

“Guys from Egypt” and others. Problematizing narratives about Islam of Polish female romance tourists

Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska⁴¹

Abstract

Polish female romance tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon linked to mass tourism to Middle East and North Africa with Egypt being one of the top travel destinations. Local exotic, travel and leisure time create conditions to enter a romantic relationship with local Muslim men. In this regard Islam is the source of danger and fascination. On the one hand it is about the essentialized submissive position of women, but on the other hand local context brings in the potential of a racialized sexuality. The paper aims to analyze how Islam is narrated and used in discussions at two Polish Internet forums dedicated to female romance tourism in Egypt and Tunisia. The data corpus indicates that information about Islam is used in order to decode, interpret and predict the behavior and motivation of Muslim men.

Keywords

romance tourism, Egypt, Poland, Internet

First submission: March 2021; Revised: April 2021, Accepted: May 2021

41 SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Institute of International Relations, kgorak@sgh.waw.pl

Introduction

The intersection of Orient and sexuality has been fascinating Westerners since their first encounters, but has significantly expanded with the colonial domination. It was the time when European knowledge about the Orient had been produced and imposed on the colonized. The changes introduced by the European colonizers had been wide-reaching, and had left a permanent mark on colonized societies that keeping bringing in a hiccup effect nowadays and has been the source of many miseries (Akbar 2002: 117). Clement and Springborg (2001: 8) believe that in case of the Middle East and North Africa it is the tradition of foreign domination rather than Islam that determines the region.

The Western 18th century interest in the Orient and the following colonial era meant not only militant, economic and political dominance in the Middle East, but also fascination with its culture (even if it sometimes was rather pragmatic – a mean to increase Western power in the region). Sexuality was definitely one of the prevailing themes both in Western science as well as in perception of the Orient (Massad 2007: 9). What is more, many Western travelers and writers combined these two spheres. According to Edward Said the Western approach to the Orient can be defined by two complementary feelings – that of sexual promise and of danger. These fantasies are presented by the means of Oriental clichés – personages (princes and princesses, slaves, dancers), places (harems, slave markets, caravanserais) and items (veils, balms and perfumes). These images were rooted in Western imagination thanks to the writings of travelers, who visited the Arab and Turkish Middle East in the 19th century. As Said (2005: 268–270) suggests, actually no European writer, who wrote about Orient resisted the temptation to experience the exotic Middle Eastern sexuality.

European production of knowledge about sexuality has emerged in the similar time when European colonial powers had been executing their rule in their Asian and African colonies, i.e. in the beginning of 19th century (Foucault 1984: 3). These two processes seem to be interlinked. In fact Orient was, according to Said, juxtaposed to the West and therefore was perceived through dysfunctional elements or aliens: delinquency, insanity, womanhood, poverty. Joseph Massad (2007: 11, 47) points out that Said could have easily added sexual deviations to this list. According to him Orient became a place which absorbed Western sexual imagination and fantasies, which could not be satisfied in Europe at that time. Setting these imaginations in an alien and exotic world of the Orient provided not only new experiences, but also a legitimation to explore topics otherwise (if tackled in European context) unacceptable.

These Oriental clichés have been used and misused in cinema (Naaman 2001), literature (Laroussi 2007), fashion (Geczy 2013), or porn (Górak-Sosnowska 2014). This article adds a new field by bringing in the lens of romantic tourism. Female romance tourism is a much broader term than sex-tourism. It implies emotional relationship that might be (or not) complemented with a sexual one (Pruitt & LaFont 1995: 243). Romance is in fact a fantasy that can only come true in the exotic and exceptional context of travelling abroad. Using the data from two publicly open Internet forums dedicated to romance tourism of Polish women with Egyptian and Tunisian men I will analyze how Oriental clichés are used in narratives about these men. In particular I will focus on the way Islam and Islamic culture are problematized in these narratives. I will start with conceptualizing female romance tourism, paying attention on the intersection of exotic and romantic. Then, basing on a corpus of messages selected according to pre-defined keywords I will deconstruct the way Islam and Islamic culture are presented and used. Three themes emerged from this analysis: the attitude of Muslims towards

women, the role of religion in attribution of Muslim behavior, and comparison of Islam and Christianity.

