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Aspects of Orientalism in Lawrence Durrell's Novel *Justine* (1957)

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Dedication

In the name of Allah, *Most Gracious and Most Merciful*

We dedicate this work to our parents who supported us and gave us the strength and will, we ask God to grant you health and endless happiness.

To our beloved family.

Acknowledgements

Our university journey has come to an end after all the hardships and difficulties, and here we are concluding our graduation dissertation by God's grace.

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Abstract

This study aims at examining and analysing Durrell Lawrence's *Justine* as a fictional novel from an Orientalist scope. It attempts to explore the western perception regarding the East by addressing the question of how the Orient was depicted in the novel through shedding light on some traits and aspects as well as extracting images about the place and its population that have been hinted at in this literary narrative. Thus, in dealing with such subject, historical, descriptive and analytical approaches are adopted in this dissertation. The present memoir consists of two chapters, the first chapter includes a general background of the concept of Orientalism which is considered as the defining point in the course of Oriental studies while the second chapter is concerned with the analytical part that displays how the notion of Orientalism is demonstrated in Durrell's literary work. Consequently, the author's attitude towards the Other was mostly negative due to his failure to capture the true reality of the Arab society, as he limits his scope to tell of their corrupt, unflattering, savage lives. In the end, it can be said that Lawrence Durrell's *Justine* was like the earliest Orientalist narratives that displays the biased examination of the Orient presenting it as an exotic and mysterious land populated by inferiors, uncivilized and backward.

Key words: Orientalism, Perception, The Orient, Lawrence Durrell's *Justine*

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General Introduction

The 20th century had witnessed a huge development in different fields including Literature. It was one of the major fields in humanities that noted a shift in its view of the world and its issues. This shift was due to the impact of civilization during such global conditions, which gave birth to a variety of new literary theories and one of those theories was Orientalism. Throughout history, the relationship between the Western world and the Eastern Arab world has always been characterized by prejudice and stereotypes. The West was seen as a faultless civilization, superior, full of intellect and modernity, whereas the East is looked at as mysterious, fanatic, and a place full of primitiveness.

The book *Orientalism* 1978 by the late Palestinian thinker Edward Said is considered as one of the landmark works in Orientalist literature, which presented the most important descriptions by which the Orientalists described the culture of the East, and the reality of its people. Moreover, the period of the twentieth century is considered as the age of travel. Travel became a part of the ordinary life of the common people due to the enormous possibilities and facilities that have occurred. For that, the East was and still is a subject of interest for Western researchers of various origins and countries. This interest was manifested in their literary production, as many Orientalists were openly hostile to this civilization. Their writings contributed in drawing and shaping a picture that may be correct and closer to reality and the true spirit of the Arab community, as it may be misleading and distorted for one reason or another.

In fact, the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a large number of English travelers that have taken an interest in the Orient in general and Egypt in particular. One of the most famous orientalist books written about Egypt at that time was the fictional literary work *Justine*; the first volume of the *Alexandria Quartet*, which was created by the British

General Introduction

novelist Lawrence Durrell. Its publication has left a remarkable impact on the fictional writings that came after and it is considered as the epic of the twentieth century.

The present dissertation centers around Orientalism in Lawrence Durrell's novel *Justine*. It seeks to investigate the characterization of the native Orientals as well as their land by a European writer who holds a superior position for himself. It aims to reveal whether the book includes a set of stereotypes and misconceptions that were previously introduced as subjects in the orientalist writings about the so-called Orient. Through this research paper, the following questions are going to be answered:

- How were the Orient and its population depicted in this literary work ?
- Was Durrell's novel a real and sincere portrayal of the other or just a pure orientalist imaginary based on fiction and existing stereotypes ?

This work is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is a theoretical part that provides an overview and a set of definitions of the notion of Orientalism along with its origins as well as presenting some of the popular images of Orientals. In addition, it includes defining travel writing as a literary genre related to orientalism, concluding with Durrell's personal and professional life. The second chapter, however; is a practical part that seeks to analyze Lawrence Durrell's *Justine* emphasizing on the stereotypical features of the Orientals and the city, as well as shedding light on sensuality as the main theme presented in the novel.

Chapter One:

Orientalism and

Travel Literature

Chapter One: Orientalism and Travel Literature

1.1. Introduction

1.2. Orientalism

1.2.1 Orientalism Definition

1.2.2 Historical Background

1.3. Famous Stereotypes about the Orientals

1.4. Travel Writing

1.5. Lawrence Durrell's Biography and Works

1.6. Conclusion

1.1. Introduction

The Orient, since ancient times, has been a destination for many travelers and orientalists, whose passion and curiosity led them to explore this vast expanse of the world, which includes in its sides various forms of cultures, customs, civilizations and religions, that these travelers observed and documented during their stay in the Eastern world. The Western dominance led to the birth of scholars under the name Orientalists, who have produced a substantial body of literature filled with a huge amount of information about the orientals, which were often unrealistic descriptions from their imagination. This has contributed to the formulation of Western false perceptions of the East in general and the Arab world in particular, expressing the intellectual background of the civilizational conflict between them. Thus, the Orient remained an enigma for the Occident, which promoted their study whether to present new images towards the East or simply to maintain the old picture created by the West to aggravate its power.

Hence, in this chapter light will be shed on the notion of Edward Said's 'Orientalism' and its historical background and definitions from different perspectives. It provides also a broad definition of the literary genre of Travel writing as well as presenting various images about the East and its people, as drawn in the writings of the Western Journeys, from different points of view, then followed by a focus on Lawrence Durrell.

1.2. Orientalism

Generally speaking, during the 19th century, a lot of western scientists and scholars shed the light on describing and investigating the term Orientalism, which is based on giving an inclusive study and depiction about the aspects of the Eastern culture and civilisation. For that, they deliberately emphasized on such portrayal and descriptions that differentiate the East from the West through the European depiction of the Orient. Various literally

works focus on the portrayal of the Orient and its people lifestyles, in addition to the basic intellectual structure of the Orientalist enterprise. In other words, Orientalism is seen as a colonial discourse which focuses on many fields such as literature and culture that are shown during the colonial years in the eastern world.

