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TABISH KHAIR'S *JUST ANOTHER JIHADI JANE*: TRANSGRESSING TO TRANSFORM AND TRANSCEND

ABSTRACT. The paper discusses Tabish Khair's novel *Just Another Jihadi Jane* as a literary contribution to re-examining established neo-orientalist notions of female agency in militant organizations like the Islamic State. Drawing from a number of theoretical analyses of the insufficiency of normative approaches to the concept of female agency cast within binary frames, I argue that *Just Another Jihadi Jane* resists widely spread views of female jihadists as either agential heroines or agentless victims of propagandist manipulation, promoting a non-binary view of female agency by narratively interpreting its contextualized specific manifestations. The principal importance of this novel thus lies in Khair's deconstructive takes on a number of established dichotomies informing generic gendered interpretations of female participation in militant jihadist organizations and self-sacrifice in suicide attacks as outcomes of manipulation or pathologic nihilism, depicting a range of transgressive practices, including the final suicide attack – performed by, as it turns out, not just another Jihadi Jane – as not only contextually determined acts of quiet and loud resistance to sovereign power but also altruistic acts of instrumentalizing death and destruction to transfer vitality to others and professing a transcendental order negated by the brutality of its self-proclaimed emissaries.

KEYWORDS: agency; jihad; resistance; suicide bombing; transgression.

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One of the reasons why I chose two women was exactly this...because my sympathies are more with female characters who are caught in the trap of so-called jihad rather than male characters for a set of reasons [...] first of all it's a sexist movement [...] it is important because you have to recognize that these girls have agency-they are not just being brainwashed.

Tabish Khair²

To cavalierly label [them] as immoral, mad, scatterbrained or masochistic, as a number of critics and reviewers have done, is to ignore the possibility that the worlds they inhabit may in fact be real, or true, and for them the only worlds available and, further, to deny the possibility that their apparently "odd" or unusual responses may in fact be justifiable and even necessary.

Annette Kolodny³

The two epigraphic quotes concisely summarize the key ideas discussed in this paper, in which I read Tabish Khair's *Just Another Jihadi Jane* (2016) as a novel about female agency as contextualized transgression. In the context of "war on terror" – immediately suggested by the novel's title – the discussion of female agency within militant movements and organizations has been largely defined by the clash between the two ideologically imagined monoliths – the West and its "omnipresent" and "diabolical" enemy (Todenhöfer, 2016, p. 8), currently still incarnated in the Islamic State. Depending on the side in this war, the primary roles ascribed to female militants are either those of, as Harjeet Marway (2011) writes, "superwomen", heroines with indisputable agency, or "subwomen", agentless and failed individuals marked by traumatic experiences or personal defects and thus appropriate and logical victims of manipulation (pp. 222–226). Maintaining Marway's observations about the insufficiency of this foundationalist dichotomy in an attempt to understand the full complexity and contextualized specificity of female agency, I discuss the two main characters of *Just Another Jihadi Jane* as fitting neither of these categories but as simultaneously "acted upon and acting" (Butler, 2006, p. 16), so that their migration to the Islamic State and the suicide bombing attack performed by one of them are not understood as either manifestations of psychopathology, male coercion, propagandist manipulation or heroic deeds of fighting and dying for the Caliphate but as

² Kolkata Literary Meet. (2017, February 27), my transcription.

³ Some Notes on Defining a 'Feminist Literary Criticism' (Kolodny, 1975, p. 84)

