspicion through stereotyping and harsh language. The frames used by media, Ahmad and Matthes argue, hinder the actual societal integration of Muslim immigrants, suggesting that Muslims cannot be assimilated. These frames then reinforce arguments for limiting immigration from countries with a high Muslim population (Ahmad and Matthes, 2016).

Representations of Arabs and Muslims in Entertainment Media

While news media framing of Arabs and Muslims has been widely examined, some studies have also examined their representation within entertainment media. The work of two scholars is at the forefront of this research. The work of Jack Shaheen focuses on the portrayals of Arabs and Muslims before the 9/11 attacks. Evelyn Alsultany's research focuses on television representation after 9/11. These scholars use qualitative textual analysis to identify the dominant representations of Arabs and Muslims in pre- and post-9/11.

In his book and documentary with the same name, *Reel Bad Arab: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, Shaheen analyzes over 1,000 Hollywood films from the early 20th century to 2002. His research shows that the "Othering" of the Orient and the *Oriental* by Hollywood has relied on four dominant stereotypes.

The first stereotype is "The Villains." This stereotype is of an evil *Oriental* aggressively assaulting a Western adversary. However, this *Oriental* villain is not even a competent one. *Orientals* are portrayed as the inept nemesis of the smart, victorious and ethical Westerner (Shaheen, 2003). The second stereotype is "The Buffoon," a bumbling idiot used as the butt of every joke making the Westerner seem sophisticated and civilized (Shaneen, 2003). The third

stereotype is "The Sheikh." In Arab culture the sheikh is presented as a wise senior, however, this cultural reality is not depicted as such in Western entertainment. The sheikh is presented as an image of oil-rich, sex-driven deviant. When describing this stereotype, Shaheen describes them as being "stooges-in-sheets, slovenly, hook-nosed potentates intent on capturing pale-faced blondes for their harems" (Shaheen, 2003). The final stereotype, "The Maiden," dehumanizes females as sex objects in silk, or portrays *Oriental* women as oppressed and subservient in black burkas that hide their humanity. Even when given a stronger role, women are usually presented as the femme fatal, terrorists trying to seduce Western heroes, who are often disappointed by the attempt (Shaheen, 2003).

These stereotypes identified by Shaheen before the events of 9/11 work side-by-side with the frames identified by Schmidt, Ahmad, and Matthes. They build on the frames that exist in the news media while being placed into entertainment storylines.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, Alsultany noticed more sympathetic representations of Arabs and Muslims. She notes that while the political climate was ripe for further negative stereotyping, some television dramas were including what seemed to be more complex representations of Arabs and Muslims. She suggests that perhaps media outlets were sending a clear message about news or entertainment: "[T]he message was, we should not resort to stereotyping and racism; we should not blame our innocent Arab and Muslim neighbors for something they had nothing to do with" (Alsultany, 2012). Alsultany explains that these new representations and media narratives were used as citations of a new perceived era of multicultural sensitivity in America.

Alsultany notes that US government policies did not reflect these ideas of racial progressiveness. She supports this argument by pointing out the registration system for Muslims

called The National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), requiring males to register their personal information every few months and how refusal to do so might lead to deportation. In the months after 9/11, there was a rise in hate crimes on anyone who looked Arab or Muslim. Muslim men were detained without due process or criminal charges, and the US government required Arab men to submit to a "voluntary interview" program (Alsultany, 2012).

Alsultany writes about these policies: "To put it mildly, the explicit targeting of Arabs and Muslims by government policies, based on their identity as opposed to their criminality, contradicts claims to racial progress." While American entertainment media portrayals of Arabs and Muslims presented a post-racial illusion, the reality of what was happening in America proved the contrary (Alsultany, 2012).

Alsultany suggests that the discourses surrounding a post-race era centered on the noticeable progress the United States has made since the ending of slavery in 1865. In light of the 9/11 events, critics and the general public viewed the sympathetic representations of Arabs and Muslims in entertainment and as a confirmation of the United States' perceived racial progress. These discourses surrounding post-racial progressiveness used the election of the first black president to solidify their ideas (Alsultany, 2012). However, the far-right media such as Fox News still accused President Barack Obama of being Muslim and of not being American. What the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections truly showed was the reality of what Alsultany describes as the "continued strains of anti-immigrant, anti-black, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim sentiment" (Alsultany, 2012).

Alsultany also mapped some of the representational strategies that have become standard in multicultural movements. She identifies strategies used by television writers, producers, and directors that give an impression that the characters and representations they are producing are

nuanced and complex. Alsultany calls these strategies "Simplified Complex Representations."

She argues that these representations are a mode used by television creators to portray a post-racial era on screen. The representations appear to be complex, but in the end only contribute to the post-race illusion (Alsultany, 2012).

Alsultany identifies seven strategies that are part of the Simplified Complex Representations. The first strategy identified by Alsultany is inserting a positive, patriotic Arab or Muslim American into a scene. The forms these depictions take are usually of an Arab or Muslim American patriot, one that aids in the fight against Arab or Muslim terrorism. Alsultany argues that these characters were used the most in television dramas as they challenge the idea that Arabs and Muslims are not un-American. She also points out that this was the most direct and easy way to challenge any charges of stereotyping (Alsultany, 2012).

Sympathizing with the Plight of Arab and Muslim Americans after 9/11 was the second of the seven strategies identified. Alsultany found that multiple stories on television drama's showed Arab and Muslim Americans as unjust victims of violence and harassment. This strategy challenged past representations that allowed for insensitivity (Alsultany, 2012).

Third is Challenging the Arab/Muslim Conflation with Diverse Muslim Identities. This strategy demonstrated that not all Arabs are Muslim, not all Muslims are Arab and that not all Arabs and Muslims are heterosexuals, thus challenging the idea of homogeneous Arab/Muslim presented by government discourses and other media representations (Alsultany, 2012).

The fourth is Flipping the Enemy, which involves leading the viewers to think that Muslim terrorists are plotting against the US, but then showing that the Muslims are really pawns of Euro-American terrorism. This strategy shows the lack of intelligence of Arabs and Muslim and at the same time suggests that they do not have a monopoly on terrorism (Alsultany, 2012).

The fifth is Humanizing the Terrorist. Unlike the stereotypes of the past where Arabs and Muslims were simply portrayed as villains, post-9/11 terrorists are humanized in multiple ways. TV dramas show the backstories that lead to these individuals joining terrorist organizations. Writers are adding multiple dimensions to previously one-dimensional characters (Alsultany, 2012).

The sixth is Projecting a Multicultural U.S. Society. It is another strategy to avoid any critique or allegations of racism while representing Arabs and Muslims as terrorists. This strategy is reliant on casting and scripting characters with diverse backgrounds to create an image of the acceptance of multiculturalism in the United States. The creators of these shows portray the United States as a country where everyone can work together and where racism is not accepted (Alsultany, 2012).

Finally, Fictionalizing the Middle East is a strategy where the terrorists' origin and country remains unnamed. There is an assumption that in eliminating the origin or country name from the script, it removes the potential of offending any one country or culture (Alsultany, 2012).

Alsultany argues that these strategies are a shift from the past representations and that "they present an important departure from stereotypes into more challenging stories and characters" (Alsultany, 2012). However, even with these new attempts for better representation, the context of these shows still remains surrounded by terrorism. In doing so the producers and creators therefore do not effectively challenge the representations of Arabs and Muslims (Alsultany, 2012).

As noted shown above, studies have shown that the way entertainment media frame Arabs and Muslims has changed. Prior to 9/11, Arabs and Muslims were primarily portrayed

negatively. After 9/11, studies suggest they were portrayed in more sensitive, softer frames that recognized difference. However, Alsultany's examination ends in 2012. Much has happened since 2012 that might have an impact on Arabs and Muslim image construction in entertainment media, including the rise of Islamaphobia, nationalism and anti-immigration rhetoric worldwide (Huffpost, 2019). This thesis attempts to address that gap in the literature by analyzing a current television show to see how entertainment media in this new environment constructs images of Arabs and Muslims.