In turn, Edward Said in his famous book *Orientalism* presented how westerners often present the Orient from different sights depending on their needs and requirements and associate the East with a lot of misconceptions. As a result, Orientalism became a widespread debatable theme that gained a lot of various meanings among a number of scholars; yet Edward Said is the most prominent figure in shaping Orientalism.

1.2.1 Orientalism Definition

Broadly, the concept 'Orient' was mainly associated with the Eastern region. It denotes all that is represented as different, bizarre and out of the western world. In addition, the first use of the concept of Orientalism was by the literary critic Joseph Spence in the *Essays on Pope's "Odyssey"*, published in 1726. He indicates "Orientalism" as a "new word", the "true sublime" saying:

I cannot express the fullness of the words but you know the original (.....); and in particular, give us a higher Orientalism than we meet with any other part of Homer's writings. You will pardon me a new word, where we have no old one to my purpose: You know what I mean, that Eastern way of expressing Revolutions in Government, by a confusion or extinction of Light in the Heavens (quoted by Kalmar 19).

As mentioned in the above passage, the new word was meant to denote the different systems of government between the East and the West. This clearly indicates a negative meaning as illustrating the east with confusion, hesitation and puzzlement.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), during the 18th and 19th centuries, the term has been referred to as "the work of the orientalist, a scholar versed in the languages and

literatures of the orient (Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabia, later also India, China and Japan, and even the whole of Asia); and in the world of the arts to identify a character, style or quality, commonly associated with the Eastern nations” (Macfie 2).

In the same context, Orientalism is established as one of the most essential delayed concepts in modern scholarship that was presented by a collection of scholars and thinkers many of whom lived in and derived knowledge from the Orient. Hence, the concept was given a variety of definitions by those thinkers. Thus, Claire Mabilat claims that Orientalism “is an element and part of an immaterial potential fight between East and West: through Orientalist assumption and depictions, the East was depleted and more straightforwardly conquered” (3).

Otherwise, Ziauddin Sardar affirms that “there simply has never been a determinate object that is the orient. The orient is purely a device book from which stands can be taken to mode whatever suits the temper of times in the west” (28). In addition to the Orientalist thinkers who have various perspectives on the term Orientalism such as French orientalist-scholar Maxime Rodinson as well as Rodri Bart and other intellectuals and philosophers originating from the orient including A. L. Tibawi and Anouar Abdel-Malek.

Basically, Orientalism is a discourse of seeing the orient from the occidental view. More precisely, it refers to the prejudiced interpretation of Asia and the Middle East from a Western perspective. The Palestinian-American professor, author and activist Edward Said wrote his 1978 book titled *Orientalism* making his Palastenian Arab identity central to his work. He links the concept to a lens that distorts and misrepresents the actual reality of people and places in the East. Edward Said mentions that “the orient was almost an European invention” (1) in which the Western cultures were, thus, unable to comprehend the Eastern cultures as they were so different to their own. Instead, they attempted to judge and define it without having any real understanding of what they were talking about. Therefore, Rudyard Kipling in one of his poems wrote this line “Oh, East is East, West is West, and never twain

shall meet". These two entities can never meet because both are entirely different from each other.

Said argues that Europeans and Americans constructed images of the Orient that include Asia and Arab countries as "a place of Romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (1). Such characteristics have intertextual references to the world of the *Arabian Nights*; flying carpets, Jinns, submissive seductive Arab women... Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio claim that "*The Arabian Nights* played a decisive role in forming the general image of the Islamic Middle East in Europe" (xv). Pictures that reduced the orient to a dark place that lived in the white man's imagination as violent, sensual, exotic and mysterious.

In fact, Orientalism is based on describing the Western ideas, thoughts and scholarship in relation to the Orient, the Arabs, and Islamic people as savages, barbarians, inferior, wild, brutal in particular. For that Edward Said affirms that, "One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which were the truth about them to be told would simply blow away" (6). It is clear that the Orientalism that was found out in Western literary texts by Said is absolutely a fictional and fanciful phenomenon, in which the reality and truth were replaced by lies, fantasies and myths.

Moreover, the term Orientalism was described from the Orientalist work which is attached with the eastern community in literature and tuned to be a collective foundation used for dealing with the Orient and its assimilated theme and subject matter. In addition, the incomplete perspective regarding Islam, a tangible instrument of the western capital imperialism, and a way of thinking according to the anticipated structuralism, objectivism and religious discrimination between the orient and occident.

In a nutshell, Orientalism constructs a false reality of the Eastern Oriental body. The identity that was given to those of the Orient is consequently inaccurate and misleading.

Orientalism developed shortly after the European powers came into contact with the "lesser developed" of the East. They recognized these alternative Eastern cultures as incredibly foreign, bizarre and somewhat exotic. The West consequently began representing and speaking on behalf of the East, simultaneously creating identities and stereotypes of this new found Orient. This has listed people of the West into a position of power; they were able to authorize and control views of the East by creating a dominant ideology of the orient. Said is able to define Orientalism at last as a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the orient" (3), by means of the knowledge it was able to produce about this region. Moreover, Said notes that:

Orientalism, therefore, is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable investment. Continued investment made Orientalism as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid of filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness, just as that same investment multiplied ...indeed, made truly productive - the statements proliferating out from Orientalism into general culture (Said quoted by Hussein 7).

Hence, according to him, the development of Orientalism formed a system of knowledge or a grid that filters the East into the consciousness of the West.

1.2.2 Historical Background

The concept of Orientalism was used to refer to the attempts made by some Western thinkers to find out the features of the Islamic world and its civilization. The term "Orientalist" was also applied to the scholars who study the Eastern culture; its social, political and economic history. Thus, in talking about the history of Orientalism, it is not easy to determine the first beginning of Orientalism. It is not known exactly who was the first Westerner concerned with oriental studies, nor at what time. Scholars held different opinions in which some dated it back to the days of the Islamic state in Andalusia; where some Western monks went to

Andalusia during its greatness and glory, and were educated in its schools by Muslim scholars in various sciences, especially philosophy, medicine and mathematics. As Mamasulova Gulnoz Abdulkasimovna mentioned in his article "The Concept of Orientalism and Its Influence on English Romantic Literature":

At first, western scholars carried out initial studies of Muslim traditions, then gradually penetrated into the history of Islam, and for this they had to learn the Arabic language, its alphabet. Afterwards it was the turn to study the origins of Eastern peoples, their languages, the way of life, their culture, their religions, their worldviews and so on. Thus, the concept of "Orientalism" appeared and developed in the West. Since that time, the thoughts and interests of Oriental scholars in the West have focused on Arabic alphabet, Islamic civilization, the discipline of Islamic studies, due to several actors mainly religious and political motives (21).

