Şadi ʿĪsawī Mān (Delhi: Nadwat al-Muʾṣannifīn, 1962) but in spite of all this interest the task of its complete translation in English, rather in any language, remained lacking.

Basil Collins, the translator is a known authority on al-Muqaddasī. Prior to the present translation his study al-Muqaddasī: The Man and His Work: With Selected Passages Translated from the Arabic (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1974) had appeared. He had access to the manuscripts of the text that had been the basis for de Goeje’s prepared edition. Collins attests “the great fidelity of the text” prepared by de Goeje’s to the readings of the manuscripts. With this assessment he based his translation on de Goeje’s text. The pagination of de Goeje’s Arabic text is indicated in the margins of the corresponding translation. Collins has also made use of the original manuscripts by the inclusion of the maps present in them, but neglected by de Goeje.

The translator had the co-operation of several Arab scholars in reading the Arabic text in order to make the translation possibly close to the original text. Moreover Muhammad Hamid al-Tai of Baghdad was especially assigned the task of the reviewer.

The present translation is by and large simple and readable, though one comes across certain typographical errors here and there during reading.

**Safir Akhtar**


‘The framing of Muslims amounts to a refraction, not a reflection of reality’ (p. 3–4).

Since the events of September 11, 2001, the stereotypes about the Muslims popularized earlier by the classical orientalists have made a sad comeback in the media discourses, cinema and television. The orientalist and colonial gaze has resurfaced with a new vigour and venom in the War on Terror kitsch. *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11* by Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin is a timely and well researched study to unravel the growing phenomenon of media misrepresentations of Muslim communities that is leading to increasing levels of Islamophobia. Peter Morey is Reader in English Literature, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of East
London. Amina Yaqin is Lecturer in Urdu and Postcolonial Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

The book is a good addition to the growing bulk of works that challenges the post-9/11 political witch-hunting and cultural-ideological stereotyping of Muslims as a faith community and Islam as a religion. Published by the Harvard University Press, the book is a balanced account of the wide spread profiling of the Muslims living in various European countries where they face debasing stereotypes on daily basis as images of terror flash on the television and cinema screens.

Written by two British literary scholars, the focus of the book is the (mis)representations and stereotyping of the Muslims in European and American corporate media, Hollywood films, British documentaries and popular television series in the US such as 24. The main thesis and scope of the book is described best by the writers themselves: “Although this book touches on matters of psychoanalysis and deep structures of belief, our approach has been...to display and analyze a range of examples of cultural texts where Muslims have been discursively fixed in limiting ways” (p. 20).

Since 9/11, media has played influential role in stigmatizing Muslims as extremists and terrorists, and are consistently painted as backward-looking community who kills their women on the pretext of honour. As the writers aver, since 9/11, “the images that emerge, and are repeated and circulated through modern channels of communication, are often little more than caricatured in which the propensity for extremism and violence of a small segment of political Islam is magnified and projected onto Muslim communities around the world.” The American media (print, electronic, film industry) is often blamed for inculcating such distorted images in the old Orientalist fashion. However, the focus of this study is the British share of Muslim bashing and ‘covering’ and framing of the Muslim community especially since the London bombings of 7/7, 2005. The construction of Muslim identity in Britain has comparatively long history. The Muslim response to Rushdie affair in 1988-89 was perhaps the first modern-day turning point when Muslims were turned into a political category that had been at odds with the British/European way of life, as the Islamophobes claim. A number of British films (East is East, Bend it Like Beckham, Goodness Gracious Me) and the work of Hanif Kureishi, and Rushdie of course, entrenched those stereotypes of Muslims in general and Pakistanis in particular. As the writers themselves assert, “Far from being accurate or neutral, contemporary images of Muslims presented by politicians and in mainstream media and cultural forms are almost always tied to an agenda that simultaneously announces its desire to ‘engage’ with them while at the same
time forcing debate into such contorted and tenuous channels as to make a meaningful flow of cross-cultural discussion almost impossible.”