<u>Methodology</u>

The methodological approaches to studying framing are divided into two categories: deductive and inductive. The deductive approach relies on predetermined framing categories and often uses a quantitative content analysis to count the number of times a certain frame is present in a media text. The reliance on already established frames enables a systematic analysis of content, but may also miss out on finding new emerging frames that may exist in the content. The inductive approach can help with the shortcomings of a deductive approach as they often use a qualitative method to identify and extract frames through an interpretation of media texts. In an inductive approach, the researcher focuses on interpreting the language, visual images and cues used in the media text (Touri and Koteyko, 2014).

Through a qualitative method, we can critically analyze the ideology, metaphors, representations, and the frames used to construct the reality produced by the show creators. That is why a qualitative approach works best in trying to answer the questions central to this project. I will follow the works of Avraham and First in attempting to use both representation theory and framing theory to identify the frames used in entertainment television. The writers put forth that "both theories are influenced by the input of social-political reality, as well as symbolic reality

and the interaction between the two. Moreover, framing is the outcome of modes of representation, and vice versa" (Avraham and First, 2010).

For this thesis I will be focusing on a textual analysis of the BBC show *Bodyguard*, which was produced in 2017 then aired in the 2018 season on Netflix. From a framing method, I will be looking at the narratives of each episode to try and identify the frames used. The textual analysis will look at the images, music, lighting, and spoken words used in each episode. This textual analysis will also allow me to see if the frames identified in the show follow the same narrative frames used in the mainstream news media and if new frames are established in entertainment narratives.

 I will also be looking at the representations of Muslims in the show to analyze if the strategies used by the show creators fall under the identified strategies from Alsultany or past stereotypes identified by Shaheen. I will also be looking at the frames identified from the narrative to better understand where the representations are placed in that narrative. In making these identifications of frames and representations I aim to look for indicators of and image construction of the Arab and Muslim as the Other or the lack of Othering in the show, in an attempt to see how entertainment media constructs Arabs and Muslims images in the 2018 TV drama genre.

My analysis will focus on three frames identified in the literature and how these frames are used in *Bodyguard*. The first is the ideology of binary thinking of Orientalism and Othering, the second is the simplified complex representations, and the third is the adoption of the war on terrorism news construction.

Bodyguard

 Bodyguard is a British drama about David Budd, an ex-military officer, who moves on to the Royal protection service branch of the London police force. The show follows the rise of terrorist alerts in London after an attempted bombing of a train in the first episode. The narrative of the show focuses on the corruption of politicians in the UK after the Iraq and Afghan war and the rise of terror threats through suicide bombings. It also focuses on how politicians use terrorism to justify their actions.

 It was the most popular BBC show of the season with 10.4 million viewers in the UK larger than any other TV program besides the World Cup (The Guardian, 2018). Shortly after airing in the UK, *Netflix* premiered the show and according to their data, 23 million households in the USA viewed it in its first month (Business Insider, 2019). The show got a 94% rating from rotten tomatoes from critics and an 82% audience rating. The show garnered raving reviews, Golden Globe Nominations and BAFTA wins, and talks of a second season coming out in 2020. I decided to use *Bodyguard* as a case study for my research due to its popularity but also due to a statement by the show's creator, Jed Marcurio, when asked about the Muslim representations on the show: "The other thing is, unfortunately, the reality of our situation is that the principal terror threats in the UK do originate from Islamist sympathizers, I do understand that's different from the religion of Islam, but it's the reality of who the perpetrators are of the majority of the offences. If the show were set in the recent British past, the attackers might be Irish republicans" (Independent, 2018.)

 The series highlights some of the past image constructions of Arabs and Muslims. However, *Bodyguard* also establishes a new representation with the character Nadia, whose character development starts as the Maiden, moves on to become a patriotic Arab or Muslims

then reverts back to a villain. I identify this shift in character development and representation as

the Duplicitous Arab or Muslim.

Chapter III: *Bodyguard:* A Chance Missed

In this chapter, I will be highlighting three main frames that are present in *Bodyguard*. The first is the ideology of binary thinking of Orientalism and Othering, the second is simplified complex representations, and the third is the adoption of the war on terrorism news construction.

Ideologies of Binary Thinking: *Orientalism and Othering*

While evidence of binary thinking is present throughout all six episodes, the following demonstrates how the show establishes Orientalism and Othering in the first two episodes. The first two episodes are important for establishing the foundation for the rest of the series.

The first episode opens with the sound of guns going off as the title of the show comes on the screen. The audience then sees a white male – Sargent David Budd - waking up on a train in a scare. These sounds and images are used to inform the audience of the military background of the man on screen. The camera then zooms out to show his children sleeping as he breaths heavily. The train makes a stop and the audience hears the conductor call out the station of the London-bound train. Budd lovingly grabs his son's coat to cover him as he sleeps, and tells his little girl to cover up, as they are still not yet home.

Budd looks out the window and notices a man wearing a big coat, taking the battery out of his mobile phone, throwing it in a trash bin on the platform, and then boarding the train. This is where the audience gets the first glimpse of a suspicious brown male. The ominous music pushes the audience to feel some stress and anxiety as to what might happen next.

Only seconds later we see the conductor of the train walking past Budd and suspiciously watching another brown male passenger with a beard. The conductor then moves to the bathroom of the train cart and knocks on the door and tries to communicate with the person

inside. With no reply from the rest room, the conductor walks back to her station, her face filled with fear.

Sargent Budd looks back at the conductor, then the bathroom door and politely asks the passenger across to keep an eye on his peacefully sleeping children as he gets up and makes his way to the conductor. Budd introduces himself to the panicked conductor and shows his badge as he says "Sargent David Budd, Metropolitan police. What's going on?" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 3:47). The conductor looks baffled and scared as Budd continues "you've got an intelligence report for an Asian Male in his 20's?" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 3:53).

Audiences from the United Kingdom would be familiar with the term "Asians" in describing people from the Indian Subcontinent. However, other audiences can deduce from the action so far that Asian means brown. Budd then continues to say, "I saw you checking out the guy in my carriage. He's fine. I saw someone suspicious at Marston. I don't know if he succeeded in boarding the train. But if he did, he could be in the toilet" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 4:02). This final statement gives the audience confirmation of the presence of an antagonist brown Asian male and the protagonist white Western officer.

Jack Shaheen identified the antagonist image as the "Villain," the biggest foe of the European hero (Shaheen, 2003). According to Shaheen this representation has been around for decades. He writes, "From as early as 1912, decades prior to the 1991 Gulf War, dozens of films presented allied agents and military forces—American, British, French, and more recently Israeli—obliterating Arabs" (Shaheen, 2003).

Within the first five minutes of this show, we have visual and verbal cues that give us motivations to support Budd and hope for the fall of this "*Oriental* villain." The "villain" does

not have to look like the typical Muslim stereotype with a beard and a turban, as long as the construction of evil has been established.

This construction of evil is established from the continued conversation between Budd and the conductor, where she informs the sergeant that she received an alert about a possible suicide bomber attempting to board a London-bound train. The conductor also informs Budd that a special unit is waiting in an empty station seven minutes away. Budd then informs the conductor that suicide bombers would not detonate in a bathroom but in a carriage saying, "He'll detonate in the carriage for maximum casualties" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 4:36).

Budd then walks back through the carriage while the audience sees images of unassuming passengers filling the frame. Images such as a mother calming her infant child, people reading books, people sleeping or looking at their phones. Budd stops to take a look as his sleeping children and his eyes are full of fear as he asks the passenger to look after them a little while longer. He stands by the restroom door attentively trying to listen to what's happening inside, he calls the conductor and informs her of a plan to push the bomber off the train the minute he leaves the bathroom saying, "I can't let him out. There's dozens of passengers on this train and kids, mine included" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 6:13). The choice of showing these innocent bystanders and the choice of Budd saying these words push the audience to view the antagonist to not only look like a blood-thirsty villain, but someone who has no regard for humanity. The villain does not just want to hurt bad people; the villain wants to hurt everyone. After all, we see children and a baby on board. To make them into causalities makes the antagonist below human standards; it makes the antagonist into a monster.

As Budd stands by to push the bomber off the train, the audience gets a clear view of the terrorist: a brown man with a baseball cap and wearing a t-shirt. He looks sternly at Budd. Budd

proceeds to follow the suspect, quickly noticing that he has no device on his body and informs the conductor that he will be examining the toilet for signs of a device. The view pans out to show a Special Forces team waiting with artillery for the train, as they are being relayed the message about the suspect.