This has shown the interest of westerners in the Islamic culture since early modern time as they translated the *Quran* and Arabic books into their languages. Therefore, some consider that the first indications of Orientalism are linked to the appearance of the first Latin translation of the *Holy Quran* in the year 1143 AD while others such as Bernard Lewis dated it back to the days of the Crusaders that witnessed a clash between Christians and Muslims over the control of the Holy Land. This is indicated by L. K. Solomon as

"God wills it!" was the battle cry of the thousands of Christians who joined crusades to free the Holy Land from the Turks. From 1096 to 1270 there were eight major crusades and two children's crusades, both in the year 1212. Only the First and Third Crusades were successful. In the long history of the Crusades, thousands of knights, soldiers, merchants, and peasants lost their lives on the march or in battle (110).

The Crusader movement played a central role in the global events that centered on the beginning of the Middle Ages, the face-to-face meeting of East and West, the emergence of the Crusader phenomenon, and their fascination with the East. Thus, after the end of the war, the Crusaders showed their growing impress and astonishment with the oriental world. As a

result, the East has become a destination for many travellers among them writers and painters as they started writing stories about the region and its inhabitants.

In other words, it is difficult to be precise about the origin of the opposition between the West and the East. In the Middle Ages, since the advent of Islam and its expansion, European Christians have viewed Muslims as their infernal enemies. Western countries looked with great hatred at the spread of Islam and the strength of Muslims, as they finally saw that it was not possible to stop the Islamic tide except by invading it intellectually while showing friendship to the Arabs, and other Muslims, a time when they make their extreme efforts to resist Islam and confront the Muslims. To extinguish the light of Islam, this trend of the Christians has remained in the form of a fierce struggle throughout the history of the Christian and communist West alike, as this led to the difference of scholars in determining the emergence of Orientalism for the first time, but it was certainly after the Crusades and the defeats inflicted on the Christians.

Overall, the dialectic of the relationship between East and West throughout history has been a matter of contention, and has oscillated between acceptance and rejection. Perhaps one of the most important features of the ambiguity and tension of this relationship is the Orientalist movement.

1.3. Famous Stereotypes about the Orientals

From the earliest times, the West misrepresented the Eastern people and presented them as inferior and incredibly different. It assigned the Orient distinctive stereotypical features and characteristics rather than recognizing the individual countries and accompanying cultures. It placed them under an umbrella of uniform identity. So essentially, fanaticism, barbarism, violence, terrorism and all what is negative and regressive were always associated with Arabs and Muslims publicly in the western mind.

Obviously, the western writers deliberately misinterpreted and spread their misperceptions in Europe. They presented themes such as backwardness, cruelty, and hostility that have offended the oriental traditions and civilization for they considered the Eastern people as stupid objects having no comprehension of the Western civilization. They presented through their literary works as well as their films the Eastern inferiority and decadence unlike the Western superiority and modernity. These stereotypes have remained in place over time, repeated through various sources such as texts and the media. They have consequently become a normalized and unquestionable way of viewing the East.

There is a very common assumption amongst the West that the Arabs are violent and Africans are sexually obsessed. Examples of this can be seen in the translation of the collection of the the Middle Eastern folk tales often known as the *Arabian Nights* that widened the western writers' imagination, including elements such as flying carpets and eroticism. Men in the East lacked masculinity and women appeared only as sexually exotic and belly dancers dressed in scandalous clothes dancing in front of everyone. These were the most prominent characteristics of harems portrayed in the Orientalist writings that were largely unrealistic.

In other words, such tales usually offered sexualized depictions of Eastern women. The story of William Beckford's *Caliph Vathek* is considered as one of these tales that have left a landmark in the world of Orientalism. Thus, the Middle Eastern societies in general and the Arab in particular are presented as more sexually arousing and sensual than other societies. The late academic Edward Said developed the term Orientalism to describe how Europeans portray the Orient as inferior, uncivilized, uncultured and all around weird. But more importantly, Said argued that this was also, simultaneously, about defining Europe as the Orient's opposite as superior, civilized, and all around wonderful (9). For this reason, the Arabs from a western perspective are extremely fanatical and dangerous.

Additionally, during the time of visiting and exploring the oriental lands particularly in Algeria, a lot of travellers provided some biased images about the Arabs; more precisely the Algerians. Among these travellers was Lambert Playfair in his account *Handbook for Travellers in Algeria and Tunis*, he described the Orientals as underdeveloped, backward, and inferiors. He portrayed them saying, “thenomade existence is not without its advantages among a people so primitive and so filthy in their habits” (9). In other words, he described their character as “lazy and indolent to excess” (11). Lloyd Evans was another orientalist writer who offended the Algerian civilization seeing it as “champ de manœuvre”; this clearly denotes the innate rudimentary and backwardness of its inhabitants (64). Overall, the Arab race and the Algerian population were being linked and connected to primitivism and inferiority.

The orientalist depiction was sometimes overly dramatized and exaggerated to fit the general image of the exotic Orient culture. In *An account of The Manners and Customs of The Modern Egyptians* (1836), Edward Lane depicted the oriental Egyptians saying that “The Arabs are a very superstitious people; and none of them are more so than those of Egypt. Many of their superstitions form a part of their religion, being sanctioned by the Qurán; and the most prominent of these is the belief in ‘Ginn’ or Genii, in the singular, ‘Ginnee’” (222). They were associated with superstition, false doctrine and magic.

Besides, alongside the negative image of brutality and inherent barbarity, Orientalists formulated a false picture of Oriental women, presenting them as oppressed women, obsessed with amusements and subject to slavery. They were seen in most orientalist works by western writers such as Lane as “the most licentious in their feelings of all females who lay any claim to be considered as members of a civilized nation; and this character is freely bestowed upon them by their countrymen, even in conversation with foreigners” (Lane 295). He added that:

some of the stories and the intrigues of women in *The Thousand and One Nights* present faithful pictures of occurrences not infrequent in the modern metropolis of Egypt. Many of the men of this city are of opinion that almost all the women would intrigue if they could do so without danger; and that the greater proportion of them do (296).