1. Female romance tourism in MENA context

Geographical proximity, sun and sea, as well as a pinch of exotic make the region of Middle East and North Africa (MENA) the most popular non-European tourist destinations for Polish tourists. In 2011 Egypt was one of the top 10 tourist destinations with 200 thousand visitors, less than 100 thousand arrived to Turkey and Tunisia (Instytut Turystyki 2011: 11). In 2015 the interest in MENA tourist destinations peaked at 300 thousand Polish tourists coming to Egypt and 400 thousand – to Turkey. The refugee crisis in Europe, and later COVID-19 pandemics have significantly limited travel to MENA region – a year later, in 2016 only 90 thousand tourists came to Egypt and 240 thousand to Turkey (Ministerstwo Sportu i Turystyki, 2017: 10).

These destinations are attractive for Polish mass tourists as they are relatively cheap and thus affordable, and they offer a commodified exotic travel package that includes exotic landscapes, hotels, sea and sun, and service by local population who works at these holiday destinations (Illouz 1997: 97). According to Scott and Selwyn (2010: 4) these holiday destinations offer a homogenic product that is located beyond time and space. These exotic spaces set premises for engaging into romantic relationships with local men. In fact as a tourist one has already the two assets crucial for engaging in such a relationship: free time (holidays mean no work) and financial resources (necessary to buy holiday services). MENA exotic represents almost a paradise that offers engaging contact with local nature that is meant to be pure and authentic (Illouz 1997: 140–141). Local men who work at the hotels or provide tourists with local attractions on the beach, or at the sea and seem to be entombed in the nature (Jacobs 2009: 44; Herold, Garcia and DeMoya 2001: 987).

Spending holidays in an exotic destination by no mean means that one will engage in a romantic relationship. However, the setting seems to make it easier to engage in this kind of relationship. Local men seem to fulfil the dream about romantic love by being charming gentle and paying to the female tourists a lot of attention (Herold, Garcia and DeMoya 2001: 986). Many of females who engage in romance relationship with local man while being on holidays follows a narrative about romantic love produced in Western popular culture. The local man is the one and only, and the emotional bond is even more precious than the physical one (Giddens 1992: 45, 61). Yet, different ethnicity and culture plays a significant role, and racialised sexuality brings in a significant erotic load (Williams 2004: 275).

There are several Internet forums where females exchange information about local males from tourist destinations. The biggest ones are in Russian (e.g. *dezy-house.ru*, *kunstkammera.net*), but also in English (*tunisianloverats.com*, *againstbezness.ch*) and German (*1001-geschichte.de*). At least three such Internet forums are in Polish, including two public ones: *Faceci z Egiptu* ('Guys from Egypt'; FE) and *Tunezja – faceci z wakacji* ('Tunisia – guys from holidays'; TFW), and one closed to the outsiders – *Salam* (at *salam.gromader.org*). The last forum is definitely the biggest in terms of the number of postings (over 516 thousand), threats (over 9,4 thousand) and members (around 2,5 thousand). It was established in 2005, in the beginning on a public domain which hosts a variety of forums at *gazeta.pl*, but in 2006 it moved to the *gromader.org* platform. In order to get access to the forum one has to register and be positively verified by the administrators. *Salam* provides its users with a safe space to discuss

problems related to their relations and daily life. The forum has a very strict privacy policy and no member is allowed to reveal anytime and anywhere its content.

The two other Polish forums are located on the biggest Polish forum platform at gazeta.pl portal. It is the portal of “Gazeta Wyborcza” one of the biggest Polish dailies. Gazeta.pl ranks on 16th place among most popular websites visited by Polish Internet users, according to Alexa. Around 24% of the whole traffic goes to the subpage forum.gazeta.pl, on which all the forums are located. As of March 2021 there were over 2 thousand forums registered with 167 million messages. The data corpus comes from the two open forums, FE and TFW. Both were created around 2004/2005, and had their peak around 2009, when Egypt and Tunisia started to become major tourist destinations for Poles. With almost 25 thousand messages FE is much bigger than TFW, which comprises only 8,1 thousand messages. Both forums targeted females who entered (or consider entering) a relationship with an Arab man (Egyptian or Tunisian). FE is for “exchanging information on guys from Egypt (as in the title), but also about Egypt and its customs”⁴², while TFW is for “girls who, during their holidays in Tunisia, have met a guy, would like to talk about him, check if he is serious, but also for those who treat holiday relations as an adventure”⁴³.