This interaction with the first suspect allows viewers to draw from past experiences of media consumption whereby they hold onto the ideology that this threat is probably an evil Muslim. Shaheen writes, "Over a period of time a steady stream of bigoted images does in fact tarnish our judgment of people and their culture" (Shaheen 2003).

The next image we see is Sargent Budd walking into the bathroom and being faced with another terrorist. With a shock on his face, the camera moves to reveal a woman with a bomb vest holding a detonator. She is wearing a hijab, breathing heavily, shaking, and full of fear as she stares at Budd. There is a pause as the antagonist and protagonist face off: Budd looking just as scared as the bomber takes a breath and says, "Alsalamu alykom" (an Arabic greeting meaning peace be upon you) (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 9:11). The hijab is one of the most outwardly visible displays of Islam, and having the suicide bomber wearing the hijab puts to rest any doubts the audience may have had about the religious identity of the bomber: they are undeniably Muslim.

Sargent Budd's fear becomes more visible as he tries to calm the bomber down and the camera moves from his face and focuses on her hands and her thumb on the trigger. Budd goes on to tell the bomber, "I can see you're as scared as I am. Miss I just want to help you" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 9:27). The woman is quiet, shaking in the corner of the restroom as Budd stresses "you don't have to do this, you can change your mind" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 9:35). A look of resolution and anger sweeps across the bombers face as the camera moves back

33

down to her shaking hands and Budd urges her with a look and voice filled with fear: "Don't do that, please don't do that. Don't move. Stay still. Please, just stay still. Please! Just stay still. Don't move. Please! Please!" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 9:42).

The bomber then starts to break down into tears moving her thumb further from the trigger, and audibly sobbing. That is when Sargent Budd looks a bit calmer and with a warm kind voice and says, "You don't want to do this. You don't look like you do" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 10:08). Budd then explains to the bomber that the counter terrorism unit is at the next stop a few minutes away and that he would like to help her and let them know that the bomber is willing to cooperate. Budd then proceeds to relay a message to the special unit to hold back from boarding the train and requests a bomb unit and negotiators are the operational priority. Budd also instructs the conductor to move the passengers from the closest carriages to move further away from the bomber, and with her permission makes sure that the train carriages are being evacuated and that his children are ok.

In these first interactions with the bomber, an image construction of Budd is created as that of the Western Man always being benevolent, righteous and empathetic. This interaction between Budd and the Bomber is where we start to see the ideological image construction of binary thinking and Orientalism taking shape. According to Schmidt, "Binaries in Orientalism are not merely seen in neutral terms as mere oppositions based on difference. Rather, the dualism is inherently linked to value judgments and opposing belief systems" (Schmidt, 2010). He continues to explain that values used to regulate behaviors in large social settings, "value holders," are responsible for spreading these values. He then continues:

[I]t becomes clear that binaries are always linked to value judgments. This goes along with the notion that value opposition includes hierarchies. The two formative elements of

34

a binary are thus not seen to stand in juxtaposition to each other but in contrast, whereby one is superior to the other (Schmidt, 2010).

The show continues in this binary construction as the story of Budd and the bomber continues to unfold in the first episode. Budd continues in his efforts to calm the bomber. He introduces himself to her and asks her what her name is. She is still shaking and scared, but she hesitantly gives him her name, Nadia. Budd then asks, "The man that was here before, is that your husband?" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 12:10). She replies with a nod as she weeps. The conversation continues with Budd saying "and your husband wants you to die?" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 12:21). Nadia continues to cry closing her eyes tight. The conversation continues as Budd tells her how "they" can help her and deactivate the device. He says, "We can protect you. You don't have to see him again if you don't want to" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 12:28).

The conversation starts to construct the image of the *Oriental* man as a cold husband forcing his wife to kill herself while he lives. This image of the oppressive villain, a misogynist full of irrational violent tendencies has been adopted from past images prior to the 9/11 attacks. As Alsultany notes, "[C]ommercial media reveals that while 9/11 is a new historical moment, it is also part of a longer history in which viewers have been primed by the media to equate Arabs and Muslims first with dissoluteness and patriarchy/misogyny and then with terrorism" (Alsultany, 2012).

This binary image construction puts Budd, the protagonist, on the moral high ground and in direct opposition of Nadia's husband. The choice of Budd using the term "we" over and over when speaking about himself and his colleagues creates a clear "us" versus "them" narrative that further pushes the ideological binary thinking and thus begins the process of Othering. Amir Saeed writes about this binary approach to Othering Muslims: "[B]inary conceptions not only

depict all things Oriental as 'Other', but also define Islam as the 'Other' religion to Christianity. With the 'Other' constantly described as inferior, even barbaric, it is easily accepted by a Western audience that terrorism stems from Islam" (Saeed, 2007).

Budd continues to calm Nadia down as he talks to her about his children, showing her a picture of them on his phone. Meanwhile the train pulls up to the empty station as the counter terrorism unit stands by. Nadia tries to close the door; Budd stops her saying:

Stop! Please! Stop! Listen to me, why would someone you love want you to kill yourself? You've been brainwashed. He has, you have. And I'd know. I was in Afghanistan. I saw my mates get killed. Nearly got killed myself. For what? Nothing. Politicians. Cowards and liars. Ours and theirs. People full of talk but will never spill a drop of their own blood, but you and I we're just collateral damage. Don't let them win Nadia. Don't let them win (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 13:39).

One might take this confession by Sargent Budd as a sign that the creators of the show were being sympathetic in representing Muslims. However, Alsultany identified these strategies as part of simplified complex representations. The narrative is part of the strategy of a combination of humanizing the terrorist and flipping the enemy (Alsultany, 2012). The idea here is to show that Budd understands the rationale why she might think she is doing the right thing through her attempted suicide, and pinpointing the corruption of politicians. He tries to relate to her by implicitly by stating that understanding that the war in Afghanistan was unjust that the true enemies are the politicians on both sides, brainwashing people. This strategy aims to distance the constructed images on television away from the stock villains of the past, adding multiple dimensions to these characters (Alsultany, 2012).

The audience then sees Nadia's husband being arrested and the counter terrorism unit going through the train to get to Nadia. Budd is asked to get out of the way but he refuses shielding Nadia and continually comforting her. He demands to get a unit to help dismantle the vest. He asks Nadia to raise her arms to show that she is cooperating as he moves closer to her shielding her body from any critical sniper shots. He argues with the unit leader insisting that they call the bomb unit to come in and help, all the while hugging Nadia and moving around so that no one could harm her. This altercation is fueled with fear from both Nadia, who is whimpering, and Budd as well, as the situation escalates with the counter terrorism unit. With no clear kill shot, the counter terrorism unit accepts Budd's demands and brings in the bomb unit to defuse the vest. As Nadia gets off the train, she watches as her husband is arrested. Budd looks at her kindly and says, "It's over. You're safe now. He can't hurt you. No one's going to hurt you" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 21:30).

It is important to note here that while we know that the bombers are Muslim, a definitive nationality is never given. One can argue that the vagueness of the term "Asian" as an ethnicity may mean coming from of any number of places, but the choice in being vague can be seen as a way to homogenize the Muslim community by narrowing the diversity that exists amongst them. Saeed argues that "[v]arious authors have noted that Islam and Muslims are treated homogenously in Western media and depicted as the opposite of the West . . .. On the other hand, if one looks closer at the religion of Islam one can find that it is interpreted in multiple ways in the universe of Islamic cultures, societies and history, ranging from China to Nigeria, from Spain to Indonesia, etc." (Saeed, 2007). According to Saeed, the increased number of stories and coverage surrounding Muslims in the media, the homogenizing of this minority and

the misrepresentation by focusing on extremists and fundamentalists further highlight

"Otherness" of Muslims from mainstream society (Saeed, 2007).

At the beginning of episode two, the Home Secretary is informed of a plot to attack a

school by the same terrorist cell unit a couple of days after the failed train bombing. The

audience soon finds out that that the targeted school is where Sargent Budd's children attend.

During this conversation, the Home Secretary is made aware of a security breach in one of the

government departments as this attempt is considered a revenge attack for the failed train

bombing.

The next scene in episode two is of the camera following the head of Counter Terrorism

Unit as she checks on a mission/operation where her teams are following terrorist suspects in

South London. To the teams' surprise, the suspects change vehicles from a sedan to a truck. The

counter terrorism unit expects this new vehicles is holding explosives. The head of the unit then

immediately requests all her on group personnel to stop the truck by any means necessary.