contextually determined transformative acts of disruption (Eagleton, 2018, p. 10) to be analyzed “along a series of continua” (Jenks, 2003, p. 2) or located in between the binaries like agent-victim, sovereign-subject, life-death, individual-collective. Such an analysis is, as Kolodny suggests in the quoted passage, premised on a non pre-codified perception of these categories as historically, contextually and socially specific. Inverting in the second half of the novel what Frazer Egerton identifies as “the dynamic of movement” (Egerton, 2011, p. 100) of militants from the experienced towards the imaginary, utopian and virtual, Khair depicts the sexist and oppressive character of ISIS by creating two paradigmatically representative contexts within which Jamilla and Ameena face specific challenges, portraying their acts of agency affirmation as transgressive acts of both quietly and loudly “exceed[ing] [specific] boundaries and limits” (Jenks, 2003, p. 7) imposed on them by ISIS authorities. Furthermore, understanding the final suicide attack as an act of affirming life by killing rests on a deconstructive appreciation of life-death dichotomy, Irm Haleem insists on in her Hegelian interpretation of radical Islamism, pointing that within this framework death is not to be interpreted merely as a physical process, but a social and symbolic one, i.e. as a loss of one’s autonomy, so that voluntary physical death figures as a desperate and victorious termination of the process (Haleem, 2012, p. 84). The paper focuses on various forms of jihad represented as “symbolic death[s]” by which Jamilla and Ameena resort to acts of transgressive self-negation, such as their migration to the Islamic State, identity changes, and finally Ameena’s suicide attack, in order to redress specific grievances or instances of their “social death” (Jan-Mohamed, 2005, p. 68). Connecting the physical and symbolic death of one girl with the physical and social survival of the other, Khair stresses the causal relation between different forms of death, on one hand, and, as Stuart Murray puts it, “some other emergent form of life” (2006, 199), on the other. This is why Ameena’s final act of true jihad (as opposed to the “so-called” one Khair denounces in the quoted passage and throughout the novel) in the suicide attack is not viewed as a manifestation of the nihilistic fascination with dying (Roy, 2017) but rather as an act of “explod[ing] the social game” (Eagleton, 2005, p. 92) of oppression by, according to a hadith, “speak[ing] a word of truth to a tyrant” (in Marranci, 2006, p. 23)⁴ or instrumentalizing one’s body/life in putting up resistance to the processes of one’s dehumanization (Bargu, 2014, p. 13) as

well as an act of sacrificial transformation of one's life and death into something, as David Wood writes, "whose significance transcends that individuality" (Eagleton, 2018, p. 57).

RETHINKING AGENCY: WHO IS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT?

This paper was conceived two years ago, during a one-day conference at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo to commemorate the 36th anniversary of Elaine Showalter's seminal "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (1981), which resonated with my initial response to *Just Another Jihadi Jane* – although not an instance women's writing – as, to use Showalter's words, "a double-voiced discourse, containing a 'dominant' and a 'muted' story" (Showalter, 1981a, p. 204), examining muted forms of agency while focusing on particular female agents and multiple, complex "lines of inheritance" (Showalter, 1981a, p. 203) shaping their acts. The question of female agency to which I refer in the section's heading was posed by Showalter in two other texts, "Towards a Feminist Poetics" (1979) and "Rethinking the Seventies: Women Writers and Violence" (1981), in which she addresses Muriel Spark's 1970 novel *The Driver's Seat* as a representative exploration of the theme of sexual violence, whose strong presence among female authors at the time Showalter interprets as a novel reflection of "the apocalyptic sense of panic, uncertainty, and frustration that pervades contemporary life" (Showalter, 1981b, p. 70), persisting with slight modifications well into the new millennium, whose fiction continues to explore "radical simultaneous challenges to both personal identity and the social order" (Tew, 2007, p. 190) with new metaphors that reflect them.

As a metaphor for the millennial traumatic contemporaneity, *Jihadi Jane* reflects a public sense of frightening discomfort and

⁴ Citing Paul L. Heck, Marranci argues that scholarly interpretations of jihad have over time moved away from focusing on its theological aspects to instrumentalizing it as expansionist apologetics, giving jihad a bad name: "I agree with Heck when he observes "The umayyad logic of state had profound and lasting effects on the Islamic conception of jihad: jihad as the tool of a state oriented towards expansion and became itself conceived as a tool in the service of territorial expansion, rather than a religious struggle at the level of devotion to God's cause' (2006, p. 108)"