Both forums were closed by the administrators, and their content is no longer accessible from the Internet. While active, they were both open – i.e. everyone could read the messages. These two factors – public accessibility back then and unavailability of this data at the time being make it possible to study the data and use it in this study. This way, even if I use some quotations the authors will not be trackable. As the nicknames can be also used by the forum members in other forums, I have decided to quote only the threads without mentioning the author.

My interest in these forums was related to how Islam – the religion of most of the local men – has been problematized in these messages. On the one hand there is the image women in Islam that are subordinated to Muslim males and have to submit themselves not only to Islam, but also to their male family members. They have to cover their whole body, including their faces (Piela 2021), and ought to be liberated (Abu-Lughod 2002). Moreover, the image seems to be homogenous as if there was one kind of a ‘Muslimwoman’ (cooke 2008). On the other hand, there is the image of an exotic lover who fits well into a holiday romance narrative (Górak-Sosnowska 2016). If combined together, these two images result in a cognitive dissonance – i.e. conflicting opinions which can result in a mental discomfort. Internet forums could become a vital place for information exchange about local men and a guidance for understanding their religion and culture.

In order to analyze the narratives on Islam a sample from all messages was drawn. Since forum.gazeta.pl platform included a search engine, it was possible to pick up messages which contained one of several keywords related to religion. The summarized frequencies from both forums are as follows:

- Islam – 927,
- religion – 627,
- Quran – 352,
- religious – 252.

⁴² *Faceci z Egiptu – forum dyskusyjne*, http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/f,24864,Faceci_z_Egiptu.html.

⁴³ *Tunezja – faceci z wakacji*, http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/f,30397,Tunezja_faceci_z_wakacji.html.

The keywords provided a final sample of around 1,5 thousand messages. Having coded the final data corpus I developed a coding schema through which I was able to identify three key themes that emerged from the data – i.e. the status of women in Islam; the role of Islam in socialization of Muslim men; and Islam in relation to Polish national identity.

2. Islam vs. women

Women in Islam, or wider – an “Oriental women” – are one of the most essential components of Orientalism, and thus byproducts of European colonial history (Dobie 2001: xi). The status of woman in Islam has been elaborated through all possible lens and perspectives in Islamic theology, and well beyond – in social and political sciences, as well as in the mainstream discourse. The number of women in Islam (Islam is the second biggest religion and half of the believers are women) and the variety of their experiences, as well as strong interest in their live and representations result in a plethora of approaches to this core issue being their status and rights in Islamic religion and mainstream Islamic societies. Women in Islam are considered to be liberated equals or protected dependent (Freyer Stowasser 1987), they need to be liberated or saved by Westerners (Freedman 2007), or are just deemed to be oppressed through their religion – including their legal status according to the Islamic law, or the way they dress (Piela 2021).

Yet, the status of women in Islamic societies is far from unambiguous, and the way it is narrated and constructed is sometimes used in local political agenda, let it be in order to control women (Nader 1989). Some images of women in Islam are particularly uneasy for Western public and scholarship, including the harems (Ahmed 1982), or belly dancing. These both phenomena bear opposite and conflicting images of Muslim women. On one side women are subjective to male desires, but on the other side they are embodying sexual attractiveness and lure of pleasure – as illustrated with European paintings (Thornton 1994). Moreover, belly dancing – as used in the West – is a celebratory form of women’s empowerment (Dox 2006).