The suspense is pushed by using ominous music and dramatic shots going back and forth

from the stressed out and panicked officers at headquarters to the car chase happening on the

streets. The music gets louder triggering viewers' anticipation to what may happen next. All of a

sudden the scene shifts and the next image seen on screen is that of children playing outside at a

school. As the camera pans out we see two teachers with an expression of fear on their face as

the sound of sirens blare in the background and the audience hears the trucks engine revving as it

speeds towards the playground.

The teachers start moving the students away from the playground and into the school in

such disarray where there is screaming and mayhem in the background. The camera then slowly

zooms on Sargent Budd's children. A police car with snipers parks in front of the playground

and the officers start gunning down the two brown passengers in the vehicle; the truck crashes some distance away from the school.

As police officers approach the truck, the driver appears to be dead. However, the other bloodied passenger looks at the officers and gives a wicked vindictive smile. This image is followed by the look of terror on the officer's face and seconds later there is a major explosion and the school's windows shatter.

The audience knows nothing about these villains; they have no names, no background information about their ethnicity. All the audience is aware of is that they are Muslim, brown, and attempting to murder children. These constructed images of these *Oriental* antagonists follow past stock images of what Shaheen identified as the "villain."

The above-described sequence of events follows the image construction of Muslims and Islam. According to Ahmed and Matthes, post-9/11 media portrayals of Muslims and Islam worldwide were mostly negative, with Muslims and Islam being framed within the context of religious extremism and a clash of civilizations and culture. Studies outside the USA have also identified that the September 11 attacks appear to have influenced a rise in overt and indirect discrimination against Muslims—as was witnessed in the UK and Canada. Overall, media representations of September 11 emphasized Muslims as a threat to universal 'white' values of democracy and freedom (Ahmed and Matthes, 2016).

In the first two episodes, each an hour long, the male Muslim antagonists got a total of 3:40 minutes of actual screen time. They were constructed as brown males with a vendetta against the UK. While the plot of the series continued to shift and twist as the terror threats in London continue, one cannot help but notice the clear binary approach to the image construction between what it means to be British and what it means to be a Muslim.

What is interesting to note here is the fact that while the audience only sees the male antagonists for a very brief time in the first two episodes, their presence is felt throughout the entire season. The idea that there are people "out there" still at large plotting against the UK is never forgotten furthering the "Us" versus "them" binary. Saeed's research finds that the most common stereotypes that keeps cropping up in Western media are that Muslims are "intolerant and misogynistic," "violent and cruel," and finally "strange and different" and therefore Othered (Saeed, 2007). Saeed also suggests that these constructed images can be linked to the development of "cultural racism," and in turn, "Such images are transferred to the public at large, therefore the media is guilty of reinforcing anti-Muslim racism" (Saeed, 2007).

This ideological construction of binary thinking is evident in the first and second episodes through the use of language, images and by the ominous background music. Schmidt argues that the use of binary language and images further raises binary thought of "us" versus "them". Furthermore, this division prompts thoughts where civilization is Western and on the flip side is the idea of barbarism (Schmidt, 2010.)

The first and second episodes also make use, through both imagery and language, of the binary categories highlighted by Schmidt's research, where terms such as "us" and "we" are met by their counter "them." Images of a "white" protagonist are met by images of "brown" antagonists, and constructed images of a "secular, democratic" British society are placed in juxtaposition with a "totalitarian, religious authority" presented by the antagonists. Schmidt argues that these categorizations and binaries are also linked with value-connotations, "with positive or strong being linked to the West and negative or weak ones with the East. Since the Arab/Muslim within Orientalist history has become the object of this dichotomization rather than

the 'creator of discourse,' he/she represents the stereotypical Other in the normative binary structure" (Schmidt, 2010).

Bodyguard: Simplified Complex Representation Strategies

Alsultany claims that television shows present Simplified Complex Representations (SCR) of minority groups and argues that these representations contribute to a post-race illusion that promotes "logics that legitimize racist policies and practices" (Alsultany, 2012). This section focuses on the SCR strategies used by *Bodyguard*.

Flipping the Enemy is the first strategy used on the show. Flipping the Enemy simply means leading the viewer to believe that Muslim terrorists are behind any plot against a Western nation only to reveal later in the series that those Muslims are "merely pawns for Euro-American or European terrorists" (Alsultany, 2012).

In Episode two after the attempted attack on the school, the audience is informed that there is a leak in the police department and the Counter Terrorism Department. In a meeting of the leaders of all counter terrorism forces, including the Security Service and the Home Secretary, the audience is informed of the idea that there is an accomplice to these bombings. During the meeting the Home Secretary says "either you have got a security breach in your ranks, or your office has failed to detect another accomplice involved in 1/10.[4] Added to which your surveillance operation failed to learn that the subjects had hired a light goods vehicle" (Episode 2, 22:40). During this meeting the Home Secretary also gives the Security Service full access to the bombing case and the antagonists in custody, despite protests of the Police Department and Counter Terrorism Department heads. This conversation prompts the viewers to

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[4] 1/10 is the name given to the attempted train bombing, similar to how 9/11 came to represent the terrorist attacks in the USA.

start thinking that there might be a bigger conspiracy behind these attacks if an intelligence agency is asked to take over.

Privately after the meeting, one of the Home Secretary's colleagues points out the ramifications of her decision saying, "I hope you're not serious about giving more responsibility to the Security Service. They are less transparent and less accountable." The Home Secretary responds with, "The real danger is to our national security." (*Bodyguard*, Episode 2, 25:08). These particular statements are telling to Alsultany's argument of promoting and legitimizing policies that are racist, and in this case the lack of accountability and transparency is implicit to torturing the would-be attackers for more information.

Towards the end of the second episode, a sniper tries to assassinate the Home Secretary while under Sargent Budd's protection. Budd secures the Home Secretary and rushes toward the roof where the sniper was shooting. Once Budd is on the roof, he is faced with a white male, who happens to be one of his former regiment officers. This white male was no stranger to the audience; we know he is also Sargent Budd's friend.

Earlier in the episode, this white male is having a drink with Budd at a pub while they watch the news about the school bombing, where three police officers died. In that news footage the Home Secretary is making a statement saying "the government will do everything in our power to bring the perpetrator to justice, and I call upon my parliamentary colleagues to pass my strengthened Regulation of investigatory Power bill" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 2, 20:42).

The former regiment officer tells Budd how much he detests politicians and specifically the Home Secretary saying:

Sanctimonious Bitch. She is doing what they all do. Exploit the situation to gain more power. She said shit like this during the war, just a sniveling little MP (member of

parliament) back then trying to join the big boy's game. Sign a piece of paper and a hundred blokes get killed. But who suffers? Her kind couldn't give a shit (*Bodyguard*, Episode 2, 20:43).

This man has a lot of scarring on his face that the audience can deduce is an injury from his time in Afghanistan. Ominous music starts playing as he and Budd continue the conversation about Budd's family being a target for the terrorists. The friend then lowers his voice telling Budd that the Home Secretary should get a taste of what she puts people through, as the scene ends with him saying, "How do you reckon she would feel if she got a taste? Of suffering the consequences?" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 2, 22:05).

After the shooting of the Home Secretary the two are on the roof of a building facing off. Budd tells his friend it's over and that he should surrender. His friend agrees that it's over for him, but that Budd should take over and finish what he started. He then puts a gun to his head and takes his own life. This whole exchange gives viewers further confirmation of a bigger plot twist yet to come.

Another part of the Flipping The Enemy strategy, according to Alsultany, are the choices by the creators of dramas emphasizing the flaws in government and its branches (Alsultany, 2012). This is highlighted in Episode three as Sargent Budd starts to uncover the truth about how the Security Services knew about the school bomb threat and that they kept this information from the Counter Terrorism Department. He also discovers that the Home Secretary was informed and let the attack happen.

Budd then goes rogue and starts investigating who might be involved in this greater plot against the UK, picking and choosing what information he shares with the Counter Terrorism Department.

The viewers are also let in on a secret that the Home Secretary and the Security Service had begun illegally monitoring and surveilling the public and government employees to gain more power and support. In this episode [Episode three], the last and final bombing happens during a debate where the Home Secretary was giving a speech, resulting in her death.

