

Editorial

Dear readers,

This is the seventh issue (Volume 4, No. 1, Spring 2023) of our and your magazine *illuminatio/Svjetionik/Almanar*.

In this issue, you have the privilege of continuously getting to know more deeply and broadly the terms *ars* - *techne* - *craft* - *fann* - *qadar/ṣinā'at* in "art", terms that academician **Mehmed Akšamija** brings closer to our understanding, all with the aim of adequately recognizing the important difference between the pre-projected westernized artistic "reality" and the constantly creative Islamic artistic *qadar/ṣinā'at* at genius, originality and distinctiveness in the image and work of the *homo islamicus*.

Akšamija's work is not primarily theological, but "artistically" dialogic, whereby the essence of its content and message is the affirmation of Islamic *tawḥīd*, monotheism, as the primary motive of artistic creation/*ṣinā'at* of *homo islamicus*. Hence, Akšamija reminds us „that modalities of the *qadar/ṣinā'at* discourse are completely different from other "art forms" by a series of mutually related, complementary principles, conditions and features... Modalities of *qadar/ṣinā'at* discourse allow *homo islamicus*'s experience of the Divine as a form of symbolic presence (ar. *al-ḥuḍūr al-ramzī*), manifested by means of a multitude of aesthetized forms of activity/*ṣinā'at*. In pictorial representation which uses appropriate modalities of the *qadar/ṣinā'at* discourse, there is wisdom (ar. *al-ḥikmah*) personified in organized actions, colours, sizes and proportions of both geometric figures and human figures and objects. By analyzing the visionary zeal with which works have been created, it can be concluded that it is *homo islamicus*'s beneficence and mercy (ar. *al-iḥsān*) ...“

Thus, Akšamija's ability to guide us and open a new perspective for Islamic *tawḥīd*, monotheism, as the essence of Islamic religion and culture, through original "Islamic art", makes not only this work exceptional, but also the entire project of our magazine, which despite everything is experiencing its seventh issue.

The following article is also in the spirit of Islamic *tawhīd*, which points to the vagueness of quasi-Selfism, which bypasses or suppresses the rational power in man to affirm true Islamic monotheism in a discourse with quasi-monotheism through the faith and thought of **Imam al-Māturīdī** (d. 333/944) from Samarkand. Namely, authentic Salafism, which is based on continuity of memory, i.e., Islamic identity, has never been disputed, but quasi-Salafism, which advocates a kind of utopian, *ṭūbāwiyya*, thought that is foreign to Islamic thought and practice, is disputed.

Professor **Beshir Lassioued** from Tunisia honored us with his contribution on Gnostic thought and its influence on the development of humanity. This work follows the concept of our magazine to illuminate the human spirit and mind. *Gnosis*, *ma'rafah*, i.e., the knowledge of oneself and the world, is the way for moral and ethical healing of the world, which is burdened with many psychological and physical diseases due to the lack of gnosis about the meaning of life. For this reason, professor Lassioued suggests the restoration of gnosis in the sense of returning to spiritual values in thought and practice, i.e., an exercise such as one finds in *Sufis* or *dervishes*.

Ajla Čustović brings us back or bring us down from the metaphysical to the physical world, where she confronts us with real challenges regarding human rights on the example of Salman Rushdie. This is not about freedom of thought and speech, but here we are talking about a relationship towards Islam not only from the outside, but also from within Islam itself, where the idea of human rights loses its meaning because it is reduced to a mere perception of a clash of civilizations. Insightful researcher Čustović shows us how to defend the position of law and justice, how to defend human rights, in the context of "intertwined areas of theology, political theory, philosophy, linguistics, hermeneutics and intellectual history". When you read this article, you will surely feel more confident with a great knowledge in this world abundant with unknowns and uncertainties.

In the context of world challenges such as the strategic competition of great powers, where when one falls is no less dangerous than the one that is rising, and problems without passports, such as the pandemic and the climate crisis and the revolution in technology, which inexorably changes the way of human life, dr. **Enes Karić** presents an essay in which he points out the danger for the planet Earth or the end of the world in the sense that man today possesses the means of self-destruction, which he did not possess before. Without apocalyptic obsession, dr. Karić takes us through the story of the beginning and end of the world as taught by religious books. Of course, no one, except God the Creator, knows how the world was created or how and when it will end, but it is useful to read and think about, because we all belong to Allah and to Allah, we all will return.

In his article on "Đozo and Socialism", **Šaćir Filandra**, like no one before, portrayed the relationship of socialist Yugoslavia to Đozo, but also Đozo's relationship to Yugoslavia. It may not be on the level of Plato's apology of Socrates, but it is certainly on the path of defending Đozo's character and work, well deserved as it is also a defense of the Bosniak/Bosnian right to a national and state identity. Not falling for superficial and flat assessments about the role of Husein ef. Đozo in different historical circumstances, Filandra managed to point out important details from Đozo religious and social activism that frees him from pejorative prejudices. By reading Filandra's work on Đozo, we get to know a period of our Bosniak/Bosnian history, which is still in our memory, closer and better.