The status of women in Islam has been discussed and disputed in both Internet forums. These discussions refer to the main source of Islamic law – the Qur’an – and its interpretation. In none of the messages collected within the corpus there has been a quotation from the Qur’an, but rather statements referring to what has been written in there. The two statements below illustrate it:

The Quran says that husband can beat his wife and here the offences are enumerated... (FE₁)

In our culture it is prohibited to beat women, but be careful with the Arabs, because even the Quran says something about it (FE₂).

Both quotations seem to refer to the disputed Quranic verse 4:34, in which the Arabic word *daraba* was used, which might be translated as beating or whipping. Theological interpretations of the verse and so wife beating are varying depending on the school of Islamic jurisprudence (Ammar 2007). For this article the ease with which the authors interpret and use the Islamic source is telling. They namely use what they claim Qur’an is saying in order to discredit Muslim men, or to predict their behaviour. Regardless of the factual side, they offer a literal interpretation of Islamic source – just like Islamic fundamentalists (Freyer Stowasser 1994: 6). Moreover, it seems that Qur’an rather than observation, or hard data – e.g. on home violence – is the key to understanding how a Muslim acts and behaves. This brings in the identity

essentialism that has become a significant part of Western Muslims’ identity crisis as they try to meet the expectations related to this essentialist identity that has been imposed on them (Gest 2011). However, in this case the essentialism seems to be used on its own – as an ultimate source of information about Muslim men.

Not always is the status of women in Islam brought up in a negative way. In fact when it comes to differentiating between Muslim and non-Muslim women, the first category seems to have much more rights than the latter. Moreover, the rights stem from being religious Muslim – i.e. from Islam:

If he really loved you he would propose a real Muslim wedding. (FE₃)

A Muslim who respects his woman and considers her a potential wife will never lower himself to ask her for money. (FE₄)

If he really loves, he will do everything in order to prevent “zina” – pre-marital sex, the greatest sin in Islam (FE₅).

In these narratives Muslim men are described as having positive features such as being able to love, show respect to a woman, or doing everything to prevent her from sin. Moreover, Islamic marriage is considered to be one that gives women certain rights (Zyzik 2003). This is however not in order to praise or show a more diverse image of Muslim men, but rather to discredit Polish females who are willing to engage in a romantic relationship. This is enhanced further by comparing virtuous Muslim women who engage in a relationship only if it is really serious, and Polish females eager to experience love from the first sight.

Regardless if Islam is presented as a religion that protects or suppresses women, in both kinds of narratives it is essentialized and imposed on Muslim men, who are believed to act only according to the normative teachings of Islam.

3. It is all about Islam

The role of Islam as the determinant of Muslim behaviour is present also in the second type of narrative. However, this time the narratives are more imposed onto Muslim men – i.e. actions and behaviour of Muslims is explicitly interpreted in terms of Islam. As van Liere (2012: 187) claims, it is “not at all about Islam as a living religion, but about ‘Islam’ as a cultural menace to, or negative projection”. While his analysis regards political disputes in the Netherlands, the same pattern can be observed in case of the two forums dedicated to female romance tourism.

In this case the discussions were usually started by the female romance tourists, who posed questions whether they will be able to understand and interpret their partners by referring to their religion. While intercultural competences are a useful skill in the globalized world, it seems that in this case it is a part of the ‘all about Islam’ narrative. Moreover, the answers they receive also stay in the same tone:

Quran answers all the questions, autonomous thinking and seeking truth is not advisable – i.e. prohibited (FE₆)

Muslim hate of others is enhanced by the Quran, which clearly states how a proper Muslim should behave in order to be saved... (FE₇)

I think all depends on the branch of Islam. You work in Egypt, there are Sunnis (these are more gentle), while in Iran or in Lebanon there is Shia – and they are completely screwed. But regardless of whether they are Sunni or Shia it is hard for me to understand them (FE₈).

Looking at other answers of FE₆–FE₈ users, one could classify them as ‘haters’ or ‘trolls’ as they kept pointing on how violent Islam is, and how foolish Polish female romance tourists are in many other postings. These statements resemble the classical cultural determinism as exemplified by Patai (1973), or Hamady (1960), that build up the core of neo-orientalism (Tuastad 2003).