Since female ‘body’ has always been the site of much socio-political and cultural debate, empire, and discursive practices historically, the writers of the book remind the readers how historically the feminization of the East as a literary trope has been going on since the 13th century; and more recently, in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In chapter two, the writers have analyzed the politics of media reporting of “honour killings,” that evokes Orientalist vocabulary and assumptions about the Muslim community. The “freeing of Muslim women” from the Islamic male tyranny has been used as a political and military rhetoric to invade these countries as if, in Arundathy Roy’s words, the American Marines were on a feminist mission in Afghanistan. Therefore, lot of pulp and pop fiction has been published where Muslim women characters are always depicted as if cooped up in the harems, or suffering and longing for freedom behind the veil. However, the authors give space to the dialogic nature of this process by discussing how the launching of “Muslim Dolls” (to counter the ‘un-Islamic’ Barbie dolls) has in fact strengthened many stereotypes about Muslims. The self-presentation through the ‘hijabi’ dolls (such as Razanne and Fulla) demonstrates a hyper-performativity of Muslimness, thus Muslim femininity itself is being stereotyped. There is no essential Muslim femaleness that needs to be represented via such commodified dolls. If Barbie has Ken as her boyfriend, the makers of Razanne are contemplating to launch “Ahmad” doll too.

More than books and newspaper articles, it is the power and reach of the electronic media (television, cinema, video games, etc) that is being exploited to perpetuate misrepresentations and stereotyping of Muslims and Islam as a religion. In chapter 4 the writers move from context developed in the previous chapters to specific visual texts and explore the power of framing. The anthropological impulse, according to Morey and Yaqin, is strongly at work even in those visual narratives that are apparently sympathetic. For example, Kenneth Glennaan’s Yasmin or Abi Morgan’s White Girl situate Muslim subjects as passive who embrace values that are essentially different from those of the ‘local’ populations. But the more dangerous attempts at stereotyping are those docudramas that paint the Muslim presence as a clear and present danger to the ‘western’ way of life. Among such films and television series are Dan Percival and Lizzie Mickery’s Dirty Wars, comparable to the American cultural production such as 24 and The Grid in terms of relying heavily on the clichéd binary of terror versus heroism. ‘War on terror’ theme has been exploited in many television thrillers and Hollywood blockbusters. They have been studied, in a rather fragmented manner by Jack G. Shaheen in his two
studies, *Reel Bad Arabs* (2001) and *Guilty: Hollywood’s Verdict on Arabs after 9/11* (2008). What makes *Framing Muslims* distinct from such earlier studies is that it is very well rooted in critical/social theory as the writers have invoked some important theorists like Bakhtin, Freud, Foucault, Bhabha and others to give it a more academic and philosophical support. Their theorization about stereotyping as a psycho-social process for political-cultural reasons is inspired by Maxwell McCombs’ analysis of news media “frames,” which restricts audience interpretation through selective emphasis. Tracing the etymological origin of the term ‘stereotype,’ they write that it means “rigid trace” and stems from the printing trade where letters were fixed prior to being imprinted on paper. Similarly, stereotyping people is the discursive-cultural practice of fixing and marking “them indelibly with a set of projected characteristic” (p. 35). They quote Henri Tajfel’s notion of the three functions of stereotyping as expressed in his book *Human Groups and Social Categories*. These three are: “social causal” function in which the stereotyped group is seen as the cause of an event; a “social justificatory” function where stereotypes are created to justify behaviour toward a given group (contemporary discourse of war and terror, for instance); and a “social differentiation” function wherein difference between groups are accentuated in favour of one group over another. This last function is particularly in use in the multicultural setup of western societies. Many European countries have official policies that promote multiculturalism at the state level through educational curricula. In fact one of the strongest sections of the book deals with the policy and condition of multiculturalism, which, as they demonstrate, is split into two discrete entities: “multiculturalism-as-law and multiculturalism as quotidian experience.” This policy came under threat in many European countries since 9/11 where it had been a semi-official policy but could not be embraced entirely at the social level, as is evident from the rise of far-right political parties.

At the same time, one must admit that, unlike the American media, the British media does not work in unison or in a corporate fashion. There are strong independent media outlets that do not conform to the framing of Muslim. The authors have quoted a number of British films and documentaries that feature Muslim issues with lot of empathy. For instance, the BBC’s *Women in Black* challenges the stereotype of the passive, oppressed Muslim female, Tariq Ramadan’s account of reformation in Islamic thought in *The Muslim Reformation* (Channel 4, 2006), Ziauddin Sardar’s *Battle for Islam* (BBC, 2005) and Channel 4’s survey of Muslim values and opinions in *What Muslims Want* (2006). In the wake of 9/11, the analogy of the Crusades was also employed to refurbish the memory of historical enmity between Islam and the West. However, Ridley Scott’s 2005 movie *Kingdom of Heaven*, that
was dubbed as a post-9/11 reworking of the Third Crusade fought between Saladin and Richard the Lion Heart of England, was widely praised as a corrective among the plethora of films that began to strengthen the old stereotypes about Muslims.

