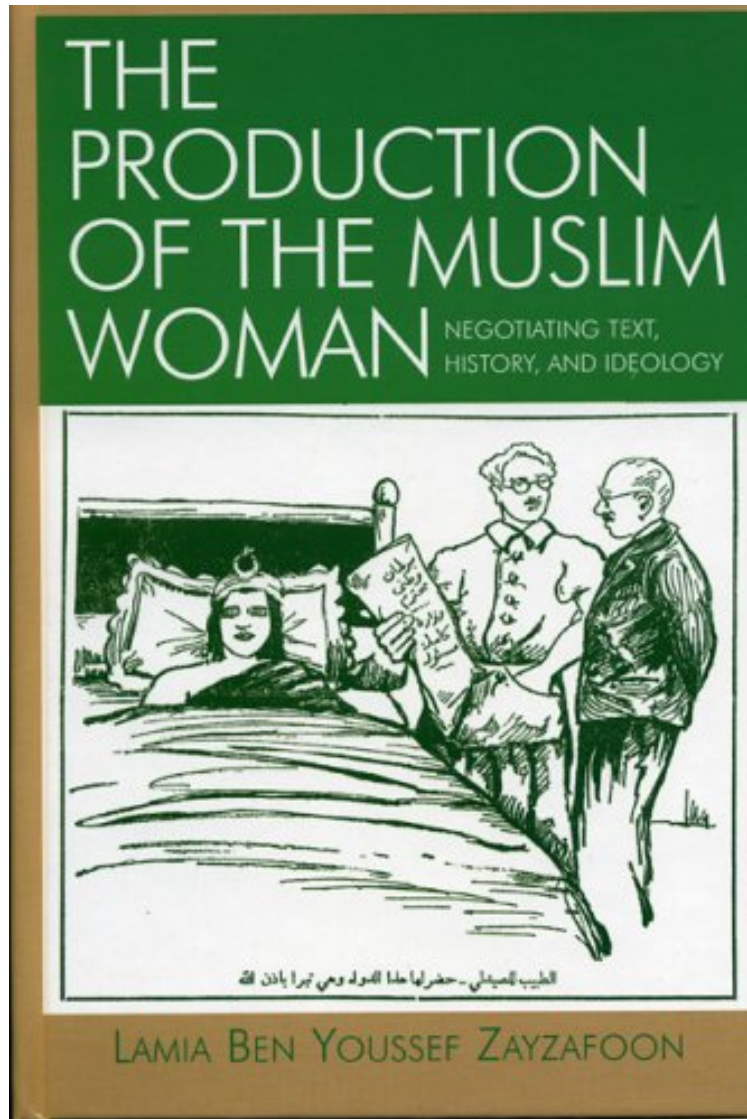


(Ebook pdf) The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History, and Ideology

The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History, and Ideology

Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon
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Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon : The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History, and Ideology before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History, and Ideology:

1 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Maghreb Muslim Women By William Garrison Jr. "The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History, and Ideology" by Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon", paperback

hardback (2005), 213 pgs. The author opines that there is no generic Muslim woman. The author focuses upon French colonial and postcolonial influences on Muslim women living in the Maghreb (northern Africa) region. One reviewer (Schirin Amir-Moazami) contends that Zayzafoon's Muslim women do not exist "outside of constructions and that these constructions are always linked with, and even based on, mechanisms of power operating at intersections of race, nation, gender, class, and religion" - something Amir-Moazami believes are frequently similar to those espoused by Edward Said his book: "Orientalism". [See her review in: "Journal of Middle East Women's Studies", Volume 5, Number 1, Winter 2009; pp. 94-97.]

In this fascinating and important study, Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon examines how the "Muslim woman" was produced as a fixed category to serve various ideological and political ends. *The Production of the Muslim Woman* enriches the debate in Islamic and gender studies, arguing that the traditional perception of a division between spiritual Islam and a misogynist Arab culture is a recent construct derived from the rhetoric of cultural liberalism in the West. In addition to incorporating the discourses of Maghrebian feminism, female orientalism, French psychoanalytic feminism, and North African nationalism, this book introduces to an Anglophone audience archival material culled from extensive research in Tunisian collections. The insights offered by this book will be invaluable to students of postcolonial thought and theory, gender studies, Maghrebian literature and history, and Middle Eastern studies.