Sometimes the commentators are willing to overcome this religious determinism discourse, but they seem to be unable to get beyond it as the two examples illustrate:

There are such Muslims who drink alcohol and don't care that the Quran prohibits it. (FE₉)

I thought, maybe if they don't respect the Quran (sex, cigarettes, clubs, hashish, alcohol) holding hands or a hug is not really a sin? (FE₁₀)

In both cases the perceived lack of religiosity is to be proved by references to drinking alcohol by Muslims. It is use of substances rather than belief what determines Muslim's religiosity. Alcohol seems here to be the obvious pick, since its prohibition in Islam is relatively well known, and is perceived as a significant lifestyle difference comparing to non-Muslims, even if the role of Islam in alcohol consumption seems to be overestimated (Michalak and Trocki 2006).

Another strategy to explain actions of Muslims which seem to be inconsistent with the essentialized idea of Islam is by turning to other aspects of Islam that provide an explanation, for example:

A young Muslim doesn't seem to care about the rules of the Quran – from 5 daily prayers to fasting. But a pilgrimage to Mecca “absolves” all their sins. (FE₁₁)

I don't know any Muslim who would dare to criticize his religion (...). If he says so, he is lying (FE₁₂)

In other words, if a Muslim does not fit to the essentialized stereotype it is because of other religiously motivated rules that allow it. This way he stays within the religious framework. Moreover, FE₁₁ claimed that many Muslims travel for the pilgrimage purposely when they are old, so that all their sins are absolved. FE₁₂ referred to the concept of *taqiyya* – a term used in Islamic jurisprudence which stipulates under which circumstances a Muslim can lie. While the scope, meaning and usage of this concept varies, it has been used in order to discredit Muslims (Mariuma 2014).

In all these statements and explanations essentialized views of Islam are taken as the major source of information about Muslim men. Other kinds of attribution that would base on dispositional or situational factors are completely absent. Islam becomes a label and sort of stigma. In case of Egyptian men, there are also some references to the Coptic Christians.

Sometimes their Christian religion makes them more modern or liberal – according to the commentators from the forum – sometimes they are put into the same box with Muslim Arabs.

While the majority of references to Islam seem to be negative, and are used in order to discredit Muslim men, there is at least one sphere which is perceived in a positive manner, namely hygiene:

One of Islamic doctrines says that it is diligent to keeping hygiene (FE₁₃).

Imagine that they depilate their underarms daily and don't consider it gay (what unfortunately many Poles do). And, moreover (if this is the case) they depilate THERE, because Quran orders men and women to get rid of unnecessary hair (FE₁₄).

Religion makes them shave at least every 40 days. I am curious if they keep this rule. And if they do, do they expect the same from their partners? (FE₁₅)

Personal hygiene has been extensively elaborated in Islamic sources. Before starting praying a Muslim should perform *wudu* (ablution). There are also rules for hygiene of different parts of the body, including removal of unnecessary body hair, toilet hygiene, or oral hygiene. When it comes to shaving pubic hair there is a hadith of prophet Muhammad reported by Al-Bukhari (Bajirova 2017: 46). Some of the discussions in the Internet forum had also a practical dimension – as in the case of FE₁₅ – who was wondering whether she should also get rid of her public hair before going for a date with a Muslim man. Similar questions are raised on the issue of circumcision – its prevalence, hygienic meaning, and role in a sexual intercourse.

Another practical explanation was offered to a woman who was considered with taking shower by her Muslim lover after having sexual intercourse:

I think you overreact this Egyptian shower paranoia! It is not that they are disgusted by their sperm, but due to the Quran, or their cultural tradition, one shall wash after having sex, and I consider it quite reasonable and hygienic. (FE₁₆)

Cultural determinism is also visible in the statements referring to hygiene. However in this case they are often backed up by personal observations of the disputants. Thus the case begins with personal experience or observation to which a cultural explanation is pursued.

Essentialized image of Muslims seems to fulfill a significant role to female romance tourists. It offers them a reliable and easy way to decode behavior and actions of their Muslim partners. By assigning them to the “Muslim category” they are supposed to become more predictable and understandable. It is an imagined, literal Islam, rather than lived Islam that preoccupies the disputants on both Internet forums.