In a comprehensive review of the book *Bias in Popular Culture: The Power of Visual and Linguistic Narratives* by Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali, **Linda Hyökki** introduces us to the fact of stereotypes in visual and linguistic narratives, which Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali convincingly and illustratively points out especially when it comes to Islam, Muslims, Arabs and others who, according to those who spread these stereotypes, do not belong to them.

Dear readers,

In the hope that this seventh issue of our Magazine will also enrich you with new knowledge and enlighten your spirit and mind, please accept these expressions of our special respect.

Dr. Mustafa CERİĆ, Editor-in-chief

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NEW IDEAS ON FAITH, MORALITY, ART, NATION, SOCIETY AND STATE



ILLUSTRATION ~ The Qur'an written in Kaligraf script on free unbound leaves (Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria or Chad).



Linda Hyökki je rođena u Finskoj. Doktorandica je civilizacijskih studija na Univerzitetu Ibn Haldun u Istanbulu, s tezom o iskustvima finških muslimanskih obraćenika o islamofobiji. Njen poslijediplomski rad usmjeren je na islamofobiju i muslimanske manjine, studije identiteta i kvalitativna istraživanja. Magistrirala je lingvistiku, kulturalne studije i prevoditeljske studije na Univerzitetu Johannes Gutenberg u Njemačkoj. Radila je kao znanstveni suradnik u *Centru za islam i globalna pitanja* (Sveučilište Sabahattin Zaim, Istanbul) i kao međunarodni referent u *Forumu mladih za islamsku suradnju* pridruženom OIC-u. Također je suradnica u *Centru za postnormalnu politiku i studije budućnosti*, gdje podučava skupine mladih diljem Evrope o opismenjavanju budućnosti. Napisala je izvješća o Finskoj za turski *Denkfabrik Foundation for Political, Economic, and Political Research* (SETA) i objavila je znanstvene članke i suprotstavljene uvodnike u svojim područjima stručnosti. Linda je članica odbora *Europskog foruma muslimanskih žena*, a njen aktivizam fokusiran je na socijalno uključivanje manjina i eliminaciju svih oblika diskriminacije i rasizma.
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Linda Hyökki was born in Finland. Is a doctoral candidate in the field of civilization studies at the Ibn Haldun University in Istanbul, with a thesis on Finnish Muslim converts' experiences on Islamophobia. Her postgraduate work focuses on Islamophobia and Muslim minorities, identity studies and qualitative research. She received her Master's degree in Linguistics, Cultural Studies and Translation Studies from the Johannes Gutenberg University, Germany. She has worked as a research associate at the *Center for Islam and Global Affairs* (Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul) and as an international desk officer at the OIC-affiliated *Youth Forum for Islamic Cooperation*. She is also a Fellow at the *Center for Postnormal Policy and Futures Studies*, where she teaches futures literacy to youth groups across Europe. She has written reports on Finland for the Turkish *Denkfabrik Foundation for Political, Economic, and Political Research* (SETA) and has published scholarly articles and opposing editorials in her areas of expertise. Linda is a board member of the *European Forum of Muslim Women* and her activism focuses on the social inclusion of minorities and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and racism.
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Linda HYÖKKI

PRISTRANOST U POPULARNOJ KULTURI.

Moć vizuelnih i jezičkih narativa

Prikaz knjige: autor Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali, Istanbul: MAHYA Yayıncılık, 2023, 351 str.,
ISBN: 978-605-72206-2-2

BIAS IN POPULAR CULTURE.

The Power of Visual and Linguistic Narratives

Book review: Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali, Istanbul: MAHYA Yayıncılık, 2023, 351 pp., ISBN: 978-605-72206-2-2.



BIAS IN POPULAR CULTURE. THE POWER OF VISUAL AND LINGUISTIC NARRATIVES

Book review: author Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali, Istanbul: MAHYA Yayıncılık, 2023, 351 pp., ISBN: 978-605-72206-2-2.

How many of us think critically about the stereotypes we consume daily on TV, in newspaper articles, and in advertisements? The role of media in spreading racism has, in the last decades, become more and more evident as minority groups have started to fight against the lack of representation. Now, corporates such as Disney have taken up the task of ensuring that minority groups, such as the Sámi in its children's cartoon movie Frozen are represented culturally sensitively. Minority groups are even involved in the making of the characters through consultations. However, Islamophobic stereotypes in our daily media are still not as frowned upon as other racist and discriminatory stereotypes are.

Sometimes, the stereotypes might be hidden behind bogus attempts for representation. For instance, in the UK series "Bodyguard," a veiled Muslim woman was caught red-handed in a passenger train attempting a suicide bombing. However, she was convinced not to blow herself up by the main character of the series; an ex-soldier turned bodyguard. Reasoning with her using Arabic phrases and creating a "rapport," he convinced the young woman – supposedly pressured by her husband to the violent act – not to execute her plan. The audience saw a white man saving the "oppressed Muslim woman." But, as it turned out, the brains and moving force behind the suicide mission were the young woman herself, not her husband.