Hence, such offensive description and exotic scenes are deliberately used to spread the western misconceptions and attract the European audiences presenting an image of the east they desire to see.

Furthermore, the culture of stereotyping also extended to include movies and films as well. Such stereotypes are explicitly and meticulously explained and illustrated in the Disney's 1992 film *Aladdin*. The film is set in the land of Arabia and follows street-smart thief Aladdin in his quest to pursue his beautiful Princess Jasmine. However, it provides a huge amount of stereotypical Arab behaviour and characteristics that display an aggressive portrayal of Middle Eastern people and culture. The supposedly evil characters in the film carry a stereotypical Eastern appearance with darker skin, large noses, beards and headdresses. Audiences are consequently encouraged to associate these characteristics with the evil and barbaric qualities of the characters that embody them. These biased perceptions first hinder a true visual understanding of the East and its inhabitants.

In a web article titled "The Aladdin Controversy Disney Can't Escape" Sophia Smith Galernotes: "The film was criticized for perpetuating Orientalist stereotypes of the Middle East and Asia. The American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee saw light-skinned, Anglicised features in the heroes Aladdin and Jasmine that contrasted sharply with the swarthy, greedy street merchants who had Arabic accents and grotesque facial features". Thus, the East is no more a free topic of thought or action, rather it is utilized to define the west. The orient is essentially pitted against the West in order to highlight the European cultural superiority. This division between the two causes the Orient to become a sort of

alternative inferior other which highlights the supposedly modern educated and democratic qualities embodied by the West.

In *Aladdin*, the land of Arabia is referred to as barbaric, encouraging the audience to recognize it as uncivilized and brutal place. Throughout the movie, Aladdin encounters various situations violent in nature; for example, he is chased down alleyways by characters waving bare swords. Their behaviour reflects the environment in which they live; one that accommodates uncivilized, irrational people who are not hesitant to attack one another. The Oriental environment of Arabia, thus, become synonymous with barbarism and danger and its people irrational and wild in nature.

Walter B. Denny, Distinguished Professor of Art History at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, specializing in the art of the Islamic world, states that “those first three or four minutes of the Disney film *Aladdin* are basically very prejudicial. They create a very, very false and a very, very prejudicial view of the Islamic world”. He added “one of the most important ideas behind orientalist art has been to show the Islamic world in a position of either moral or cultural inferiority to that of the west” (*Al Jazeera Plus*). Hence, the audience is positioned to view the East as inferior to the West through highlighting its cultural differences and downfalls from a western viewpoint. Films such as *Aladdin* depict these people and their accompanying cultures and environments in a particularly biased way.

To sum up, the Orient is basically a concept supported by history that have granted it a reality and existence. Therefore, Orientalism is the consequential viewing of this created Orient and the ensuing stereotypes and expectations laid upon the people and cultures associated with it, specially by travellers who wrote about it.

1.4. Travel Writing

The word 'travel' basically means the act of moving by someone from one place to another aiming to explore new surroundings as well as engaging with different people. Some travellers started to note down their journeys forming a new literary genre known as travel writing. This art of literature appeared first under the category of history books, geography, and biographies ...

Generally speaking, "literature is closely associated with travel" (Baghli Berbar 30) and thus, it includes a wide range of different writings that include various aspects in terms of the writer's style, the purpose of writing, and the interests of both, the writer and his audience. But these writings all have in common that "they always tell the story of a journey" (Korte 9) that a person takes to a place for a reason of exploring new places and people with different lifestyles and cultures that were not previously known. In keeping with Said who argues elsewhere that "The point of theory therefore is to travel, always to move beyond its confinements, to emigrate, to remain in a sense in exile" ("Travelling Theory Reconsidered" 421). Therefore, this denotes that intellectual people should live a life of an outsider, stranger, migrant and exile.

Nonetheless, travel literature is a literary genre that recites a journey partaken by an author to unfamiliar lands as he recalls his feelings, experiences, and the geographical settings around him. It includes books about adventure, exploration and personal journeys. Furthermore, the events in travel literature can either be real or fictional that happened in a geographical setting, usually unfamiliar to the reader. Thus, most of the authors of this genre, early on, were travelers and explorers who visited exotic new places and brought back their stories with them which "have always been popular, feeding their reader's imagination with tales from faraway lands" (Baghli Berbar 24). They recount the events of their travels and

what they witnessed and lived through mixing that with their personal impressions about the other cultures.

At its infancy, travel writings, according to Souad Baghli Berbar, were mainly told orally, as people who travel came back to their homes with exciting and strange stories to tell. However, as writing arose, especially with the rise of the novel, travellers made sure to keep detailed accounts of their trips, “had long been instructed to keep careful records of their movements, to direct the travellers who would follow in their footsteps and fill in the gaps of geographical knowledge” (Sherman quoted by Baghli Berbar 23).

This type of writing has been defined diversely by many authors and scholars. Thus, in her book, *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations* (1996), Barbra Korte argues that travel writing is “defined by the interaction of the human subject with the world” (5). She states that most travelers are more likely to be strange to the land they visit, thus these detailed accounts allow the reader to experience the author’s journey, as well as to imagine taking part in it without leaving the comfort of their homes. Accordingly, travel books are among the most important geographical, historical and social sources, because the writer derives information and facts from real observation and direct photography, which makes reading it rich, enjoyable and entertaining. In this meaning, Korte stated that:

Accounts of travel depict a journey in its course of events and thus constitute narrative texts (usually composed in prose). They claim – and their readers believe – that the journey recorded actually took place, and that it is presented by the traveller him or herself. Within this basic frame of definition, accounts of travel manifest themselves in a broad formal spectrum, giving expression to a great variety of travel experience (1).

This literary genre was mainly associated with the production of representation of the non-Western world particularly ‘the other’, which clearly created, biased perceptions and constructed false realities of the so-called “Orient.” As mentioned by Casey Blanton that

“Once I understood, however, that travel books are vehicles whose main purpose is to introduce us to the other, and that typically they dramatized an engagement between self and world” (Blanton xi).