4. Islam as a fun-mirror for Polish national identity

Orient, and in particular Islam has been positioned in Europe as an absolute Other (Delanty 1995: 88–89). The first one was effeminate, savage and barbaric, whereas the second –

masculine, modern and civilized. Just as in the case of any dichotomy one cannot exist without the other that defines what the first one is not.

Also in the case of discussions about female romance tourism the world of Islam is used to define what Poland is and stands for:

I can't understand women marrying Muslim men, even the biggest love doesn't explain giving up civilization, culture and social relations in which a woman is a respected rightful citizen. (FE₁₇)

It is funny, how they are engaged with them and seriously jabber about some orfi and disavow their European culture in the name of (...) the wild Islamic civilization (FE₄).

Positioned at European semi-periphery and having joined the EU club relatively recently – comparing to the so called old EU member states – places Poland in-between. Just as other countries of Central and Eastern Europe it is positioned as a region in permanent post-communist transition, which limits their chances to become ever a part of the West (Kulpa 2014). By referring to Islam as the absolute Other Poland becomes a part of the European culture, civilization and respect for women (and that despite the ongoing struggle of Polish women's rights movement; Kostrzewska 2020).

An important point is some of these statements refers to the threat of “Islamization by love” – as FE₁₈ called it. By engaging into a relationship with Muslim men Polish women betray their own roots and contribute to a secret plan of Islamization:

It is enough that she bears new Muslims and this way adherents to Islam colonize further regions. (FE₁₉)

Do you know why Muslims marry women of different faiths? It is their holy war – children from such relationship will be Muslim. (FE₂₀)

According to Narkowicz and Pędziwiatr (2017: 394) women are perceived as reproducers of faith, and the essence of womanhood is motherhood. Polish national identity has been framed around the figure of Virgin Mary, who had been crowned the Queen of Poland. Women are thus the custodians of the continuity of Polish nation. In case of entering into a relationship with a Muslim man they do not contribute to this continuity, but in fact reinforce the Muslim enemy.

Entering the West vs. Islam dichotomy adds one more element to the puzzle – namely the position of Poland within this dichotomy. According to Jackson (2018: 145–146) the West perceives Islam and Muslims as an obstacle to Western identity and core values of freedom, equality and liberalism. Islam and Muslims are ascribed to submission to God and pre-modern, traditional values. A closer look at contemporary Poland reveals that the attributes of Muslims can be easily assigned to Poland and the dominant notion of turbo-patriotism that is coined around ethnicity, religion and tradition (Napiórkowski 2019). This is a double-edged sword for the way Catholic religion is situated in a relation to Islam. Some disputants praise Catholic religion over Islam, while others criticize it as in these two statements:

Why do you need Islam? (...) Why do you disavow gentle Christianity for strict, cruel Islam, in which Allah recommends man to beat “disobedient” wives? (FE₂₁)

What I like about Islam? That e.g. in Turkey mosques are built and maintained only and exclusively by believers. The attitude towards prayer – do you know a Christian who prays 5 times a day? (FE22)

For Casanova (2004) joining the post-Christian Europe positions it between secular normalization and great apostolic assignment, i.e. restoring Christianity in Europe, or maybe just proving the secularization wrong.

Conclusion

Orient has been constructed as a paradox by being both a source of fascination and horror (Delanty 1995: 89). The same pattern is visible in case of the Polish female romance tourists. While they are being told by other disputants about the evils that Muslim men can do to women according to their religion, they are still tempted by the Oriental Other. It is the mix of exotic nature, holiday time and racialized sexuality that becomes an object of erotic fascination (Cervulle 2008: 175).

Discussions about Islam seem not to preoccupy Polish female romance tourists in Egypt and Tunisia. From total over 30 thousand posted messages less than every 10th was devoted to religion. It is rather the haters who tried to infiltrate the forums and flood them with critical information about Islam and Muslims. At the same time Islam is problematized in these discussions as an absolute being that frames actions and behavior of Muslim men. Female romance tourists themselves also use Islam as sort of a codebook which helps them to understand and decode the thoughts and motivations of their partners. Even if they refer to a real life situation they tend to twig to Islam as the ultimate source of knowledge about Muslim men.