frustration rooted in contemporary inability to grasp an extraneous presence in “hearts of our societies”⁵ (Allam, 2015, p. 19) and consequently unfit responses to its violence on multiple levels, cultural and generic being the two most obvious ones. On a cultural level, Jihadi Jane (like Jihadi John/Jamie/Joe) is suggestive of what Victor Seidler sees as a major intellectual challenge for the West after 9/11 and especially after 7/7, and that is to recognize the role of Islam as an integral part of “the historical experience of the West” (Seidler, 2007, p. 80) its multicultural diversity not reducible to mono-directional integration (p. 241), but a complex process in which religious beliefs and identifications have come to play important politically mobilizing roles among children of Muslim immigrants. Jihadi Jane constitutes an important challenge to the “narrative fidelity” of neo-orientalist apologetics for the “war on terror”, which, as Caron E. Gentry (2011, p. 179) argues, dismisses any possibility of a voluntary female rejection of advantages of living in the progressive and liberal West in order to join a sexist and retrograde organization such as the IS or Al-Qaeda and, moreover, target Western societies for the sake of ideals propagated by these and similar organizations. Apart from that, and unlike her male counterpart, Jihadi Jane causes unease due to a gendered contradiction identified in her acts because, like other female terrorists, as Catherine Taylor writes, “she has chosen to take life, not to give it” (in Gentry & Sjoberg, 2011, p. 76). Attempts to resolve this gendered contradiction are usually developed within the neo-orientalist “faulty and inadequate analytic frames” (Mohanty, 2003, p. 236), questioning the authenticity of Jihadi Jane’s agency. These attempts, as Gentry and Sjoberg (2011, p. 4) contend, further “reify gender stereotypes”, viewing a female (suicide) bomber primarily as a victim of indoctrinating manipulation, where joining fundamentalist or militant movements is seen, as Nira Yuval-Davis (1995, p. 289) argues, just as an illusory attempt at emancipation which results in new forms of inferiorization of women within essentially patriarchal structures, an idea Showalter (1981, p. 160) also endorses, citing “most criminologists” to dismiss any connection between female empowerment and militant organizations. Denying any form of subjectivity to women who join militant jihadi organizations manifests, as Laura Donaldson (1992, p. 1) writes in her *Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender and Empire Building*, “white solipsism”

⁵ My translation.

in studying non-white female experience, which has been instrumental in cultural affirmations of imperialist projects. The homogenizing view of non-western women as passive victims, as Miriam Cooke (2002, p. 228) contends, has been central to the apologetic narrative of Western neo-imperialism in the new millennium, evidenced, among others, by citing Taliban misogyny as a key justification for American military campaign against and occupation of Afghanistan after 9/11. Even when voluntary acting by women militants is acknowledged, Gentry and Sjoberg further argue, their roles are interpreted through the prism of personal, not political (p. 14), an approach noticeable in Mia Bloom's analysis of female militancy in which she, while insisting on an equal importance of choice and coercion, sums up the key motives of women to join a militant organization in four markedly personal Rs (revenge, redemption, relationship and respect) (Bloom, 2011, pp. 234, 235).

In the same text in which she briefly describes female militants as typically objects of male persuasion, Showalter (1981b, p. 160), by dwelling on the unresolved dilemma of who actually occupies the eponymous driver's seat in Spark's novel, actually aims to stress the insufficiency of established models on which the false dichotomy of active murderer and passive victim is founded. A woman like Spark's Lisa, although a murder victim, essentially denaturalizes female victimization by choosing her murderer and the way she dies, thus reflecting what Showalter (1979, p. 149) describes as a key breakthrough of gynocriticism in creating new models "based on the study of female experience" outside of the established frameworks of female victimization and pathologization.⁶ The traditional theme of violence in American literature was now viewed in a new manner which decentralized essentially male models of understanding violence, and women authors, by refusing to "sing the executioner's song" (Showalter, 1981b, p. 162), were now able to rethink the questions of female agency and subjectivity (Showalter, 1979, p. 152). In that light, revisiting the false and yet still normative dichotomies on which the offered understanding of female agency is based, leading to reductive binary answers (McNay, 2016, p. 44) is prerequisite to rethinking traditional agency and victimization models. This understanding of agency, resting on the criteria of maximum autonomy and rationality, necessarily overlooks various forms of female agency (McNay, 2016, p. 41) lying

⁶ It was Showalter's "Towards a Feminist Poetics" that introduced me to Kolodny's text quoted in the epigraph.

between the two extremes, or, preventing female numerous individuals from being recognized as agents (Auchter, 2012, p. 125). Attempts to understand a female militant neither as a full agent or victim, Auchter insists, would be contingent on creating a critical distance from the pre-given gendered standards of defining agency and would seek “to understand the actions themselves” (Auchter, 2012, p. 134) occurring within particular contexts, so that it constitutes, “neither a philosophical absolute nor a tangible entity but a relational and contextual practice” (Brown, 1995, p. 6). A similar approach is proposed by Gentry and Sjoberg (2015, p. 149), whose discussion of agency is developed within the relational autonomy framework,⁷ essential, as the authors argue, in identifying, demonstrating and challenging the established faulty analyses of violence as expressive of either “masculinized agency and feminized helplessness” or the “dehumanizing, depoliticizing mother, monster and whore narratives”.

