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## POOPAK AND THE RELIGIOUS IRANIAN SACRIFICIAL LAMB

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### ABSTRACT

During the recent years, the phenomenon of indigenous Orientalism has emerged as one of the most powerful pillars of Orientalism. Indigenous Orientalists are authors, intellectuals and theorists who identify themselves with the Orientalist discourse, and through conducting a comparison with western criteria, move heaven and earth to demolish the dignity and the face of their own homeland. This paper is aimed at unveiling the storm of indigenous Orientalism within the sphere of an Iranian domestic movie, *Poopak and Mash Mashalla*, directed by Soroosh Sehat, which strives at re-accrediting the orientalist stereotypes on Iranians, while decades ago Edward Said undertook to ruin it completely. The paper brings examples showing how the movie exerts itself to stereotype Iranians as the Orientalist discourse has done down the history lane. The paper finally offers an approach to deal with the issue.

**Keywords:** Orientalism, indigenous Orientalism, erotic Oriental, Manichaeism, stereotype.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Marshall and Williams present the Orient as “a continent of bizarre religions, fanatically adhered to and it was a continent whose people changed very little” and then carry on that “the one stereotype explained the other as it was their religions that required Orientals for ever the same” (Marshall and Williams, 1982, 158). To the Orientalists, time, sadly, did not get across a sense of alteration, and hence it became attainable for them to stereotype the Orientals. Illustration of the Islamic or Oriental character lead to the emergence of some markers such as *the Oriental personality*, *the Arab mind* and *the Islamic spirit* and also to the notions of the supposedly mental retardation and instinctive inertia as common features embedded in all Muslims (Elgamri, 2008, 30). The picture of the Orientals, specifically Muslims, through the watching glasses of the Westerners, from the primary days of encounter up to the moment, has changed very little. Friedrich Nietzsche in his *Human, All Too Human* argues that the ‘world of appearance’, quite apart from the ‘thing-in-itself’, emanates from the fecund imagination of human beings. He censures philosophers for their tendency to “confront life and experience (what they call the world of experience) as they would a painting that has been revealed once and for all, depicting with unchanging constancy the same event” (Nietzsche, 1984, 23). Nietzsche argues that life “has gradually evolved and is still evolving, and therefore should not be considered a fixed quantity” (23). Human generation has been altering and transforming during the dark tunnels of history from the day of Adam and definitely will go on evolving. Reflecting on this, how is it within the realms of possibility for Orientalists to generalize on the Orient, an entity which embraces a massive domain brimful of individuals from divergent social circumstances, heritages, and milieus? For Nietzsche, the world of appearance is a direct result of ‘illogical thoughts’ and projection of ‘mistaken conceptions onto the things’. Granting a speck of attention to what Nietzsche maintains, leads the Orientalists towards a danger zone. It is quite incontrovertible that they have shrugged this fact off that people are changing each second and it is certainly taboo to generalize on such a vast notion as ‘Orient’. The clichés of the Orientalists, among many other bones of contention, stimulated Nietzsche to state that “...now the world of experience and the thing-in-itself seem so ordinarily different and separate that it rejects any conclusion about the latter from the former” (23). He states that “Perhaps we will recognize then that the

thing-in-itself deserves a Homeric laugh, in that it seemed to be so much, indeed everything, and is actually empty, that is, empty of meaning" (24).

What deserves a *Homeric laugh*, in Nietzsche's words, is a set of clichés imputed to the Orientals: within this discourse an oriental is "a passive, childlike entity that can be loved and abused, shaped and contained, managed and consumed" (Sardar, 1999, 6). Orientals are 'inevitable liars', 'lethargic and suspicious' and "in everything oppose the clarity, directness and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race" (Said, 1994, 39). An Easterner "generally acts, speaks and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European" (Cromer, 1908: 164). The "accuracy is abhorrent to the Oriental mind" (Said, 38), and that their brainpowers, like their "picturesque streets" are "eminently wanting in symmetry" (38). They are 'gullible', 'devoid of energy' and "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different" (40). The Orientals are "half devil half child" (Sardar, 6) and whence absolutely untrustworthy. The Orient of Orientalists is never without 'its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness' (Said, 205).