By Episode four Budd discovers that the Russian Mob was involved in these attacks as an attempt to stop the Surveillance Bill from being approved. He also discovers that politicians and many police officers of different ranks were either willingly involved in this scheme with the Russian Mob or were coerced to do so. According to Alsultany, flipping the enemy shows that Arabs and Muslims do not hold a monopoly on terrorism, and that Arab and Muslim terrorists are intelligent and competent unlike past stereotypes of the relatively incompetent "villains" identified by Shaheen (Alsultany, 2012).

The second strategy used by *Bodyguard* is inserting a patriotic Arab or Muslim into the narrative. In episode one the Home Secretary's assistant is fired, and in Episode two the new assistant for the Home Secretary is an "Asian" Muslim. He is a young man with only a few appearances in episodes two and three, but we know he is Muslim because his name Hassan and that he was hired because it provided good optics for the Home Secretary. This character is also the only other Muslim male on the show; he dies in the same bombing that kills the Home Secretary. Alsultany argues that this strategy is used to counteract any accusations of stereotyping.

Moreover, even after Hassan's death in Episode four, the Counter Terrorism Unit considers him a person of interest in the investigation because he is Muslim and because he was next to the Home Secretary when the bomb went off. The assumption here is that he had the

bomb in his briefcase. This accusation doesn't last long, however, as CCTV footage shows him taking the suitcase from a white male superior.

The third strategy used is fictionalizing the Middle East and Muslim countries by not revealing the antagonists' nationality or country of origin. According to Alsultany, this strategy has become quite commonly used as it eliminates any potential for offensiveness to any one culture, country or race (Alsultany, 2012). To describe the first antagonist, the creators used the term "Asian" as a descriptor of brown and Muslim. They also do not to reveal any information about the antagonists in the second episode with the school bombing or the third bombings in Episode three, allowing the creators of the show to avoid criticism from any one culture or nationality.

However, by making it clear that the antagonists are working with the Russians turns a diverse group of people from different countries and different cultures into a homogenized group that presents an existential and essential threat to the UK.

Finally, the last strategy used in *Bodyguard* is that of projecting a multicultural society. The show's casting choices by the creators presents the British community as diverse and its Muslim members as being well-integrated into that community. There are non-Muslim brown, black and ethnically ambiguous characters on the show working together in harmony. According to Alsultany, this strategy is used to show that racism is unaccepted in society, while at the same time as way to avoid any accusations of unconcealed stereotyping (Alsultany, 2012). *Bodyguard* creators also use gender to showcase the progressiveness of British society by writing and casting women in high positions of power across all represented agencies.

Alsultany explains that creators of television dramas use these strategies to avoid negative stereotypes and complicate the representations of people from the Orient. However, she

argues that these representations are still placed in the context of terrorism and the war on terrorism and ultimately fail to "effectively challenge the stereotypical representations of Arabs and Muslims" (Alsultany, 2012). These strategies also magnify the ideas of binary thinking, discussed earlier, as they highlight the ideas of "Good Arabs and Muslims" and "Bad Arabs and Muslims" (Alsultany, 2012).

Construction of The War on Terror and Terrorism

In this section I will discuss the context in which the show takes place and how it uses the War on Terrorism (WOT) and Terrorism in its construction. The narrative of the show throughout the six episodes revolves around the theme of multiple, imminent terrorist attacks. As the previous section showcases, the choice to open the season with a twenty-minute interaction with a veiled suicide bomber highlights the context of Islamic terrorism and its existence in British society.

In order to create a realistic feel for the show, the creator of *Bodyguard* uses news reports as sound bites between scene changes. These news reports describe the three bombings that occur during the show. They also highlight national security issues in the UK, how the terrorist threat levels have heightened, what the authorities are planning to do about these threats/attacks (including statements from the Prime Minister, Home Secretary and other government officials).

To highlight the emphasis on terrorism, the show uses reports from television journalists accompanied by crawls along the bottom of the screen. These journalistic reports were used to give the show an increased sense of reality by linking it to terrorism. The news reports were usually employed as transitions for scene changes. Some of the news crawls at the bottom of the screen that were used in Episode one include:

"Terrorist boarded the London-bound train just before 9 p.m."

"The prime minister called a meeting of COBRA."

 "No one was injured in the attack on a packed train en route to London."

"We urge the members of the public to remain vigilant."

"Joint Terrorism Analysis Center (JTAC) will assess the threat level."

'Prime Minister: We are resolute in our determination to root out terrorism."

"Has raised the terror threat level to substantial."

Reporters also contributed to increasing connections to terrorism through on-air appearances. For example, in Episode one, a reporter appeared and stated the following:

What I'm being told is most worrying about yesterday's incident is the exceptionally high level of sophistication of the explosive vest employed by the would be attackers. It would appear most likely that this is the work of a terror cell and there may well be accomplices still at large. The 1st of October device and the real concern that it represents a new and devastating threat to national security that lead the JTAC to raise the UK's terror threat level to substantial (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 23:54).

Using these sound bites as scene changes allows the creators to construct the national security threats faced by Britain and the terrorism it faces. In the six episodes this particular strategy (using news reports as scene changes) was used six times, twice in Episode one, once in Episode two, twice in Episode three and once in Episode four. In the first episode it was used after the attempted train bombing, in Episode two it was used after the bombing of the school, in Episode three the sound bites were after a sniper attack on the Home Secretary, and in Episode four it was used after the bombing of a political debate that led to the death of the Home Secretary.

The choice of placing these news reports follows the same pattern of real-life news coverage after terrorist events. Research by Ahmed and Matthes finds that after every attack there is an increase in news coverage and that the news media uses the war on terrorism and terrorism in general to frame events. In turn they found that the coverage surrounding Islam and Muslims increases in negativity within these frames. They write, "Studies investigating terrorist attacks were able to identify them as the catalytic point when the national media and majority society adopted a common negative stance towards Islam" (Ahmed and Matthes, 2016).

Bodyguard also uses another strategy of inserting footage of news clips after attacks, by having the characters watch news on the television, and by showing news reporters shooting their stories. Within these techniques, the predominant words used are terrorism, terrorist cell, attacks, and substantial threats.

Schmidt argues that the use of these types of words highlights the war on terror and terrorism frame as a mode for interpreting these events. Schmidt also suggests that the use of these frames produces feelings of anxiety and fear in the audience, which in turn serves to support and justify security measures deployed by governments (Schmidt, 2010).

In *Bodyguard*, government measures to keep the country safe come in the form of a bill proposed by the Home Secretary. The bill allows increased surveillance on citizens and was called REPA-18. When it was first presented to parliament REPA-18 was being attacked by opposition party members as well as members of the public. However, with national security heightened due to perceived threats of terrorism, the Home Secretary's bill becomes more palpable and garners more acceptance. This image construction and narrative follows the same patterns of news coverage as after the 9/11 attacks in the US, and the passing of the Patriot Act.

Schmidt writes about the differences between war on terrorism and terrorism in general:

While many studies have focused primarily on the role of the WOT in the U.S., international comparisons with European countries reveal that terrorism became a global media frame. Despite the common significance of the WOT across nations, there are also differences as to how the WOT frame was fabricated according to the specific demands of domestic audiences. Affective elements of the media frame constitution therefore vary (Schmidt, 2010).

Similarly, Alsultany notes that television mediates the war on terrorism and that television dramas play a role in this mediation. She writes:

[I]t is important to take seriously the power of TV dramas to shape public perceptions of the War on Terror . . .. Public debate, it sometimes seemed, was displaced onto TV dramas. The slippage between debating a television show and debating a government's policies and practices demonstrates the significance of TV dramas during the War on Terror (Alsultany, 2012).

Using terrorism not only gives the show, but it provides a more realistic feel for the events occurring on the screen. While *Bodyguard* is a fictional drama, the creator's aim was to make it as realistic as possible, as Jed Mercurio says in an interview:

There was an ambition that the first three episodes would have very tense sequences where our protagonists were in real peril. Our expert advisors were political and police ones, so they helped to create an authentic texture to the world of the series so that it felt that these events could be happening in the real world (Awardsdaily.com, 2019).

As such, *Bodyguard* uses terrorism and fictional news reports to construct a sense of fear, drama and to increase interest.