JUST ANOTHER JIHADI JANE: TRANSGRESSING PROHIBITIONS AND MURDEROUS LIFE-GIVING

Just Another Jihadi Jane's latest edition's cover art is suggestive of that relationality, turning the process of reconstructing the redacted text surrounding the words of the title phrase analogous to the one of recovering what is normally censored or left out in selective and reductive interpretations of the genesis and consequences of a Jihadi Jane's violent actions. Jihadi Jane and her acts of physical and symbolic death are, as Talal Asad (2007, p. 41) suggests in his book *On Suicide Bombing*, “histories” whose full understanding rests on invisible and hardly accessible reasons that lead to them, and, as K.

⁷ We have argued that people do not make choices (to commit political violence or otherwise) independent of either the other people or social structures around them. Still, the opposite – that people do not make any choices, or that there are not discernible people who can choose – also does not resonate. With Nancy Hirschmann (1989), we have argued that people do make choices, but that those choices are both heavily and differentially constrained. By heavily constrained, we mean that a wide variety of social structures, expectations and significations play a role in constituting conditions of possibility for choices and the choices themselves. By differentially constrained, we mean that both the level and type of constraints differ across people's positions in social and political life – based on gender, race, class, nationality and other features of position in global politics (Gentry & Sjoberg, 2015, p. 138).

M. Fierke (2013, p. 37) contends in her *Political Self-Sacrifice*, “an act of speech in which the suffering body communicates the injustice suffered by a community [and individual] to a larger audience”, making its consequences both physical and “rhetorical” (Murray, 2006, p. 195), and its target, apart from the direct victims, a chain of witnesses making sense of the violent death (Atran in Murray, 2006, p. 207). Khair thus conceives his novel as Jamilla’s testimony to a silent (male) listener and the future author of the novel, building a “parented” (as opposed to *just fathered* or *mothered*, Showalter, 1981a, p. 203) “afterlife of words” (Butler in Jaworski, 2015, p. 193) portraying Ameena’s death within a specific context of a life that made it necessary and possible as well as a life made possible by that death. It is only by this interpretation that Ameena’s act is transformed from a generic act of suicide bombing by just another Jihadi Jane as, in Ranciere’s words, a “nameless bein[g] without an individual history” (Rancière, 2009, p. 97) into an act of a humanized individual whose life and death are not only grievable (Butler, 2015) but also “constrained” by their individual histories and in which one could identify both destructive and creative components. Jamilla’s narrative is an act of self-reinvention following her symbolic death, or, as she narrates, the decision to continue her life under a false name, far from her family in England, in a place “where [she] had no history, and where [she] could be with [her] beliefs without people who prescribed or proscribed (Khair, 2016), made possible by Ameena’s suicide attack.

As the migration to the Islamic State for most migrants is “less about the religious imperative than escaping the prejudice and Islamophobia associated with cultural assertiveness” (Atwan, 2015, p. 178), both Jamilla and Ameena initially perceive it as a projection of their fantasy of an alternative to their social death in England, or, as Showalter (1981b, p. 170) puts it, “the will towards autonomy, the will to change [their] lives, to release sexual and political force in a confrontation with confining institutions”. Their experiences growing up in a working class area in the north of England are marked by these aspirations on both personal and political levels. Jamilla, on one hand, decides to leave behind the established family practices of raising a daughter “groomed to marry” (Khair) a chosen man and a woman’s outright acceptance of decisions made for her by men in the family. Just like her mother who “never seemed to have a real opinion,” (Khair) Jamilla begins to understand that she is “so used to accepting the decisions of [her] father and then