If Said ruined the edifice of Orientalism and such stereotypes decades ago, native informers, in Dabashi's terminology (2006), or actually comprador intellectuals, both within the borders of the Islamic Republic of Iran and without, are making heaven and earth to chisel the aforementioned Oriental traits on the forehead of the Iranians. Pratt applies the notion of "autoethnography" to describe "instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer's own terms" (1992, 7). Our current approach to the issue does not match the definition in one aspect and that's the fact that Iran has never been colonized; however, some native informers within the country or abroad may undertake to 'represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer's own terms.' Such intellectual compradors endeavour to identify themselves with the Westerners and depict themselves as separate from the assumed *backward* Orientals. In the world of cinema, a structural binary opposition comes utterly lucid in the pattern of new movies. The movies portray characters which proffer such dualism between the westerners and easterners. The former party in this discourse turns to be 'us' and stands as the apotheosis which is better in each and every aspect from the latter 'them'. In terms of local movies the comprador intellectual is already at hand. An indigenous scenario writer, consciously or unconsciously, advertently or inadvertently, ratifies the Orientalist discourse to issue enough materials for the Orientalist minds to maneuver over. So as to fathom out how the latent Orientalism is striving to blight the face of Iranians, *Poopak and Mash Mashalla's* narrative is going to be scrutinized in the following section.

## 2. DISCUSSION

Discourse of the Orientalism, down the primitive ages of its conception till the present juncture, has not consigned the idea of 'erotic Oriental' into oblivion. One might think that 'Orientalism' and 'eroticism' are like two sides of a coin that can not be uncoupled. Each one owes its existence to the other. Consequently, one of the primal stereotypes imputed to the Iranians, *ipso facto* on the authority of simply being Orientals, is that they are depraved, fallen and licentious. Such a portrayal, as recent diaspora Iranian writers and also Orientalists have corroborated moves on a great length to be ascribed to the religious figures as well. Mash Mashalla is the religious sacrificial lamb of the movie who is doomed to be depicted as such, as a person whose blind impulse is far more powerful than his ethical facet. The narrative of *Poopak and Mash Mashalla* starts with Mash Mashalla proposing the crucial pieces of advice to the pilgrims. He is the administrator of a religious tour which takes the pilgrims to Haraame Razavi, Mashhad. Just here, at the outset of the movie, according to his job and his appearance – the archetypal religious men are depicted all the same in Oriental discourse - everyone would take him for a religious man, without hesitation. From the very beginning, his mind is portrayed to be occupied with the rights and wrongs of the religion and when a boy throws his ball into the pool and water splashes over him, he necessitates others quite angrily to force him sit somewhere. Mashalla says that the boy made them all *najes*, an Islamic term signifying uncleanness; however, an accurate and precise glance to Islamic laws makes it clear that such water splashed out of a big source of water is not *najes*; Nevertheless, as already touched upon, he is predestined to be laughed at as a stereotypical religious man. An authentic and precise reading of the scene in which Mash Mashalla is coming up with the essential instructions of the journey uncloaks another veiled impression as well: deliberating on the slips of tongues put forward by Freud, the ideal viewer of the movie would grab the covert points embedded in this scene. Mash Mashalla, consciously or unconsciously, uses the word *Jema'at* for *Jama'at* and while the latter alludes to an 'assembly of

people', the former signifies 'coitus'. If he has applied the word unconsciously, one can argue that Mash Mashalla's deep mind is so engaged with the idea of *jama'at* or coitus that he uses the word instead of *jama'at*. If even consciously projected, it unveils Mash Mashalla as one of those 'pervert' religious men about whom Azar Nafisi, another comprador intellectual and native informer vocalizes a lot in her *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. However, it seems that the word comes quite unconsciously from the dark and deep recesses of Mashalla's brain. Later on, when a couple tells him, that they are going to kill two birds with one stone, and actually consummating their marriage on the holy tour, Mashalla says that: "ahan, so you are going to do that thingy". Here, he tries to take on the religious façade and suppresses his own detrimental id.