Chapter IV: And Just Like That, We Are Back In The Past

This chapter takes a closer look at the female antagonist Nadia. She is the main antagonist with the most screen time in the season. Her character development was integral for the season finale and captured the most attention from audiences and critics of the show. I found over twelve articles criticizing the show's representations from web publications such as, *The Guardian, The Daily Mail, Al-Jazeera, and Gal-Dem*. Hassan Minhaj, a prominent comedian in the USA, and Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, were also some of the voices that critiqued the show publicly.

Q   Nadia's character develops through out the six episode series, starting off as "The Maiden" the submissive and oppressed Muslim woman, and then shifts to "The Patriotic Arab or Muslim" as her character helps the police try to stop further terrorist attacks. However finally in the season finale Nadia turns out to be the deceptive, and devious mastermind behind the bombs used in all the terrorist attacks. This character development takes on different forms of past representations, however it's diverts from past representations as the plot twist in the finale is revealed. I call this representation the Duplicitous Arab or Muslim. Implications of this type of representation are discuses further in this chapter.

Nadia: A Twist, A Turn and A Fail

As described in detail in the first chapter, the opening scenes of *Bodyguard* had a vital interaction between Budd and the train bomber Nadia. During the first interaction between Nadia and Budd, Nadia is represented as "the Maiden," as Shaheen identified it. "The Maiden" is oppressed, mute, and covered in black while acting scared as though she has no agency (Shaheen, 2003). In *Bodyguard* the choice of wardrobe puts Nadia in a traditional black hijab, and it seems that Nadia is being forced to do something she does not want to do. Her fear is

visible to the audience through her actions and facial expressions; it is palpable regardless of her muteness. She is clearly terrified.

Nadia, mostly mute for the entirety of this Episode one interaction, only speaks to tell Budd her name, but her fear and lack of agency are also solidified as Budd has most of the lines in the twenty-minute showdown. She does not speak; she is mute. We can only know her thoughts (supposedly) through Budd's words. Some examples are: "I can see you're as scared as I am. Miss, I just want to help you" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 9:27). And when he asks, "The man that was here before, is that your husband?" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 12:10) and her response again is mute with just a nod and tears to confirm. The conversation continues with Budd asking, "And your husband wants you to die?" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 12:21). Nadia continues to cry closing her eyes tight, not saying a word. He then adds: "You don't have to do this, you can change your mind" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 1, 9:35). And again the response is through facial gestures with no words.

These statements from Budd alienate Nadia from her Western counterparts whether they are female characters on the show or female viewers. Shaheen writes about this alienation:

[T]aken together, her [the Maiden] mute on-screen non-behavior and black-cloaked costumes serve to alienate Arab Women from their international sisters and vice versa. Not only do the real Arab Women never speak but also they are never in the work place, functioning as doctors, computer specialists, print and broadcast journalists, or as successful, well-rounded electric or domestic engineers (Shaheen, 2003).

Furthermore, *Oriental* women became the gendered images of the East in cultural representations and this issue of gender quickly became entangled with women's appearances.

This gendered approach led to the idea that the Muslim *Oriental* woman, viewed from a foreign perspective, became the "veiled woman" (Schmidt, 2010).

This Orientalist gender image construction is very visible in *Bodyguard* as Western women hold a number of positions of power. In the first episode during the confrontation between Budd and Nadia, the audience sees that the highest-ranking officer of the police unit is a woman, the sniper is a woman, and the bomb-unit specialist is a woman. The decision to place these highly skilled, successful women in juxtaposition to Nadia further Others Nadia from the rest of the female cast and from the viewers. This approach of placing Nadia in juxtaposition with strong female leads continues throughout the season.

In Episode four, Nadia is in the spotlight again. However, this time she is working with the police to identify the bomb maker and help them in their search for members of the terrorist cell. That is the episode that follows a successful bombing during the debate involving the Home Secretary.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, by this point the show had started adding nuance by flipping the enemy and we know that Russians and some government officials may be involved. During this time, the Counter Terrorism Unit suspects the Muslim aide to be the perpetrator of the bombing. However, this idea is undermined as the episode continues and his innocence is declared when the audience is informed, only minutes later, that a white male aide is responsible. All the audience knows at this point is that a single bomb maker is responsible for creating these devices.

During this time a major shift in Nadia's character, from antagonist to protagonist, is displayed during an interview with the police. Nadia is called in with her lawyer to try and enlist her help in preventing any further attacks. The interview starts with a female detective thanking

Nadia for taking the time to speak to them. The detective continues by saying "if anything is unclear please feel free to consult with your solicitor or your appropriate adult. If at any time you wish to stop please just say so. Do you understand" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 4, 46:40). Nadia looks around and just says yes.

Looking at the start of the interview, the choice of having a female detective work alongside Budd and Nadia's solicitor, another woman, further Others Nadia from successful, Western women. The only difference in this scene is the addition of another mute, adult hijab-wearing woman, who appears to be Nadia's accompanied adult. So now the audience also understands that Nadia is underage and married young to a man who wanted her to kill herself.

Budd then starts to question Nadia. He greets Nadia in Arabic and she replies timidly. He then asks how she's doing and in response she just gives a weak smile. In this scene, Budd has all the lines and Nadia is almost mute the entire time. He starts by saying: "This is all very intimidating, that's why the officers here thought it would be a good idea for me to talk with you. That was scary. On the train when we met. And I'm really glad no one got hurt that day." Nadia responds, "I am, too, thank you for helping me" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 4, 47:22). Those seven words relay a great message to the audience as they find out she has a very thick accent, identifying her as an immigrant.

Budd continues, "What I would like to do is ask you some questions, about the device you were going to use on the train. Would that be alright?" She nods, and that's where the lead female detective asks her to actually speak again saying, "Sorry Nadia, if you could speak up, for the recording?" Nadia looks around and says "Sorry, yeah, um yes." Budd then asks, "How did you obtain the bomb?" She looks over to the lead detective in fear and Budd speaks again: "I know you're frightened, but we can protect you. You believe me don't you?" Nadia nods again

53

and the lead detective asks her to speak again, to which she apologizes and says "Sorry, Umm

yes." Bud asks again, "Where did the bomb come from?" Nadia in shame replies, "My husband."

Nadia's solicitor then interrupts the conversation and says, "At this point, I should note for the

tapes that I've briefed my client regarding the legal compellability of a spouse, and Nadia's

appropriate adult is satisfied that she is cooperating of her own free will" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 4,

47:28- 48:50).

The interview continues and Nadia still looks worried, nodding or shaking her head to

answer questions and repeatedly being asked to speak up. Budd talks to her about the need to

find this bomb maker and the innocent lives that might be lost if they don't find him. They

proceed to show her pictures of suspected bomb makers. Nadia tells the police that she was never

allowed to meet with her husband's partners, saying that her husband would lock her in the

house when he went out. She tells them of a time where he once locked her in the house, but she

was crying so loudly he was worried the neighbors might hear, so he forced her to go with him to

meet the bomb maker. The women in the room, while quiet, look sympathetic to her situation

and appalled by her husband's behavior. Budd summarizes Nadia's feelings, instead of her

expressing them herself, when he says, "That must have been very frightening and upsetting"

(*Bodyguard*, Episode 4, 50:20). We also find out that during that time where she was forced into

the car, she saw her husband communicate with a suspicious man. The lead detective quickly

shows her images of brown men; she shakes her head after a thorough inspection of the images

saying, "I don't know, maybe." The lead detective says she is going to end this interview and

hold another for a future date where Nadia might be of further assistance.

The emotions displayed by and towards Nadia further the divide between her and

Western Women, and further the binary thinking and Othering of Muslim culture. According to

Alsultany, stories' with the oppressed Muslim woman narrative get their prominence and power from the emotions they can evoke especially through "pity and outrage." Constructed images of oppressed Muslim woman rely heavily on "an explicit expression of outrage and sympathy"(Alsultany, 2012). She further explains that sympathy is a crucial emotion that developed after 9/11 in relation to Arabs and Muslims. Sympathy then becomes a signal that the West can distinguish between good Muslims and bad Muslims, and highlights the supposed enlightenment of Western culture (Alsultany, 2012).