What is essential, though, is not only to recognize the stereotypes but also to understand how they are connected to a larger picture of how Islam and Muslims are treated in Western societies as racial Others, heavily securitized. As Anas al-Shaikh-Ali's book "Bias in Popular Culture. The Power of Visual and Linguistic Narratives" shows, stereotypes fed to

us daily through diverse media have implications that are not necessarily evident at first glance. Even though some of us recognize them here and there, their power lies in their ability to affect conditional response and judgment. As the Muslim female character in "Bodyguard" shifted from a "damsel in distress" to a security threat in disguise, these, and many other depictions of the "enemy from within" feed into the political agenda of justifying intrusive policies of countering violent extremism and racial profiling. As Al-Shaikh Ali argues, we should recognize how the ideology delivered through popular culture's bias translates into political actions. Popular culture helps to direct the acceptance of these actions amongst the larger public.

The book is divided into three main chapters, with an introduction and an epilogue. The first chapter concentrates on the soft power of popular fiction. The author analyses numerous novels from the 1970s to show how the representation of Muslims in these works has been connected to UK and US policies overseas. The author argues that the Arab/Muslim enemy in popular fiction has helped induce public support amongst wider audiences for using the military to deal with the Other. One of the chapter's central questions is the "why?" behind the shift from "the Arab as an enemy" to "the Muslim as an enemy." Yet it remains somewhat unanswered. In this regard, the chapter would have benefited from a discussion involving the acknowledgment of Islamophobia as anti-Muslim racism and the role of racialization in creating the imagery of Muslim enemies. An interesting discussion in the chapter involves, however, the genre of invasion literature that, according to the author, is particularly effective

in creating an image of a threat from outside, creating chaos and disorder in one's homeland, which demands an acute response in political response.

The second chapter concentrates on the role of images in discourse-making, as the author argues that "art literally 'paints' biased narratives" (p. 61). The section on paintings, drawings, and sculptures is an interesting read and questions the role of museums in creating and reinforcing the bias. According to the author, art is accessible in museums for everyone, and he warns especially about the vulnerability of children to biased narratives as museum visits are part of curricula. The chapter also sheds light on the visuals in advertising, though only with examples from the 19th and early 20th centuries. While the analysis is connected to the imperial politics of the times, the examples could have been extended to showcase modern racist advertisements or brand images to highlight how the contemporary bias of white supremacy is not far from the old Orientalism. The rest of the chapter is again centered around analyzing literature tropes. The author presents, among others, the erotica genre's frequent theme of a "white Western woman as a target of the lustful Arab/Muslim man" and introduces thus gendered aspects of Islamophobia and its alleged hyper-masculinity of Muslim men. He does not, however, in his analysis look deeper into these essential theoretical key concepts.

The third chapter discusses the parallels between historical antisemitic narratives and contemporary Islamophobic narratives in popular culture and political propaganda. The author introduces the concept of "killer-narratives," which does not mean a narrative of killings but rather the impact of the larger discourse of the narratives are part of. Namely, he warns against violent outcomes such as genocide, which leads to misinformation and fearmongering about an enemy. Fittingly, the author also analyzes the dissemination of fake news in newspapers and tabloids and touches upon important questions of terminology and the question of which violent perpetrators are defined as "shooters" and "terrorists".

One of the book's most significant structural shortcomings is the lack of subheadings for the subsections of each chapter in the content table. These would have made the navigation through the

book easier for those looking for specific information and provided more overview of its content for the readers. While the author uses numerous primary sources as examples, accompanied by useful visuals of book covers, advertisements, and posters, the analyses are not supported by theoretical discussions on central concepts related to Islamophobia, such as race, racialization, and gendered stereotypes. A knowledgeable reader can detect the author's contribution to these concepts. Still, as they are missing in the index, the book is less useful for researchers looking for citable parallel studies for their work.

At the end of the book, the reader is provided with three appendixes. The first lists propaganda techniques with brief explanations. The second defines cognitive bias and short summaries of various related concepts. The third appendix discusses how diverse religious minorities and racialized groups have been depicted as Others in popular media. Since the book functions well for undergraduate courses in Media Studies, Cultural Studies, and Sociology on topics related to Islam in the West, these appendixes that work like a glossary might be a helpful source for students looking to choose a conceptual tool of analysis for their seminar papers.

All three chapters of the book contribute to answering the question, "How far does fiction produce facts?" (p. xxiii), and give a convincing overview of how deeply rooted the anti-Muslim and anti-Islam biases are in all around us in cultural products we consume daily. It is a good complementary read for understanding the manifestations of Islamophobia in the West. The book's many analyses, showcasing the author's impressive life work, support other researchers' arguments on cultural expressions of Islamophobia in the West.