The two Internet forums expose the need of and surveillance of sexuality of Polish women by Polish males who try to persuade them to leave their Muslim partners, or insult them in many different ways. It reproduces the socio-biologically-founded pattern of asymmetrical permissibility of engaging in sexual relations with individuals from out-group. Women engaging in such relations with men of different ethnicity, religion, or race have been more prone to be condemned and excluded from the community than men. This results from the perception of womanhood with woman being the mothers of future generations, and patriarchal power relations. At the same time men are more likely to react negatively towards potential outgroup same-sex members – and this is not only in Poland, but also in other European societies (Klavina and Buunk 2013).

In some cases the discussions serve to position Poland and Catholic religion not only in relation to Islam, but also to the West. In this case Islam seems to be a proxy which helps the disputants to position Poland as a part of Europe, and not an entity located at its peripheries and undergoing constant post-communist transition.

In all these instances the essentialized Islam is used instrumentally as a mean to achieve a goal – either to explain behavior of Muslim men, to limit sexuality of Polish women, or to include Poland into Europe. Many of these statements are completely detached from concrete persons and refer to general abstract notions or statements. Simultaneously plenty of these references were written by Polish men who held negative attitudes towards Islam and reproduced Islamophobic narratives. Thus narrating Islam in these two forums is a clear example of Polish fun-mirror of Islamophobic discourse that cannot be substantiated with anything but essentialized Islamic glitches.

References

- Abu-Lughod, L. (2002). "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others". *American Anthropologist*, 104(3), 783–790.
- Ahmed, L. (1982). "Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem". *Feminist Studies*, 8(3), 521–534.
- Akbar, A. (2002). *Discovering Islam. Making Sense of Muslim History and Society*. New York: Routledge.
- Ammar, N. (2007). "Wife Battery in Islam" A Comprehensive Understanding of Interpretations". *Violence Against Women*, 13(5), 516–526.
- Bajirova, M. (2017). "Hygiene and Health in Quran and Science". *EC Gynaecology*, 1, 44–55.
- Casanova, J. (2004). "Religion, European secular identities, and European integration". In: Byrnes, T. and Katzenstein, P. eds. *Religion in an Expanding Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cervulle, M. (2008). "French Homonormativity and the Commodification of the Arab Body". *Radical History Review*, 100.
- Cooke, M. (2008). "Deploying the Muslimwoman". *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 24 (1), 91–99.
- Delanty, G. (1995). *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dobie, M. (2001). *Gender, language and culture in French Orientalism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Dox, D. (2006). "Dancing around orientalism". *The Drama Review*, 50(4), 52–71.
- Foucault, M. (1984). *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2. New York: Vintage.
- Freedman, J. (2007). "Women, Islam and rights in Europe: beyond a universalist/culturalist dichotomy". *Review of International Studies*, 33(1), 29–44.
- Freyer Stowasser, B. (1994). *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Freyer Stowasser, B. (1987). "Liberated Equal or Protected Dependent? Contemporary Religious Paradigms on Women's Status in Islam". *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 9(3), 260–283.
- Geczy, A. (2013). *Fashion and Orientalism: Dress, Textiles and Culture from the 17th to the 21st Century*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Gest, J. (2011). "Reluctant pluralists: European Muslims and essentialist identities". *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(11), 1868–1885.
- Giddens, A. (1992). *The Transformation of Intimacy. Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Górak-Sosnowska, K. (2014). „Erotyczne sny Aladyna X i inne oblicza pornoorientalizmu”. *Kultura Współczesna*, 1, 100–112.
- Górak-Sosnowska, K. (2016). „Między romanssem a orientalizmem. Tysiąc i jedna opowieść o miłości”. *Kwartalnik Kolegium Ekonomiczno-Społecznego Studia i Prace*, 1(25), 69–90.
- Hamady, S. (1960). *Temperament and Character of the Arabs*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Henry, C. and Springborg, R. (2001). *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Herold, E., Garcia, R., DeMoya, T. (2001). "Female Tourists and Beach Boys. Romance or Sex Tourism?". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 4.
- Illouz, E. (2012). *Why Love Hurts. A Sociological Explanation*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Illouz, E. (1997). *Consuming the Romantic Utopia. Love and the Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Instytut Turystyki (2011). *Podróże Polaków w pierwszych trzech kwartałach 2011 roku*.
- Jackson, L. (2018). *Islamophobia in Britain. The Making of a Muslim Enemy*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jacobs, J. (2009). "Have sex will travel: romantic 'sex tourism' and women negotiating modernity in the Sinai". *Gender, Place & Culture*, 16(1).
- Klavina, L. and Buunk, A. (2013). "Intergroup intrasexual competition: Reactions towards outgroup members as romantic rivals". *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology*, 11(3), 93–120.
- Kostrzewska, D. (2020). "Działalność ruchów kobiecych w sieci – cyfrowe oblicze polskiego feminizmu". *Przegląd krytyczny*, 2(1).
- Kulpa, R. (2014). "Western leveraged pedagogy of Central and Eastern Europe: discourses of homophobia, tolerance, and nationhood". *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 21(4), 431–448.
- Laroussi, F. (2007). "Forum Unfinished business: Orientalism and Maghrebi literature in French". *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, 10(1+2), 271–284.
- van Liere, L. (2012). "Teasing 'Islam': as the Other Side of 'Tolerance' in Contemporary Dutch Politics. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 29(2), 187–202.