Alsultany explains, "Pity and outrage are two sides of the same coin." She argues that pity is different from empathy. Pity implies that the person who feels pity has more power than the person being pitied while empathy has a sense of equality. In the case of oppressed Muslim woman, the idea is that they come from a culture so vastly different that it makes it difficult to understand let alone relate to. Alsultany then moves to explain how pity makes it easy to feel outrage. She writes, "Feeling sorrow for someone's distress easily morphs into anger at the circumstances that caused the distress and thus outrage at the men, the culture, and the religion" (Alsultany, 2012).

In the beginning of Episode five, the second part of Nadia's cooperation interview is in progress. At this point in the show, new suspected bomb makers who aren't of "Asian" background are at the top of the suspect list and a list of car parks and maps are gathered to locate the meeting points of Nadia's husband's accomplices.

During the interview the lead detective informs Nadia that there was no CCTV footage of her husband's meeting. She also mentions to Nadia that they have a new list of suspects for her to view. Budd tells her to take her time and just let them know if she recognizes anyone. Nadia simply shakes her head, not saying a word through the whole process, with the lead detective

verbally describing her responses. Nadia shakes her head to all brown men shown in the images. That's when the lead detective places the image of Budd's military friend in front of her to see if she recognizes him, to which she also shakes her head. Her solicitor then praises her for her help saying, "Well done Nadia, that was great." In a rogue move, Budd places an image of a Secret Service agent in front of Nadia and the lead detective. The solicitor objects to his behavior, but Nadia looks at the man and nods her head. The lead detective objects again, but Budd interjects saying, "Were you too afraid to tell the truth? Is the man your husband met actually white?" With her eyes full of fear she finally nods one last time. Nadia's subservience and muteness is heightened in this interview, making sure the viewers and audiences look at her with sympathy.

Nadia's story about her abusive husband and her quiet, submissive actions help humanize her. According to Alsultany, the stock images of a villain's past, which were bad just because of their ethnic background or religious beliefs, shift when terrorist characters became humanized. Backstories of how they were led to commit to terrorism are revealed. In Nadia's case she was a seemingly innocent young person forced by a horrible man to do things she didn't want to do. Alsultany writes, "This strategy—humanizing the terrorists by focusing on their interpersonal relationships, motives, and back stories—adding multiple dimensions to the formerly one-dimensional bad guy has become increasingly common since 9/11" (Alsultany, 2012). Alongside Nadia's humanization she is now inserted as the patriotic Muslim from Alsultany's simplified complex representations as well. However, while there is an attempt to improve Nadia's character, giving her more nuances, the creators of the show continue to alienate her and portray her as subservient. They also continue to use binary thinking of the benevolent West and Orientalist constructions of the male Muslims of the show.

Nadia's immigration story falls under the immigration frames identified by Ahmad and Matthes's research. According to Ahmad and Matthes, over the past decade the issue of immigration has been a greatly debated topic in Western media coverage. They found that the media seem to exclude the broader "political, cultural, economic and social context" in which immigrants are situated. Muslim immigrants are emphasized as a threat to national cultures, with a negative "ethno-political" consensus. They also found that the media always highlight cultural issues when it comes to Muslim immigrants, such as honor killings and forced marriages, harsh stereotyping and suspicion. The research findings also show how the media tend to "obstruct societal integration of Muslim immigrants and, as a result, the alleged unassimilability discourse is then raised as a vital argument to avoid immigration from countries with a high Muslim population" (Ahmad and Mattes, 2016).

Nadia's backstory also reinforces past stereotypes of Muslim and *Oriental* men being misogynistic aggressors, no matter where they live, and how they can't seem to integrate in the societies they now belong to. In fact, it reinforces the belief that Muslims want to destroy Western society. Also as mentioned in the previous chapter these constructed images and stories further the divide between East and West, the Othering of Muslims, and reinforces an "us" vs "them" dominant narrative.

In the final episode of the show when we finally realize that the Russian mafia and a corrupt Home Secretary are the brains behind the terrorist attacks on London, they are stopped and the moles in the government agencies are identified. However, Budd still wants to find out who created these bombs and is seeking the truth about why these terrorists were targeting his children. This is when the viewer learns that there was one person who had any knowledge of Budd's children and the school they went to. And that person was Nadia.

In this final twist to the story Nadia is called in for a final interview with two female detectives and her solicitor. At first, she is still looking demure and quiet, defending herself from any accusations. Then the lead detective, the woman from Episode four, starts revealing that they are onto her saying, "Now maybe you are a real victim in all of this, a pawn controlled by the real masterminds." Nadia's solicitor reminds her that she can refuse to comment. The detective then reiterates her question, "Is that true? Are you just a victim?" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 6, 1:05:51-1:07:01). Nadia's entire demeanor changes in that instant; her facial expressions change, she is no longer quiet or timid. In a chilling change, she seems malicious and proud, saying:

David Budd made the same mistake. He thought so little of me, he showed me pictures. To him I was a weak woman. I remembered everything he told me about his children. Their names, their ages. From prison I was able to inform my organization.

She's then informed that her DNA was on all of the devices built, and is asked how that happened. To which Nadia responds, "Because, I built the device, I built all the bombs. You all saw me as a poor oppressed Muslim woman, I am an engineer, I am a Jihadi." When asked which bombs she built, Nadia proudly confesses and the choice of dialog for this confession is alarming. She says, "The one used to kill the Home Secretary. The one used to kill police officers at Heath Bank Schools. The one I wore on the first of October." She goes on to explain her past behavior saying:

I invented that story because Sargent Budd was so eager to believe it. And so stupidly eager to believe me. How easy that was, you were all so easy, so desperate with what you wish to believe.

She is then asked why she would conspire with non-believers and criminals. She says:

For money. Money to build more bombs and buy more guns and spread the truth to our

brothers and sisters throughout the world so that the world would be convinced that we

put a sword through the heart of the British government.

The detective then tells her that she had failed with his own jihad and with pleasure

Nadia says that she has atoned for that sin through all the other bombings saying, "I have helped

the cause a thousand times more" (*Bodyguard*, Episode 6, 1:07:06 – 1:10:03)

In these final ten minutes, all past sympathy for Nadia is gone. She is no longer a

nuanced character; she is a stock of past constructed images and an incarnation of pure evil. She

is a monster that is proud to claim the deaths of innocent people including an attempt on

children. She is also diabolical and smart with great acting skill, making her more threatening

than the Muslim men. Nadia is, Shaheen's terminology, the "Femme Fatale." This new image

construction is one where the woman is a bomber and a terrorist. Nadia's construction seems to

capture Shaheen's argument that media constructions do not mirror the realities of Arab women,

who are diverse, bright and intelligent, talented and excelling and exceeding in all professions.

Shaheen points out that it seems the more women from the Middle East excel, this reality is often

denied to *Oriental* women on screen (Shaheen, 2003).

Nadia's character is Othered throughout the whole series, first as mute -- subservient and

weak in contrast with all the female characters on the show. Then she is Othered as a victim of

Muslim culture and Muslim men. And finally she is Othered as the monster in black. This image

construction of Nadia goes through a cycle of stock stereotypes from the past, to a new complex

and nuanced construction and finally backs to the stock image of the "Femme Fatale." I call this

new representation the Duplicitous Arab or Muslim.

The Duplicitous Arab or Muslim character development reveals an interesting yet problematic shift happening in entertainment media where the attempt of nuance by some TV dramas falls short. The image construction of Arabs and Muslims is once again Islamophobic. The most problematic feature of this representation is through this character development the audience may feel sympathetic towards the character initially, and maybe even support her, but as the final plot twist is revealed her deception and deviousness make her irredeemable and loathsome. It then becomes even more challenging for viewers to trust any Arab or Muslim no matter how patriotic and assimilated (in western culture) they may seem. Furthermore, audiences with little to no interactions with Arabs and Muslims may find it hard to even approach these minorities without implicit or explicit biases.

Chapter V: Conclusion: Where do we go from here?

The last section of this thesis makes today's reality seem bleak for *Oriental* communities in the West. It may also seem like an overwhelming amount of work needs to be done to change the way the constructed images of these communities are presented in the media. However, I am more hopeful about the future. Even with the rise of white nationalism and far-right extremism, since the time when Alsultany's and Shaheen's books were published, my conclusion mirrors some of their optimism.