Historically, the relationships between the Orient and the Occident have been created during the early 17th century. This period witnessed a remarkable rise in travel writing which contained many stories of journeys composed by those western travelers, who were traveling to the exotic Orient for the purpose of discovering the surrounding areas and their civilization. Europeans began traveling to MENA as explorers as well as tourists and started writing their adventures in the form of narrative accounts and letters. Nonetheless, eighteenth-century traveler-writers became popular in England due to the growing number of merchants and travelers concerned with trade in the Mediterranean Sea.

As the movement of trade exchange between the West and the East continued to expand, hundreds of writers came and traveled conveying the lives of Arabs and Muslims in their writings. Yet, the western imagination about the Orient seemed to be existing in the mind of western people since ancient times.

A large number of novels and stories can somehow fall under the name of travel literature as this broad name is able to accommodate the works of many orientalist writers who were interested in recording everything they saw and heard even if it was superstition beyond the scope of mind. Such as the fictional literary work of the twentieth century, *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) by Paul Bowel. The famous travel fiction of the life in Algeria narrating the fictional life of Americans Port and Kit, a couple who have been struggling and are hoping to reignite their relationship on their trip to Northern Africa accompanied by their friend Tunner. Yet, they found themselves surrounded by danger as the trip turned into a battle of survival. The story includes some difficult issues such as existential despair, ignorance of the Arab culture, the complexity and challenges of a triangular love affair, sickness, and death.

Thence, these travelers enriched literature with books and autobiographies of their experiences and observations about the Orient that provided information about the area and its people after spending years in direct contact with them, but most of the time negatively. They wrote down literary works that distorted the real narrative of the Orient such as T.E. Lawrence, Edith Wharton, and Wyndham Lewis. Moreover, in the description of the book *Orientalist Lives*, James Parry states that:

In one of the most remarkable artistic pilgrimages in history, the nineteenth century saw scores of Western artists heading to the Middle East. Inspired by the allure of the exotic Orient, they went in search of subjects for their paintings. *Orientalist Lives* looks at what led this surprisingly diverse and idiosyncratic group of men—and some women—too often remote and potentially dangerous locations, from Morocco to Egypt, the Levant, and Turkey. There they lived, worked, and traveled for weeks or months on end.

This emphasized the idea that Orientalist travelers to the MENA region were numerous in discovering the East and its inhabitants to reflect their perception in their writings. This is what added a new source of information about the East to the English literary repertoire and shapes this type of writing as a literary genre.

Consequently, Travel literature has been and is still of interest to many scholars and researchers throughout the ages, and from various perspectives. Orientalist travel writers follow the western tradition of using the oriental imagery which was in fact nothing but a pure western imagination as well as in instances in which writers resort to the familiar imagery of the orientalist discourse for a lack of more accurate ones. Hence, they presented through their works negative oriental stereotypes that linked the Arabs and Middle Easterners with prejudicial images such as lawless, savage, and fanatical creatures.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, travel writing tended to be more fictional as can be seen in the works of Lawrence Durrell, *The Alexandria Quartet* published between 1957 and 1960 in which the author forms much of his fiction according to his

personal experience. The series of books can often be a little complicated and convoluted and somehow over-sentimental but all of them are tethered down by the most important character, which is the city of Alexandria itself.

1.5. Lawrence Durrell's Biography and Works

Lawrence George Durrell, British novelist, poet, travel writer and dramatist. He was born on February 27, 1912 in Glandhar, India, near the Tibetan border, of Protestant Irish and English descendants. He studied in England, yet he lived most of his life in the Mediterranean region: Cyprus, Corfu, Rhodes, Egypt, and the south of France. At the age of eleven he was sent to continue his education in Britain, but he did not adapt well to the atmosphere there and was generally unsuccessful in formal education and failed the entrance exams to the University of Cambridge. Moreover, On January 22, 1935, Durrell married Nancy Isobel Myers, the first of four marriages he had. Durrell moved with his family to Greece in March of the same year.

In 1942 after getting divorce, he headed to Alexandria, where he got married for the second time to a seductive Jewish woman, Eve Cohen. This latter was considered as a symbol of the character Justine as Charles Trueheart in his Article entitled "A Seductive Spectacle: The languid bazaar of Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* still beckons 50 years later," claims that "Despite his short stay in Alexandria, he did come away with a second wife, Eve Cohen, widely regarded as the model for Justine" (Trueheart 139).

Durrell was actually exploring different places as a temporary home in which he wrote different literary works. *The Black Book* was his first novel, published in 1938, which shows the extent of the influence of his friend, the American novelist Henry Miller who had a long friendship with Durrell and epistolary exchange. Thus, according to an article in *Britannica*, the amorphous structures of Miller's novels may have influenced Durrell and vice versa. Yet, after his divorce from Eve in 1952, Durrell went back to Greece and started writing his popular novel *Justine* following other novels and, thus, he was best known for his four

successive literary works known as the *Alexandria Quartet*. It is a work of fiction that certainly contains heavy elements of travel memoir as Lawrence Durrell wonderfully and exhaustively explores the city of Alexandria as well as a handful of its inhabitants during the years preceding WWII.

Thus, *Alexandria Quartet* consists of the novel *Justine*, which was published in 1957, *Balthazar*, which was published in 1958, *Montolive*, which was released in 1959, and *Clea* that was released in 1960. In Durrell's masterpiece, the *Alexandria Quartet*, the first three novels tell the same series of events from different perspectives with each new novel recontextualizing what actually happened. Yet, the fourth and final novel revisits the same characters five years later adding the perspective of time.

Alexandria was considered as a kind of rehabilitation for him in part due to the great Greek population at that time. Nevertheless, he was seen to dislike this part of the Egyptian city and tried to forget it, and, thus, was carefully trapped in Greek life and thought. Alexandria was originally haunted by the ancient spirit of this place since its original founder Alexander the Great and partially established by his Greek friends and the verses of the Alexandria's poet, C.P. Cavafy who spent most of his life in this city (Hassan9).