Morey and Yaqin remind us of the many post-Huntington stereotypes that sprang from his ominous prediction that “somewhere in the Middle East a half dozen young men could well be dressed in jeans, drinking coke, listening to rap and between their bows to Mecca, putting together a bomb to blow up an American airliner” (116). Anti-Muslim prejudices are reinforced by “the visual signs of Islam that work in three ways: first to establish a location” (116). As for example, the British novelist Martin Amis in his short story ‘The Last Days of Muhammad Atta’ locates his terrorists’ training camp in Kandhar as if terrorism has a geographical identity too. Second, “to create a milieu,” as for example, many of these films and documentaries feature ‘azan’ [adhan] or the call for prayer in some Muslim country. And third, “to connote cultural values that are in some way discrepant with those of the norm” (116), as for example, Muslim women wearing scarfs are shown in the market place of some predominantly white locality. Thus their Muslim ‘essence’ is brought into visibility and their ‘difference’ from the ‘normal’ or ‘normalized’ is highlighted. Yasmin, a docu-drama produced and aired by Channel 4, is a glaring example of such framing and representation. Before 9/11, Yasmin, a young Brasian Muslim, lives two lives: one in shalwar-qamiz-dupatta at home, and the other in tight-jeans-crop-top at her work-place and for socializing in the white community. These signifiers are rather crudely served to emphasize cultural difference and split identity of the British Muslims. Then 9/11 happens and Yasmin and her husband are held by the police on the suspicions of having links with some cousin back in Pakistan. One night investigation at the local police cell transforms her. This transformation is once again metonymically signified through dress; at the end she appears wearing a “tightly fitted Al-Amira style veil... on her way to the local mosque, having been awoken to the other “half” of her identity” (121) and, as the producers of the film seem to imply, becoming a reluctant fundamentalist.

But Yasmin is rather a sympathetic treatment of its Muslim characters especially Yasmin as a Muslim woman living in the midst of white community and trying to strike a balance in her life. But, in the manner of James Bond novels and films, just as they try to reconstruct ‘Englishness,’ Fox news channel’s serial drama 24 is a similar but more sinister attempt to reconstruct ‘Americanness’ in the wake of 9/11. The writers have given detailed analysis of this drama made in the spirit of the PATRIOT (which means ‘Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism’) act
promulgated by President Bush in December 2001.

The writers have also covered the British and American diasporic Muslims’ response to the media ghetto where they are reduced into familiar types. For example, the prominent British ‘Muslim comedian’ Shazia Mirza attracted popular acclaim due to her onstage performances that she always performs wearing a black hijab. She has a knack for squeezing humour out of the most uncomfortable social situations in which Muslims are often typecast. In performing Muslim femininity, she challenges not only the debasing stereotypes about Muslim women but has also encountered opposition from the more orthodox Muslims for using the veil-as-signifier of Muslim women’s freedom of choice. Across the Atlantic, an equivalent of Shazia Mirza comedy performances is found in Allah Made Me Funny, a comedy show, by the now well-known trio Azhar Usman (an Indian-American), Muhammad Amer (a Palestinian-American), and Preacher Moses (the African-American Muslim and the founder of the show). It is interesting and heartening that the cultural battle lines are drawn in the realm of the comedy, and not the Huntington clash-thesis.

Inspired by Edward Said’s 1981 original study Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World, Morey and Yaqin have deconstructed the dark power machinations of the western corporate media that stereotype the Muslim community relentlessly since 9/11. Drawing on their diverse backgrounds in English and Urdu literary and cultural studies, the writers examine the reductionist mediations wherein only veiled women, bearded men, and minarets of mosques represent Islam and Muslims, reducing all their heterogeneity and cultural complexity. The book also exposes some of the stereotypes that some self-styled or government-groomed “Muslim leaders” themselves have nourished through self-representations.

Muhammad Safeer Awan

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Author of one of the best and most popular introductory English textbooks to Islam written in the past two decades, The Vision of Islam, Professor Murata is