This book is fascinating and important. It cartwheels Muslim feminist analysis to the next level. . . . Zayzafoon's critique deconstructs the sign of 'the Muslim woman' and the 'hijab' in female-authored Western Orientalism as well as in the contentious contemporary discourses of Islamists and modernist Muslims and, most intriguingly, even in texts now considered the classics of Muslim feminism. Post-Saidian in the best sense, Zayzafoon's book is the next generation of cultural critique and semiotics on this topic. (Mohja Kahf, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville) Zayzafoon's study of the figure of 'the Muslim woman' takes seriously the challenge of interdisciplinary research, engaging psychoanalytic, feminist, and postcolonial theories in what might be called a post-orientalist project. This book engages the problematics of race and gender through detailed textual analysis of a wide range of works from the writings of Jacques Lacan to the novels of Assia Djebar. She shows that conventions of patriarchal, nationalist, and colonialist discourses condition almost all attempts to represent 'the Muslim woman.' (Salah D. Hassan, Michigan State University) *The Production of the Muslim Woman* represents absolutely first-rate, brilliant scholarship. It deals with the 'invention' of the 'Muslim woman,' and focuses especially on Maghrebian authors. The argument ranges widely over feminist and cultural issues, but takes its inspiration from Said's work, and develops new, crucial ground by bringing into play questions of feminism and comparative cultural analysis. Said's great difficulty in incorporating issues dealing with feminism and women's roles in his treatise on *Orientalism* receives careful scrutiny, providing us with the tools to refine our thinking about the first major step taken in postcolonial narrative theory. The interplay between Tunisian intellectuals and political figures, the sensitive readings of Bourghiba and Tahar al Haddad, the inclusion of Eberhardt, Mernissi, Al Ma'arri, Djebar, Rushdie, and other postcolonial writers, provide depth and originality to an argument that elucidates the political discourses of the past and of the present concerning the Muslim woman. I believe that this work represents an important and original contribution to postcolonial and feminist scholarship. Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon is quickly staking a claim to be one of the more perceptive new critics in the field. (Kenneth W. Harrow, Michigan State University) Zayzafoon's strength lies in showing how strong the impact of colonial power and discourse is on both formerly colonized subjects and the colonial memory in contemporary France. *The Production of the Muslim Women* provides a rich account of the different players and interests at stake in the power games around constructions of Muslim female subjects. From this inquiry, a much more multifaceted representation of voices and of perspectives on 'the Muslim woman' emerges than has been seen in earlier studies. (Schirin Amir-Moazami *Journal Of Middle East Women's Studies*, Winter 2009) This study of *The Production of the Muslim Woman*, with its mastery of texts in the original Arabic, French, and English, locates and analyzes the multiple political interests at work imposing, inventing, and transforming 'the Muslim woman' from the orientalist symbol of nineteenth-century colonial North Africa to the contemporary post-9/11 'rescue narrative' essentializing and dehistoricizing Afghanistani and Iraqi women. Rich in its close reading of culturally diverse sources, this book investigates the transnational production of culture as inflected by gender and class, as well as race, in the discourses of Western female Orientalism, Western psychoanalytic feminism, Arab nationalism, and Islamic feminism. (Laura Rice, Oregon State University) *The Production of the Muslim Woman* represents absolutely first-rate, brilliant scholarship. It deals with the 'invention' of the 'Muslim woman,' and focuses especially on Maghrebian authors. The argument ranges widely over feminist and cultural issues, but takes its inspiration from Said's work, and develops new, crucial ground by bringing into play questions of feminism and comparative cultural analysis. Said's great difficulty in incorporating issues dealing with feminism and women's roles in his treatise on *Orientalism* receives careful scrutiny, providing us with the tools to refine our thinking about the first major step taken in postcolonial narrative theory. The interplay between Tunisian intellectuals and political figures, the sensitive readings of Bourghiba and Tahar al Haddad, the inclusion of Eberhardt, Mernissi, Al Ma'arri, Djebar, Rushdie, and other postcolonial writers, provide

depth and originality to an argument that elucidates the political discourses of the past and of the present concerning the Muslim woman. I believe that this work represents an important and original contribution to postcolonial and feminist scholarship. Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon is quickly staking a claim to be one of the more perceptive new critics in the field of Maghrebian and postcolonial studies. (Kenneth W. Harrow, Michigan State University)About the AuthorLamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon taught English literature at the Higher Institute of Languages in Tunis and at the Faculty of Arts Humanities at Sousse, Tunisia. Her areas of interest include postcolonialism, African literature, and feminist and Islamic studies.