Therefore, in thinking about Durrell's prose style of the *Alexandria Quartet*, it has a kind of, richness, sensuality and a beauty as well. According to Dasenbrockin "Lawrence Durrell and the Modes of Modernism", he was influenced by the works of such high-class novelists as James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence in England, who had a huge influence on his writing (516). These novels are characterized by a set of mirrors that serve to explain and support each other using Henry James's technique; the different narrative points of view. His works include the flowery language, extraordinary characters, and vibrant descriptions of the Mediterranean and the city of Alexandria in Egypt during the 1930s. Durrell described many issues of love, presented by the main characters from different angles in order to portray the

truthfulness of their experiences. In reading his work for the first time, one can feel the exoticism since the events of his novel are set outside England.

Following the success of *The Quartet*, the first version of Durrell's *Collected Poems* was published in 1960. After the death of Durrell's wife Claude in 1967 with cancer, he felt isolated and demoralized; this is evident in his later poetry, especially *Red Limbo* and his following novels (Hassan16). Durrell, married the attractive French journalist and actress Ghislaine de BoyssoninNovember 1973 for the fourth time, then he started working on a series of novels that would constitute a quintet (Hassan 17).

Consequently, the Quartet is one of the most immersive works ever created in fiction that put him in the ranks of the deans of modern English literature such as Henry Miller and James Joyce. In addition to the *Alexandria Quartet*, his novel *Prince of Darkness* won the James Taite Black Memorial Prize in 1974. The middle novel, *Constance, or Solitary Practices*, was nominated for the Booker Prize in 1982; and, by the turn of the century, Durrell was a bestselling author and one of England's most popular writers. At last, Lawrence Durrell's death was in November 1990. The subjects of most of Durrell's literary works were selected through his numerous travels and his living in exile.

1.6. Conclusion

In its most general sense, Orientalism has been defined as the academic discipline that studies the language and culture of the Orient usually understood as meaning the Islamic countries of the Near and Middle East. Later, this notion seemed to be defined as a literary genre in which the Orientalists produced a lot of works, writings and opinions that instilled many images in the Western imagination about the Orient. Some of which were described as good and admired its cultures, and some of them exaggerated and underestimated the Other. Hence, the oriental stereotypes as well as the orientalist writings had contributed in shaping the Orient in the mind of the western audience. The unfair description of the last has been anticipated in

anumber of literary works and films which had a biased and racist motive that paints a comprehensive view of the East. The consequences of such unfair portrayal lead to the rejection of the other, represented in the Middle East, Asia, and the Black Continent where their people are always seen as less important and less ranked. Durrell can be considered as one of those Orientalists travel novelists who depicted Egypt and its inhabitants in his novel *Justine*.

Chapter Two:
Aspects of
Orientalism in
Lawrence Durrell's
Justine

Chapter Two: Aspects of Orientalism in Lawrence Durrell's *Justine*

2.1. Introduction

2.2. The Summary of *Justine*

2.3. The Main Characters in Durrell's *Justine*

2.4. Alexandria as an Arab City in *Justine*

2.5. Orientalist Eroticism in *Justine*

2.6. Conclusion

2.1. Introduction

The second chapter of this dissertation is concerned with a literary analysis of the aspects of the novel *Justine*. It will be divided into four sections: The first section provides a summary of the novel under study, which is vital in order to conduct an accurate analysis of the literature under study and give an overview about the plot of the novel. The second section, will be dedicated to an analysis of the portrayal of the main characters of *Justine* by Lawrence Durrell using Edward Said's Orientalism theory. Then the third section will focus on the depiction of Alexandria as an Arab city, which further displays Durrell's Orientalist ideas. Finally, the last section will focus on studying the theme of Eroticism in relation to Alexandria, as a part of the Western discourse about the East.

2.2. The Summary of *Justine*

The novel *Justine* follows the life of four main characters living in Alexandria, Egypt, in the period before the Second World War. The narrator claims that the city is a central part of the story and drives the character's actions as it has a huge influence on them. The story begins with the unnamed narrator talking about his life after the events of the story; he describes his life as quiet and peaceful as he raises Melissa's offspring. The narrator then switches the setting and timeline to his previous life in Alexandria.

The narrator is a schoolteacher struggling to make ends meet, he meets Melissa, a dancer and prostitute, and they have an immediate connection. The mutual attraction is shown when she sacrifices the services of an old man who pays her well to be with the narrator, which could be due to his act of care and help, and the kindness he showed her when she fell ill. The narrator delivers a lecture and is approached by Justine who introduces him to her husband Nessim. The narrator and Justine start to spend a lot of time together and end up in an affair, which affects Nessim who is frightened that he might lose his wife, and Melissa

who feels that she cannot compete with the rich and beautiful Justine. Aware of his wife's infidelity, Nessim refuses to confront her despite the desperate attempts from Melissa to convince him to do so, their interaction and shared pain that is caused by their lovers, bring them closer together and they become romantically involved and later on, Melissa leaves Alexandria due to an illness.

The conflicts intensify when a man named Capodistria rapes Justine. This incident sends Nessim into a state of rage and determined revenge. He goes on a hunting trip to kill Capodistria, however, the outcome is not clearly stated in the novel but most likely, Nessim ends up avenging his wife. When he returns to Alexandria, he finds out that Justine has left the city. The narrator also leaves the city after he lands a job in Upper Egypt and a few years later, he gets the news that Melissa is on her deathbed and asking to see him. The narrator returns to the city but finds out that Melissa has already passed away and left a daughter behind from her affair with Nessim. The narrator learns that Nessim is planning to give her up for adoption because he fears that Justine might not ever return to him if he kept the child and so he volunteers to raise her as his own daughter.

2.3. The Main Characters in Durrell's *Justine*

Durrell was a witness of the declining power of the British Empire in the Middle East and on the global level. He tells his story from his personal position, which is that of a member of British diplomacy, a mixture of bon vivant and adventurous, thus taking a close look at the *Quartet* and Durrell's representation of Alexandria, one cannot deny Durrell's vision of a Western world that is ending and the fable of an Arab world that begins to wake up. By examining the various characters and passages, his work was characterized as a clear example of orientalism, in terms of Edward Said definition. His representation of Egypt and the Middle East would then be traversed by the canons of political and cultural colonialism.