Shaheen and Nazeer argue that hiring writers, producers and creative personnel on television shows or even consulting with some of the organizations and groups available to the industry will vastly improve the image construction of Arabs and Muslims on television and film.

In the documentary named after Shaheen's book, he gives examples of the movies that go beyond stereotypes such as *Three Kings*, *Kingdom of Heaven* and *Syriana.* Sheehan served as a consultant for *Three Kings*. He argues that in the movie they were able to portray the complexities of the Iraqi people. There was mutual respect between the characters, but there are also Iraqis who were loyal to Saddam who commit horrific acts making the images on the screen real and authentic. *Kingdom of Heaven*, according to Shaheen, was a tremendous hit overseas but not in the United States, as the film portrays the Muslim Salah Eldin as respectful to church relics and Christianity. In *Syriana* like *Three Kings* shows "unflattering yet honest depiction Arabs," but also shows decent depictions of an Arab prince who wants what is best for his people. He ends the documentary saying,

> I'm an optimist, and I believe in the future, particularly in young filmmakers. The
> stereotype will change. It will change because young men and women who are entering

the profession will see that there has been a grave injustice committed, and they'll make attempts to correct it. It's only a matter of time as to when this will happen. But it will take place. Look, we've unlearned many of our prejudices against blacks, Native Americans, Jews, other groups. Why can't we unlearn our prejudices against Arabs and Muslims? What matters is not to remain silent. I think whenever we see anyone being vilified on a regular basis, we have to speak up, whether we're image-makers or not (*Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, 2006).

Similarly Alsultany, in her conclusion, discusses the multiple modes that make her hopeful about the future of the television industry when it comes to Arab and Muslim image construction. She argues that the rise of Internet fan sites where audiences actively engage and respond to television shows are creating a community that serves as "virtual production assistants" and have the potential to makes producers more accountable to viewers. Alongside these fan sites, Alsultany argues that different groups and organizations have been "lobbying TV shows" and counseling them to change their content. These groups also actively monitor the media and offer consulting services that help produce better Muslim narratives and characters. She also points to the plethora of different creative artists with Arab and Muslim backgrounds, which have produced creative and compelling work that "challenges the hegemonic meaning of being Arab or Muslim" (Alsultany, 2012).

Alsultany also found through her research that comedies have been able to break away from simplified complex representations when telling stories involving Arabs and Muslims [namely *Community* (NBC), *Little Mosque on the Prairie* (CBC), *Aliens in America* (CW), and *Whoopie!* (NBC)]. She writes:

What is especially notable about *Whoopi!, Aliens in America, Community*, and *Little Mosque on the Prairie* is that the story lines do not revolve around terrorism or homeland security. They are about a boutique hotel, a high school, a community college, and a community center. Not only do the story lines represent a departure from prior tropes, but the characters also deviate from the standard patriot and victim molds (Alsultany, 2012).

Since 2012 new dramas and comedies with *Oriental* characters and narratives have been released. *Ramy*, a Hulu Original series, is a dramady created by comedian Ramy Youssef. The show follows the life of Ramy Hassan, "a first-generation Egyptian-American who is on a spiritual journey in his politically divided New Jersey neighborhood. He becomes caught between a Muslim community that thinks life is a moral test and a millennial generation that believes life has no consequences" (Rotten Tomatoes, 2019).

The show has been getting favorable popular press reviews and has been signed on for a second season. Audiences have also given the show 80%, 8/10 and 8.1/10 by *Rotten Tomatoes, IMDB* and *Metacritic* respectively. This example shows that well-written and honest television series surrounding the Muslim experience have an audience.

Another *Hulu* original is *The Looming Tower* miniseries about the events that lead to 9/11 and "traces the rising threat of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida in the late 1990s and how a rivalry between the FBI and CIA during the time period may have inadvertently set the path for the attacks of 9/11" (Rotten Tomatoes, 2019). The show was different to its predecessor shows about 9/11 as it focused on the infighting between the FBI and CIA. While the main Muslim character may fall under Alsultany's Simplified Complex Representation, there was a real attempt by the creators of the show to show a different side of what lead to 9/11.

Netflix also released a flagship variety show hosted by Hassan Minhaj called *Patriot Act*. A Muslim-Indian-American hosts the show and "explores the modern cultural and political landscape with depth and sincerity. Each week, Minhaj will bring his unique comedic voice and storytelling skill to investigate the larger trends shaping our fragmented world" (Rotten Tomatoes, 2019). *Patriot Act* is now on its third volume with each volume gaining more traction by audiences. The show is now signed up for a fourth volume.

In the aptly named first episode, "Oil." Minhaj mentions *Bodyguard* and Netflix while criticizing Trump's secretary of the interior, Ryan Zinke, saying, "You can't idolize Teddy Roosevelt and destroy the environment. That's like Netflix having the first Muslim talk show host and *Bodyguard*. Stay Woke Netflix!" (Patriot Act, Oil, 16:00).

On Amazon's *Prime Video* in the first episode of their original series *The Romanoffs* titled "The Violet Hour," one of the main characters is a muhajabeh caretaker named Hajar, who finds herself taking care of an old racist, xenophobic elderly woman, Anoushka. However Hajar wins over the old lady through kindness and tolerance. Hajar also ends up falling in love and sleeping with the elderly woman's grandson, getting pregnant. At the end of the episode Hajar and her mother go see the family to tell them about the pregnancy and the lady and her grandson are overjoyed by the news. This story breaks every published stereotype about Muslim women, their families and their culture, as obviously Hajar is still alive and was not killed by her family in the name of honor. This contrasts from what we hear from the media about honor killings.

This representation was a breath of fresh air at a time where what you see on the silver screen is a barrage of images of veiled women who are either oppressed or terrorists.

This new television landscape of digital networks such as Hulu, Netflix, and Prime Video and the stories they are producing are challenging some of the past the images of minorities,

coupled with the above-proposed solutions by Alsultany and Shaheen, may greatly improve the depictions and images of Arabs and Muslims on television and on film in the future. However, there is a need for greater comparative research to see if there are further changes in representations and how they are changing and why.

I also believe that the popular press may be able to play a leading role in galvanizing change that mirrors Shaheen's statement about speaking up against negative and poor portrayals and stereotypes and misrepresentations suggest. In reaction to Bodyguard, the popular press both served <u>as a voice for the audience and criticized the show's poor image construction.</u>

In an article that voices the authors criticism from *Gal-Dem* by Tabasm Begum's titled "*Bodyguard*'s Finale was Lazy Islamophobia at it's worse," the author references comedian Hari Kondabolu. Kondabolu, an Indian-American comedian who loved *The Simpsons*, felt conflicted because of how Apu's character is represented on *The Simpsons* such that the show was not written for him. Begum uses this argument to set the tone for her article writing "I remembered this line whilst watching the final episode of the BBC series *Bodyguard*."

Another Article that voices audience critique is from *Digital Spy* by Jess Lee about the final episode: "*Bodyguard* has come under fire from viewers accusing the series finale of Islamaphobia". The writer further elaborates that while the show attempts to change some past stereotypes, the finale twist still proves to be problematic. She writes, "although the twist attempted to subvert one particular stereotype about Muslim women, this problematic development served to reinforce other negative and extremely harmful stereotypes about Muslims". The article displayed six tweets with high re-tweets and engagement from audience members who were disappointed by the plot twist in the finale. This display and article format

aims to use the audience's discontent and social media responses as support for Lee's critique of the plot twist in the *Bodyguard* season finale.

The author describes her self as a fan of the show and of the show's creator Jed Mercurio, and the eagerness she felt waiting for the show's finale. Begum moves on to describe her feelings as the credits rolled at the end of the final episode, she writes:

> At the closing credits, I literally had my head in my hands. Our hero's simple mistake was believing that a Muslim woman could be a naive pawn and not a bloodthirsty murderer intent on killing kids. He had underestimated Nadia's utter callousness. She was not just evil, but attempted child murdering, multiple bomb-making, smirking in your face, Lord-Voldemort-uber-evil. (Begum, 2018)

However, more research needs to be conducted to establish whether these strategies by the popular press actually work towards changing representation, and if they do, when do they work and why. Further exploration will also help us understand the nature of the relationships between dissenting audience voices and dissenting press opinions and if these relationships will lead to change in the entertainment industry when it comes to portraying minority groups.

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