[her] older brother as inevitable ones, that once this decision had been taken, it too, appeared to [her] to be most normal, the most natural of all options” (Khair). No real refuge is to be found within the mainstream British society, where Jamilla regularly experiences verbal assaults by random strangers “for letting down [her] sex and not fitting into the culture,” (Khair) which in the life of a hijab-wearing girl like her “was not an exception after all” (Khair), but rather a representative incident in a cross-generational sequence of racial abuse experiences, since her mother “often recalled a time – [...] sometime in the early 1990s or late 1980s – when Abba had a swastika spray-painted on his cab one night, its windows smashed [...]” (Khair). Ameena, on the other hand, defiantly turns to religion after a failed relationship with a white boy, who found her – as an atypical girl, not another “Lady Gaga on steroids” (Khair) – too boring. Her reasons for joining ISIS, however, go beyond mere adolescent frustration, for she was, as Jamilla observes, “an intellectual person, a girl who reasoned with concepts, facts, figures and ideas,” (Khair), someone who saw the massacres of civilians in Palestine, Afghanistan or Syria not only as cases for sympathy or condemnation but action as well. “Actually,” Jamilla recounts, “Ameena was the only one who spoke of doing something [...] I recall her saying to the men, with that angry challenge in her eyes: ‘If Ah wor a boy, Ah’d go fight! [...] The Israelis, Assad, American, Iranians [...] Whoever needs to be smashed[...]” (Khair).

ISIS appears to the girls at the beginning as an alternative virtual community in which, as Almond, Appleby and Sivan write, they “gain what [they] lacked most” in an “alienated context” (2003, p. 84) of their community and families to which, as Jamilla claims, “[they] did not belong” (Khair) and which offered them little more than “dry legal claims” (Khair) of citizenship or inheritance distribution. Meaningless interactions with their peers “obsessed with fashions, boys and films” (Khair) are replaced by more profound relationships with girls like “a Somalian girl who refused to read anything but the Qur’an, the Algerian girl whose Islamism was driven by colonial memories of French atrocities instead of any firm religious belief, the Palestinian woman who had given up on moderate politics because she was convinced that Israeli and American politicians were lying about the two-state solution” (Khair). Lying behind these heterogeneous and incompatible interests, “erasing the differences” was a utopian idea about, as Jamilla points out, “a

hypothetical Islam, an imagined community” (Khair) on which the perception of the Islamic State, as an “emotionally attractive place where people ‘belong’, where everyone is a ‘brother’ or ‘sister’” (Atwan, 2015, p. 14) is formed. This was a place without confining institutions, superficial friendships or weak role models like Jamilla’s mother, soon replaced by a female fighter, Hejjiye, impressing Jamilla and Ameena not only with her political or religious beliefs but the charisma of “jihadi cool” (Atwan, 2015, p. 14) she radiated in photos with her “dusky Chartreux cat Batala (Heroine in Arabic) or her collection of Gucci handbags” (Khair).

The girls’ experience in the Islamic State, however, reiterates the familiar paradigm of disenchantment, in which, as Yuval-Davis and Silva contend, one form of restrictive authority is normally replaced by another, often even more restrictive, patriarchal framework of profiling women and placing them within the new community (Yuval-Davis, 1995, p. 289; Silva, 2010, p. 333). The orphanage in which Jamilla finds accommodation and work on her arrival in the Islamic State, and which she initially admires as a place established to “help women” (Khair), turns out to be a concentrated reflection of the State itself, a total institution, whose strict regime with a “full schedule [of] small, somber events follow[ing] one another with hardly a pause in between, until we were almost ready to go to bed” (Khair) serves the role of molding its wards into, as Halide, a ward Jamilla befriends at the orphanage, says, “just three kinds of women: older women, who were teachers or related to jihadis who were not around to protect them, or who had recently died; younger women, who were meant to be brides; and women, mostly girls, who were being trained to be suicide bombers” (Khair), preventing them from any kind of social interaction, so, as Jamilla soon notices, “the world had shrunk too. To begin with, there were two or three group trips to the weekly market under the supervision of Hejjiye and male members of her family or the family of one of her chaperones, but these stopped very soon after we arrived, when Daesh clamped down even further on the movement of women” (Khair).