While reading *Justine*, one can sense Durrell's inability to cope with the fact that Europeans and Arabs coexist and live side by side in Alexandria. Perhaps, the presence of Europeans in the city during that period of Cosmopolitan Alexandria has rendered it impossible for Durrell to shape the city in a clear orientalist image, which involves showing the inferiority of the Arab society which is the core idea of Orientalism "that Orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the West than on the Orient, and this sense is directly indebted to various Western techniques of representation that make the Orient visible, clear, "there" in discourse about it" (Meighoo 123). This means that only the Western literature about the Orient makes it possible for the West to understand the Orient and it is what Durrell does, describing Alexandria based on his Western view, instead of depicting the lives of the natives. It by no means suggests that the cosmopolitan state of Alexandria did not exist during the time of the events of *Justine*, however Durrell limits his focus on describing the downside of the city which is the reason that makes the story takes place in the European corner of the city, dismissing the Arab quarter. Egyptians of low extraction, of the Muslim religion, are the ones who sustain the country and the city and Durrell does not hesitate to call them typical Egyptians when referring to a character whose physical deficiency makes them ugly.

Durrell's tone throughout the novel expresses a sense of grief over the gradually vanishing presence of the European as he writes "This city has been built like a dyke to hold back the Wood of African darkness; but the soft-footed blacks have already started leaking into the European quarters: a sort of racial osmosis is going on. To be happy one would have to be a Moslem" (Durrell 59). The author sees the growing presence of the Arabs and Africans as a loss and misfortune that has overcome Alexandria, which is a reinforcement of the idea that all that is Orient or Arab in this case, is inferior compared to that of Western origins consequently, the departure from Western lifestyle is the destruction of Alexandria. In describing the natives, Durrell negatively portrays them, saying "whose coarse and derived

distinctions, menial preoccupations and faulty education gave them no clue to what style in the European sense was”(Durrell 29). The writer ridicules the natives and the way they dress, showing the primitiveness and inferiority of the inhabitants of the city as being uneducated and uncivilized; consequently, having no understanding of the western civilization. During an account of a group of Syrians, he describes them in an extremely unflattering manner stating, “A small circle of Syrians, heavy in their dark suits, and yellow in their scarlet turbushes, solemnly sit. Their hippopotamus-like womenfolk, lightly moustached, have jingled off to bed in their jewelry” (Durrell 58).

Moreover, when it comes to the characters, Durrell's *Justine* lacks any major Arab characters; he deliberately excludes any Arab representation and thus limits their voice. The Arabs are used as minor characters, sometimes only mentioned as a part of the scenery, “Below on the amorphous brown-violet *meidan* by the railway ration, forlorn in the fading dusk, little crowds of Arabs gathered about groups of sportsmen playing at single-rick, their shrill cries muffled in the fading dusk” (Durrell 84). The author rarely mentions Arabs in the novel and when he does, they are dismissed from the action but only stand there to decorate the scenes around the main characters. The only exception of major characters being of Arab descent is Nessim who is in the novel described as rich and powerful. Yet, Durrell insists on informing the reader of Nessim's religion “To begin with he was a Copt, not a Moslem. Yet somehow the nickname was truly chosen for Nessim was princely in his detachment from the common greed in which the decent instincts of the Alexandrians” (Durrell 29). He insists on the fact that Nessim is not truly considered Arab and molds his character to resemble that of a Western aristocrat.

Another striking example of the Orientalist ideas of Durrell in *Justine* is the manner in which he describes the natives when the narrator visits the Egyptian quarters describing what he sees as “a thousand dust-tormented streets. Flies and beggars own it today.” (Durrell

17) He only depicts the unflattering side and dismisses any other image of the Egyptian corners. Furthermore, when the narrator talks about the natives, his interactions always take place in brothels. For example, his love interest at the beginning of the novel, Melissa, is a dancer and works as a prostitute, her character is associated with the brothel nightlife of the city. Melissa's character can serve as a depiction of an Orient sample in the novel, despite her not being an Arab. She represents the fate of a poor woman living in Alexandria, making ends meet through prostitution. It is either that fate or Justine's, who marries a wealthy man to escape the life of poverty, yet she remains unhappy and constantly cheats on her husband. Melissa's occupation itself in the novel denotes the Eastern females who appear as belly dancers in the oriental tales, which is a stereotype that haunts Eastern female representations in male narratives.

Although both Justine and Melissa can stand as a depiction of the destiny of a woman in Alexandria, when it comes to the description of their physical traits, the author displays positive emotion, displaying them as beautiful women, which stems mainly from their race, given the fact that Justine is Jewish and Melissa is Greek. However, when he talks about Egyptian women, his demeanor and tone change drastically as in

An Egyptian woman — absorbent, soft, lax, overblown; given to veneers; their waxen skins turn citron-yellow or melon-green in the naphtha-Wares. Hard bodies like boxes. Breasts apple-green and hard — a reptilian coldness of the outer flesh with its bony outposts of toes and fingers (Durrell 59).

He compares the women to reptile creatures, which displays his degrading view and detachment from any humane feeling towards the natives. However, when it comes to Melissa's physical description, he retains a positive approach describing her as having "blue-veined phthisic hands. Her eyebrows artificially pointed upwards to enhance those fine dauntlessly candid eyes" (Durrell 21). He adds, "Watching the long bereft Greek face, with its sane pointed nose and candid eyes, the satiny skin that is given only to the thymus-dominated,

the mole upon her slender stalk of the neck” (Durrell 50). The author is clearly impressed by her beauty and the delicacy of her Greek features.

Similarly, when it comes to Justine’s description, it is meant to make the reader fall in love with her. He describes her as having “magnificent white teeth” (Durrell 22) and a “Lovely head — the deep bevel of that Arabian nose and those translucent eyes, enlarged by belladonna” (Durrell 30). The contrast he displays when describing the European race in comparison to the Orient shows his racist attitude towards the East, not only when it comes to savagery or lack of education, but also the very features of their race; their physical appearance.

In addition, there is the character of Selim who is the secretary of Nessim, in a scene where the narrator is talking with Hamid he says “One-eyed Hamid told me one day of a mysterious caller who had told him that he must keep a careful watch on his master as he was in great danger from some highly-placed personage. His description of the man might have been that of Selim, Nessim’s secretary: but it also might have been any of the 150,000 inhabitants of the province” (Durrell 122). It gives a rather negative connotation that all people of Selim’s race look alike.

