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The Discursive Construction of Saudi Women in the American Media

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THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF SAUDI WOMEN IN THE AMERICAN MEDIA

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Lama Abdullah J. Alharbi

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This study aims to examine the common discourses that circulate around Saudi women in the American newspapers. Focus was put on four American news organizations: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Time Magazine* and *The Associated Press*. The news reports have been collected between 2010 and 2013. The collected data was analyzed by using critical discourse analysis (CDA). Findings from the study reveal that the mainstream coverage of stories about Saudi women is rife with an Orientalizing gaze where Saudi women are constructed in a monolithic sense in which they have homogenous goals, needs and dreams. They are also portrayed as “oppressed,” deficient, subordinate, submissive, and non-agentive women who unquestioningly accept patriarchy and domination. Thus, Saudi women need to be saved and their rights need to be defended. The study also shows how the structure of American news discourses plays a role in the circulation of the ideologies of power and hegemony.