More than being dissolute, Mashalla is completely authoritative and dogmatic. He forbids any relationship with the opposite sex whether physically or over the phone; nevertheless, he keeps a secret romantic relationship with Zohre, a girl he holds very dear, and on occasion, sings for her under her balcony, plainly reminding one of the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. Such a dualistic rendering strives to unveil Iranians and primarily their religious leaders as schizophrenic beings who while wearing masks of piety, possess a debauched mind inside. One can lucidly unravel that the ones who curb the sexual freedom are themselves sexually 'pervert'. Such is the case with Azar Nafisi, and many other diaspora memoirists as well, who believe that all religious men are sexually 'pervert'. Nafisi relates a story considering Nasrin and her uncle to corroborate the point:

"She had gone on to tell me, as she calmly put sheets of paper in blue file folders and entered the date and subject for each file, that her youngest uncle, a very pious man, had sexually abused her when she was barely eleven years old" (Nafisi, 2003, 107).

Mashalla's mind is swarming with sexual innuendos. On one occasion, when Mashalla is roaming within the realm of Zohre's neighborhood, he spots a groom at the door of the hair saloon. The moment Mash Mashalla catches a glimpse of him, his downtrodden id escapes the cage of suppression and commences on some issues full of sexual insinuations and undertones. Such portrayal of Mash Mashalla reminds one, and of course western audience, of Azadeh Moaveni's one-sided and inequitable claim that "everyone was addicted to talking about sex" in Iran (Moaveni, 2005, 71). The religious sacrificial lamb of the story, however, is not to be simply depicted as lewd and promiscuous, some other traits are stored within the hackneyed orientalist discourse to be assigned to him as well. Back to the presuppositions of the orientalist discourse, an oriental being is singled out with 'its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness'. Tendency towards despotism, repression and cruelty, as aforementioned, can be readily discerned. Mash Mashalla grants himself the right to prohibit others from committing the deeds that he himself engages in, most likely with immunity. He calls and woes his girlfriend Zohre, while forbids others from cultivating such a relationship. Subsequent to his negating Poopak for saying hi to her father for his mother, Mash Mashalla commences on new commandments. He forbids any relationship with the opposite sex whether physically or over the phone. His sermon is not yet terminated when his mother tells him that there is one who needs you on the phone; and when Mashalla asks the identity, she says it is a woman. Here, the curious looks hound Mashalla who is unreservedly overwrought. It is Zohre who has called him, his girl friend. The movie tries to deconstruct the pious veil of Iranian religious men, supposedly. However, Mashalla cannot put his trust in others. Once, due to a certain reason, an oral debate alters into a grappling stance which causes a lady to faint. Since the blacked out lady is a little bit overweight, others are in no way to come to a rescue and take her towards hospital. Mohsen turns up and tells others that they can place her over his shoulders and he will carry her into the car in order to be transferred to the closest medical center. Nonetheless, Mash Mashalla appears, notices, and slaps him strongly in the face. Mash Mashalla is the cruel religious Iranian man and is doomed to be rendered barbarous.

On the way back from the airport, Poopak's baggage is copious and fills up the whole trunk and the back seat. Hence, Mash Mashalla follows Mohsen and Poopak with a motor. On their way back home, Mash Mashalla tells them not to talk together - reminding once more of the oppressive nature of Iranian (Oriental) religious men - and when they insist, he obliges Mohsen to pull away. Mashalla's manners strikes Poopak as utterly bizarre and queer since she is coming from a Western culture and her mind is not adapted yet to the supposedly brutal and despotic demeanor of Iranian religious people. This part is drawing, once more, a picture of an Iranian religious man who is absolutely oppressive and rides roughshod over young boys and girls. On another scene, we are at Ehteram



Khanom's house. Posterior to some introductory notes considering the house, we find Poopak who decides to take a photo of Mash Mashalla. While approaching Mash Mashalla she is to take off her hijab, and as a result, Mashalla turns his face and requires Mohsen to do the same deed. Mash Mashalla inhibits her from taking off her hijab in the presence of two men. However, he put it in a language Poopak is not versed in and does not know: "Kashfe hijab nakon." When she asks of the meaning, Mohsen defines it as 'striptease' which is a total distortion of reality. The word, of necessity, might come as a new cultural commodity to occupy the Iranians who are not apprised of the meaning prior to looking it up in a dictionary. Just after this scene, we have Mashalla and Mohsen in the yard. One should bear in mind that the house is Ehteram Khanom's, and Mohsen has lived there from his childhood. Nonetheless, Agha Mashalla orders Mohsen to leave the house since he is under the impression that Mohsen is not trustworthy. This part reminds us of Taji, Marji's mother, in *Persepolis*, concluding that: "of course! Because they really are perverts" (Satrapi, 2004, 74). When Mohsen challenges him, Mashalla slaps him strongly in the face for two times, to manifest Mashalla's brutality and tyranny once more. When, in consequence, Mohsen asks him why he is sending him out of the house, he replies that Mohsen has got a bad history behind himself. This scene is enlightening since Mohsen, with a face quite denigrating, tells him that: "you don't have any bad history?!" The tone and voice of Mohsen makes everything clear for the audience. To the viewer again, the 'pervert' religious man of Nafisi pops up, the one that according to Taji since he himself is 'pervert', considers everybody as 'pervert'.