These instances of mortification, turning the vision of alternative life into another form of social death, however, are not passively accepted by the girls like Jamilla and Halide, who offer resistance primarily by waging, in Haleem’s words, “a rhetorical war” (p. 13) of recognizing their own humanity outside of the dehumanizing confinement of the State. Aware of their inferiority within the

institution, Jamilla and other wards learn how to transgressively inhabit it, secretly violating imposed prohibitions, accessing, as Halide does with Jamilla's help, forbidden web pages and, after recognizing the faces of two girls killed in a suicide mission, warns other girls about the real purpose of their education in the orphanage. Married outside of the orphanage, Ameena deceives Hassan, a Daesh fighter, with a fake Chinese hymen she buys in Istanbul on her way to the IS and manages for a while to hide Yazidi boy Sabah from Hassan's exhibitionist brutality. Her final act in which she kills Hassan and other guards in the orphanage now besieged by Kurdish troops is preceded by an ultimate act of agency affirmation through passing as a transformed penitent, plausibly superseding others in her extremism, convincing Jamilla and other remaining wards that "[s]omething had changed, but it seemed a determined change. Ameena has set out to become another Hejjiye – even more austere version of Hejjiye" (Khair).⁸

Ameena's passing thus only precedes and ensures an act that turns out to be the only one of true resistance and liberation, since she eventually fails to protect Sabah from Hassan, just like Halide, having refused to repent for warning the girls about what she discovered online, gets isolated, abused and finally married off to a Daesh fighter. Keeping Ameena and Halide alive after their transgressions is indeed a demonstration of "the desire for recognition" on the part of the State, whose resistant subjects may be violently subjugated only by being kept alive as the necessary sources of that recognition (Haleem, 2012, p. 18). Dying, as an act of crossing the utmost boundary of the sovereign power, is also an act of irreversible transgression, a final "release from terror and bondage" (Gilroy in Mbembe, 2003, p. 39) framing the submissive life on which the sovereign power depends. This definite refusal of one's consent to be kept alive and dominated (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 68), as a decision over which the sovereign has no control, is not only a negation of the sovereign's power over the subject, but also of his immunity

⁸ Ameena's passing as an Islamist extremist echoes the practices of *taqiyya* and *kitmān*, Allam discusses in his book (Alam, 2015, pp. 68-73). Often understood synonymously, *taqiyya* and *kitmān* refer to practices of concealing one's true beliefs in order to avoid persecution. Normally associated with the Twelver Shi'ite tradition, these practices were manifested as acts of dissimulation (literal translation of *taqiyya*) whereby Shi'ite imams and their followers would publicly pass as Sunni Muslims to avoid oppression and persecution (Gleave, 2003, pp. 678-679).

to destruction (Haleem, 2012, p. 75) in a violent act of equalization in death. A “defeat of the master [sovereign],” (Haleem, 2012, p. 80) a negation of powerlessness and dehumanization and a transgression of “a twofold prohibition: of [...] suicide and [...] murder” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 38), death by suicide bombing is also an affirmative act of “victory for the self” (Haleem, 2012, p. 80). Significantly shouting Sabah’s (Arabic for dawn, sunrise) name just before detonating herself in front of Hassan and his guards, Ameena not only transgresses the boundaries imposed on her but also commits both a destructive act of “passionate identification” (Asad, 2007, p. 66) in power with her oppressor and the boy’s executioner and a productive act of symbolic maternity or a “transfer of the vitality” (Fierke, 2013, p. 49) onto Jamilla and Kurdish prisoners, its immediate beneficiaries and future witness-bearers. Thus, in Ameena’s case, suicide bombing goes beyond the individual victory and becomes an act of true martyrdom or of opposing the tyrant’s brutal order and professing a “transcendental *nomos* outside it” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 37) witnessed through the “ethical li[ves]” (Murray, 2006, p. 211) she sacrificed and saved as the ones of “dependency” and “dependability” (Butler, 2015, p. 218).