- Massad, J. (2007). *Desiring Arabs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Michalak, L. and Trocki, K. (2006). “Alcohol and Islam: An Overview”. *Contemporary Drug Problems*, 33(4), 523–562.
- Ministerstwo Sportu i Turystyki (2017). *Charakterystyka krajowych i zagranicznych podróży mieszkańców Polski w 2017 roku*.
- Mariuma, Y. (2014). “Taqiyya as Polemic, Law and Knowledge: Following an Islamic Legal Term through the Worlds of Islamic Scholars, Ethnographers, Polemicists and Military Men”. *The Muslim World*, 104(1–2), 89–108.
- Naaman, D. (2001). Orientalism as Alterity in Israeli Cinema. *Cinema Journal*, 40(4), 36–54.
- Nader, L. (1989). “Orientalism, Occidentalism and the control of women”. *Cultural Dynamics*, 2(3), 323–355.
- Napiórkowski, M. (2019). *Turbopatriotyzm*. Warszawa: Czarne.
- Narkowicz, K., and Pędziwiatr, K. (2017). „Saving and fearing Muslim women in “post-communist” Poland: troubling Catholic and secular Islamophobia”. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24(2), 288–299.
- Patai, R. (2002). *The Arab Mind*. New York: Hatherleigh Press.
- Piela, A. (2021). *Wearing the Niqab: Muslim Women in the UK and the US*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Pruitt, P and LaFont, S. (1995). “For Love and Money. Romance Tourism in Jamaica”. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(2).
- Said, E. (2005). *Orientalizm*. Poznań: Zysk i S-ka.
- Scott, J., Selwyn, T. (2010). “Introduction. Thinking through Tourism – Framing the Volume”. In. Scott, J. and Selwyn, T. eds. *Thinking through Tourism*. Oxford: Berg.
- Thornton, L. (1994). *Women as Portrayed in Orientalist Painting*. Paris: Poche Couleur.
- Tuastad, D. (2003). “Neo-Orientalism and the new barbarism: Aspects of symbolic violence in the Middle East conflict(s)”. *Third World Quarterly*, 24(4), 591–599.
- Williams, L. (2004). “Skin Flicks on the Racial Border. Pornography, Exploitation and Interracial Lust” In. Williams, L. ed. *Porn Studies*. Duke University Press.
- Zyzik, M. (2003). *Małżeństwo w prawie muzułmańskim*. Elipsa: Warszawa.