We are to spot another sheer gibberish on the side of Mash Mashalla to make a laughing stock out of him. On one occasion, we discern Poopak speaking with his father over the phone. Mashalla's mother asks Poopak to say hi to her father. The moment Poopak finds Mashalla back to the house, she disconnects the phone. Mashalla asks his mother to whom she said hi. Poopak replies that his mother said hi to her father. As a result, Mashalla goes fuming and tells Poopak that she has been quite erroneous in saying hi to her father for his mother. This comes quite bizarre and odd to see such a man like Mashalla in an Iranian public forum, let alone a Western milieu. He plays completely irrational, not only to the Western man, but also to the Iranian man. Such portrayal of Iranian religious man is too hazardous. The discourse of Orientalism is so mighty that would sneak into the mental faculties of the Orientals. Such movies are utterly authoritative in covertly inculcating and instilling the same discourse of Orientalism flowing outside the boundaries of the country to the mind of Iranians within the country. They bring the same craps exilic Iranian memoirists say about the despotic, oppressive and salacious religious Iranians to the mind. Movies as such can not be as bold as diaspora memoirs; nonetheless, they work progressively and systematically to convey the same things covertly step by step.

Mashalla's despotism does not cease at this stage. Mashalla also tries to ground Poopak and for that reason tells her mother to inhibit Poopak from getting out of the house. The intention reminds one of Betty Mahmoody's best-selling *Not without My Daughter* which relates her appalling ordeal in Tehran where she is grounded, molested and plagued. It strikes one that this movie, though a comedy, tries to communicate a sense of Iranophobia to its viewers, as some of the Iranian diaspora memoirs attempt to, but certainly in a lesser degree. At the end of movie, we get to the crux of the issue. The movie first tries to make a clown out of the sacrificial lamb, the religious man of the story and then castigates him. When Mashalla asks Poopak why she has locked him in, Poopak says that:

"Because you are so selfish; you want others to think the way you do, and to live the way you do. You let yourself to judge everything. At first, I didn't retort anything considering whatever you said since I wanted to respect your beliefs. I thought may be you would respect mine too. You let yourself to insult me, command me, restrict my relations, and to denigrate my friend. You think these are your rights; however, they are not. I am so sorry for you." (Poopak and Mash Mashalla)

It seems that Poopak, the symbol of west, is plainly inculcating the credos of orientalist discourse. There are some other characteristics detected in Mash Mashalla also, for example he is avaricious, a feature certainly not for the pious. Once, we hear Mash Mashalla who raises his voice and struggles with a couple for an extra seat. Mash Mashalla orders them to pay for three seats, since the fat lady needs two – it seems that the religious sacrificial lamb of the narrative is preordained to be portrayed as avaricious too. Mash Mashalla is also impolite. On many occasions, while talking to others and specifically Poopak, he employs a bad language. He is also depicted as a fool as we discern Mohsen once whom quite cunningly tries to poke fun at the sacrificial lamb of the movie, the despotic

religious man of the story. He tells Mash Mashalla that there is a possibility that Poopak is a spy. When Mashalla is petrified of the risk of such a possibility, Mohsen turns his face and laughs at his credulity.