CONCLUSION The power of the “omnipresent” and “diabolical” enemy is largely based on its ability to deploy the key assets of psychological war for the hearts and minds of potential jihadists living in Western societies, mobilizing them digitally via positive and negative campaigns, which are emotionally appealing and convincing in their presentations of Western war crimes committed in Iraq, Afghanistan or Palestine as well as the visions of an alternative, utopian and “emotionally attractive” societies like the Islamic State (Atwan, 2015, p. 14). Combating that enemy, as Allison McDowell-Smith, Anne Speckhard and Ahmet S. Yayla (2017, p. 51) contend, it is of key importance to strike back in equal measure and offer equally convincing arguments that would antagonize potential followers by morally contesting the promoted ideals of militant Islamism and jihadism. One of the strongest weapons in that psychological war, as one of the most authentic sources of such arguments, are personal testimonies of disillusioned former followers of ISIS, young people who are, as Atwan (2015, p. 139) writes, unable to return to their “normal” lives before ISIS but very much aware of the mistakes made by joining it. Atwan (2015, p. 140) thus provides an example of a young British mother currently held in Turkish custo-

dy who testifies of her own horrifying experiences of war and disillusionment with ISIS, where “women were treated like cattle”. A personal testimony like this, as Atwan (2015, p. 142) insists, should not be dismissed as sensationalist propaganda but its role as an authentic narrative, just as that of war crimes against Muslim civilians, should be observed within the ongoing psychological war, their significant role being to confirm the established status of the enemy as a retrograde threat and highlight the nobility of its denunciation and defeat. Although women are some of the “most vocal and visible supporters” of ISIS online (Stern & Berger, 2016, p. 55), their representations often conform to the orientalist stereotypes of female roles in ISIS and Islam in general as oppressed and de-subjectified individuals, exposing a deeply rooted discomfort of Western societies around even a faint possibility of these women being agential transgressors of the socially sanctioned boundaries between women and violence. Furthermore, fitting individual experiences and narratives into the mainstream apologetics of anti-terrorism, as McDowell-Smith, Speckhard and Yayla argue, goes in favor of comprehending the group dynamics and ideological characteristics of ISIS rather than individual motivation of its former members to join and leave the organization. In *Just Another Jihadi Jane*, Tabish Khair's intention was to contest such generalizations, favoring an individualized narrative over generic reports and offering a profound, authentic and presently uncommon reading of jihad as a practice of resisting tyranny and altruistic sacrifice of one's life “in the name of life for others” (Eagleton, 2005, p. 99).

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REZIME

TRANSFORMACIJA I TRANSCENDENCIJA KROZ TRANSGRESIJU U
 ROMANU SAMO JOŠ JEDNA DŽIHAD DŽEJN TABIŠA KERA

Ovaj rad analizira Tabiš Kerov roman *Just Another Jihadi Jane* [Samo još jedna Džihad Džejn] kao književni doprinos preispitivanju etabliranih neorijentalističkih poimanja ženske moći djelovanja u militantnim organizacijama kao što je Islamska država. Oslanjajući se na niz teorijskih analiza o nedostatnosti normativnih pristupa konceptu ženske moći djelovanja formiranih u binarnim okvirima, rad ukazuje na to da *Just Another Jihadi Jane* odbacuje rasprostranjena viđenja ženskih džihadista kao heroína sa punom moći djelovanja ili nemoćnih žrtava propagandističke manipulacije, promovisući nebinarno viđenje ženske moći djelovanja kroz narativnu interpretaciju njegovih specifičnih i kontekstualno određenih manifestacija. Primarni značaj ovog romana se stoga ogleda u Kerovim dekonstruktivnim pristupima nizu etabliranih dihotomija na kojima se temelje generična rodno određena tumačenja ženskog učešća u militantnim džihadističkim organizacijama i samožrtvovanja u bombaškim napadima kao posljedica manipulacije ili patološkog nihilizma, oslikavajući čitav niz transgresivnih praksi, uključujući i konačni samoubilački napad – koji izvodi, ispostavlja se, ne samo još jedna Džihad Džejn – kao ne samo kontekstualno određene činove tihog i glasnog otpora suverenoj moći nego i kao altruistične činove instrumentalizacije smrti i uništavanja u svrhu transfera vitalnosti na druge i svjedočenje transcendentnog poretka negiranog brutalnošću njegovih samoproklamovanih emisara.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: moć djelovanja; džihad; otpor; samoubilački bombaški napad; transgresija.



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