Once again, let's consider the clichés of orientalist discourse: the "accuracy is abhorrent to the Oriental mind" (Said, 38) and that their brainpowers, like their "picturesque streets" are "eminently wanting in symmetry" (Said, 38). The powerful discourse of Orientalism sends out a signal and imparts that accuracy is abhorrent to the oriental mind; and native informers are ready to confirm it. It reminds one of Pax Britannica. The concept which signifies that occidentals are there to obviate the problems of the Orientals, as we can obviously see, at the end of movie, in the last resort, it is Sami and Poopak, the symbols of western world, who are talking with Zohre at the door of hair saloon to solve her and Mashalla's problem. As the orientalist discourse confirms, they are here to obviate the problems of the Easterners who need to be controlled. To orientalist discourse, the difference between East and West is the difference between modernity and ancient tradition. Mash Mashalla does not know even a soupcon about the identity of an 'email', since being enclosed in the Orientalist discourse, one can be whether religious or scientist, and not both concurrently. Anyhow, Poopak signs up an email address for him. Mashalla is standing there at the door and seemingly has been apprised by Poopak of many technological concepts; nevertheless, he has not got the core of the science as we see that he has understood the points somehow deficiently. He also plugs the telephone cable into the electricity socket and burns it. Mash Mashalla is depicted as a man poles away from the modern technology. Irrationality of Iranians is also painted with precise contemplation. Once, we notice a car packed with passengers. Four adult men are sitting in the front part of the car, and in reality, imperiling their own lives, but plainly unperceptive of, while they are carrying a patient to the hospital, which adds to the risk. Human beings as such certainly need some people to control them. On another scene, Poopak, a supposedly 'us', while being at the back seat, fastens Mashalla's safety belt to remind us again of another prototype Orientalism has chiseled on the forehead of Iranians. When accuracy is abhorrent to the Oriental mind, assuredly the science emanating from the spring of such minds is not to be trusted and as aforementioned through orientalist discourse, moves in the ancient tradition. Once, at a hospital, a doctor visits a fainted woman and asserts that she has had a stroke. She asks the doctor if her blood pressure is running low; however, the doctor insures Ehteram Khanom for ten more years to go without any problems. Unfortunately, posterior to this phone call, Ehteram Khanom is struck by a stroke. Iranian medicine is one of the best worldwide; however, it is held in contempt when we chance on a woman who is insured by an Iranian doctor not to encounter any problems for ten years, suffers from a stroke not half an hour after the doctor's assertion. Such a thing reminds one of the dualistic theology or Manichaeism of Orientalist discourse: one becomes 'us' and the other 'other'; one 'good', the other 'bad'; one 'developed' and the other 'undeveloped'. In such a hierarchy, Iranian science bottoms the pyramid of technology and westerners top it. There is no middle ground, whether developed or undeveloped, and Iran, as an Oriental territory is doomed to be portrayed as the dark side. On another scene, when Mohsen supplies Poopak with a hand-made toilet, she asks him of his occupation. He replies that he is a translator. Mohsen pronounces that he imports 'cultural packages' and then transcribes them for the use of those who do not know (English) language so as not to lag behind the contemporary science of the world. The golden point here is that these movies which are labeled as the 'cultural packages' inform Iranians of the upgraded science. The contemporary science of the world is being identified with the movies which are being made in the west. The same antediluvian notion of Orientalism which suggests there is no 'science' in the Orient pops up here. Mohsen continues that unfortunately no one in Iran pays heed to what they do, and asserts that they, the enlightened ones, are underprivileged and pressed there. Another immoral deed on the side of Orientals (Iranians) as certain diaspora Iranian memoir writers corroborate is that Iranians lie instantly. In police headquarters, Mohsen's cellphone rings; the policeman gets incandescent and the moment he asks whose cellphone is ringing, Mohsen 'lies outright' and claims it is not his. It reminds us of Afshin Molavi's assertion which Iranians 'lie outright' (Molavi, 2005, 142).

One more issue that we should zoom in on is the idea of availability of woman and erotic Oriental man. Oriental people are depicted as possessing a hot sexual drive while being unqualified to control it. Such people remind one of the people that Nafisi avoided their company, as she says: "I shunned the company of the Iranian community, especially the men, who had numerous illusions about a young divorcée's availability." (Nafisi, 83) Such a picture also portrayed in a delicate manner. On a scene, Poopak escapes towards the subway system. There, while waiting in line for purchasing the ticket for metro, she comes to know that she has not changed her money yet. There is a man who tells her that he would pay the money for the ticket and reminds the audience of Iranian hospitality. Poopak denies it at first but when she notices Mashalla approaching, he accepts it. They are to get in the metro when we detect the

man who paid for Poopak is going to hand over his telephone number to her. Here also, Iranians may again be despaired beyond repair. Even this act of mercy on the side of an Iranian alters to signify another sinister intention. Later on, we spot Poopak at Hasan Abad square while whose hand is full of telephone numbers. It tries to depict many Iranian men who could not curb their sexual impulses and wanted to have some affairs with her.

Contemplating on Marshall and Williams when they say that one stereotype explains the other, the religious sacrificial lamb of the story would represent the bundle of all religious Iranian men as the ones who are deeply egomaniac, ill-mannered, imperious, repressive, domineering and impertinent. Poopak's diatribe intends to attribute such traits to the Iranian religious men and then to necessitate them that they shall not interfere in the things that are not related to them.

### 3. CONCLUSION

As we considered, one can catch sight of the Oriental stereotypes, aforementioned in the introduction, flowing in an Iranian society rendered in *Poopak and Mash Mashalla*. *Poopak and Mash Mashalla* describes an Iranian community whose individuals and milieu jog the viewers' memories directly towards the orientalist prototypes: the religious sacrificial lamb of the narrative is deeply voluptuous, pervert, erotic, imperious, repressive, domineering, backward, hypocrite, "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different" (Said, 40), 'half devil half child' (Sardar, 6) and 'despotic by nature.' (Sardar, 7) Oriental people in this work of art lie outright; Science is outmoded and not up-to-date; Iranians are to be tutored and assisted by western agents; Occidental cultural packages should be brought in the country in order to brighten and familiarize Iranians with the modern technology. On the one side we have 'us' and on the other, 'them'. Iranians are rendered as the 'other' to the accuracy, morality, and rationality of Westerners. This reconfiguration of the Other as a modern structural binary opposition between anti-modern and modern Iranians occurs along two overlapping parameters (Rastegar, 2006): gender and religion. As lucid from the cares and concerns of the movie, women are the victims of an oppressive society, and the religious people are those who bolster up these oppressive policies. Consequently, religious symbols are the actual victims of an Orientalist discourse.

If Edward Said ruined the edifice of such cliché prototypes, the "comprador intellectuals" are striving to re-endorse them. Native informers advocate false notions without a hitch since they are not obliged to submit authentic sources for what they prattle on. They articulate many things on society, men, women, constitution, and history of Iran without sufficient knowledge to furnish their works with a tinge of veracity. Such works do their utmost to vandalize a country gradually and covertly. This movie, which is a product of a native informer, avails itself of a collective amnesia and strives to brush off the precious values and cultural products of an Islamic republic from the book of history. The movie's greedy longing for admiring Western agents spells out a defaming and vilifying attitude towards local Iranian history and culture. Nonetheless, one shall not put this fact into oblivion that such movies just submit subjective discursive mappings of the world. Peter Novick, considering such a discourse, asserts that: "public discourse doesn't just shape private discourse, it is its catalyst; it sends out the message "this is something you should be talking about" (Novick, 1999, 97). Imperialism acts out as a 'catalyst'. It simply presents the scenario writers with a message, a quite dictatorial one: you must articulate what 'we' crave for. So as to accomplish this, the collective amnesia and selective memory join forces to let them submit to the passions of imperialism. An orderly deprivation of a collective memory paves the way for such movies to paint a vast nation as a dark sphere whose account was passed above. It strikes us as if, in Francis Fukuyama's terms, we are hitting 'the end of history'. It seems as if no one has ever recorded the heroism and warm-heartedness of Iranians manifested in different zones. We are not attempting to represent Iran as a utopia, what we want is to omit the prejudices against Iran, to detach the affiliated attributes of Orientalist discourse from Iranians. Nonetheless, we are dealing with symbolic power in this sphere, which is the "power to construct a hegemonic version of reality" (Tuastad, 2003, 591). *Poopak and Mash Mashalla* moves heaven and earth to fashion a hegemonic version of reality, to illustrate the reality as it is not. The native informers at hand here, "following in the tradition of their European predecessors ... have glorified, exaggerated, and fantasied about an East, which, far from being real, is more the stuff of dreams and fancy" (Bekhrad, 2012).



One essential question raises here: what should we do in order to fight the influence of such movies off in the West, and also inside? Of necessity, the moment anti-Iranian movies are produced, Imperialist bells start tolling, and they commence on making a sword out of it to disparage Iran. Since the power of Western media is so formidable, we should counter them with dominant media; but, since the Western agents possess the most paramount media, we should gradually introduce the real Iranians to the world and stop stereotyping. We can spot both virtuous and malicious people in Iran as in the West. So why shall we stereotype the East?

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