The narrator’s diction when describing the Arabs serves to ridicule their state of poverty. When talking about Syrian prostitutes, he says, “Some of these encounters with poor exhausted creatures driven to extremely by physical want are interesting, even touching, but I have lost any interest in sorting my emotions” (Durrell 24). He depicts them as uni-dimensional, seeking physical pleasure with no other depth to their personalities. In addition, Selim’s character is completely submissive to his ‘master’ Nessim. There is a scene where the narrator interacts with Selim “I asked Selim the meaning of this scene and he simply shrugged his shoulders and pointed at Nessim’s door. “He gave me the orders” was all he said.” (Durrell 142). He is fully loyal to Nessim that he does not have a voice of his own.

Durrell successfully draws a line between the European quarter and the Arab quarter, providing the reader with his views of the Arabs and the way they live. These negative observations and accounts come off as racist and they do not provide a deeper and more accurate insight into the Arabs for the western reader, they only reinforce the misconceptions and stereotypes the West has about the Middle Eastern society.

2.4. Alexandria as an Arab City in *Justine*

Durrell's *Justine* is set in the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria; he is able to give a realistic and vivid description of its scenery including the cafes, brothels, and streets, all of which is thanks to his military service in Alexandria. Durrell insists in the novel "only the city is real." (Durrell 13) However, there are various misconceptions when it comes to the city of *Justine*.

The shops filling and emptying like lungs in the Rue des Soeurs. The pale lengthening rays of the afternoon sun smear the long curves of the Esplanade, and the dazzled pigeons, like rings of scattered paper, climb above the minarets to take the last rays of the waning light on their wings. Ringing of silver on the money-changers' counters. The iron grille outside the bank rill too hot to touch. Clip-clop of horse-drawn carriages carrying civil servants in red flowerpots towards the cafés on the sea-front. (Durrell 22)

Durrell successfully renders the autonomy of the city and its atmosphere. However, when it comes to describing the native quarters, he states that the city "Alexandria, outwardly so peaceful, was not really a safe place for Christians." (Durrell 125), indicating religious intolerance, which stems from the stereotypical idea that Muslims have a negative, violent attitude toward Christians and Jews. The author's negative impression of the city is evident in the novel, as in the story of a Swedish vice-consul whose wife is killed by the savage native inhabitants of the city:

To find her body sitting normally on the back seat — without a head. Police were summoned and the whole district was combed. Some Bedouin encamped nearby were among those interrogated. While they were busy denying any knowledge of the accident, out of the apron of one of the women rolled the missing head. They had been trying to extract the gold teeth which had been such an unpleasant feature of her party-smile. This sort of incident was not sufficiently uncommon to give one courage in visiting strange quarters of the town after dark (Durrell 126).

Such horrible incidents in the strange darkest quarters of the town denote the brutality and hostility of the locals. This shows the aggressive portrayal of the natives linking them with barbarism and backwardness. This behavior clearly reflects the environment that these people live in which is a repetitive theme in Western literature. Stories about the East are always related to savagery and how being in such an environment can render any man a savage as well.

Furthermore, the narrator associates Egypt in general with cruel and horrific incidents such as kidnapping and rape. This is clearly illustrated through the abduction of Justine's little child as it is stated by the narrator "these things do happen quite frequently in Egypt as you know" (Durrell 82). Children are a sensitive subject; they represent the weakest among us and the depiction of their atrocious conditions elevates the level of the savagery of the natives. The narrator talks about the child prostitution that happens in the Arab quarter of the city, informing the reader of the fate of orphans in the cruel city of Alexandria, which is the sexual exploitation of "parentless children" (Durrell 82).

The author shows the dirty Oriental place of the city Alexandria and describes it to be consisting of "a thousand dust-tormented streets. Flies and beggars own it today — and those who enjoy an intermediate existence between either" (Durrell 17). He paints an image of a decaying city that lacks any morals and drowns in poverty and filth. Besides, Durrell further insists on the dark entity that is Alexandria, by painting a negative portrait of the city stating:

Streets that run back from the docks with their tattered rotten supercargo of houses, breathing into each others' mouths, keeling over. Shuttered balconies swarming with rats, and old women whose hair is full of the blood of ticks. Peeling walls leaning drunkenly to east and west of their true centre of gravity. The black ribbon of flies attaching itself to the lips and eyes of the children — the moist beads of summer flies everywhere; the very weight of their bodies snapping of ancient flypapers hanging in the violet doors of booths and cafés. The smell of the sweat lathered Bebeerine's, like that of some decomposing stair-carpet (Durrell 26).

The author shows the savagery and the barbarity of the local native Egyptians and the horrible city they live in through Clea's narration of her childhood:

A house with an earthen floor alive with rats, dim with wicks floating upon oil. The old money-lender drunk and snoring, drawing in with every breath the compost-odours, soil, excrement, the droppings of bats; gutters choked with leaves and breadcrumbs softened by piss; yellow wreaths of jasmine, heady, meretricious. And then add screams in the night behind other shutters in that crooked street: *thebey* beating his wives because he was impotent. The old herb-woman selling herself every night on the flat ground among the razed houses — a sulky mysterious whining. (Durrell 56)

The author's detailed description of how the nights are in the poor quarters of Alexandria through Clea's eyes is intentional to illustrate the psychology that this unfortunate Western character is being exposed to. He reminds the reader later on in the same passage that "we Europeans in such disharmony with the fearful animal health of the blacks around us. The copulations of boabs shaking the house like a palm-tree. Black tigers with gleaming teeth. And everywhere the veils, the screaming, the mad giggle under the pepper-trees, the insanity and the lepers. Such things as children see and store up to fortify or disorient their lives." (Durrell 56). Even though Clea lives in the same place as the natives, she is different from them and is repulsed by what she witnesses. Durrell's negative attitude towards the orient people of the city and Alexandria as an Arab city is evident in the novel due to his failure to capture the true reality of the Arab society at that period, as he limits his scope to tell of their corrupt, unflattering, savage lives.

In another passage in the novel, Durrell includes a quote said by Nessim saying: “I remember Nessim once saying — I think he was quoting — that Alexandria was the great winepress of love; those who emerged from it were the sick men, the solitaries, the prophets — I mean all who have been deeply wounded in their sex” (Durrell 18). This indicates the author’s opinion about Alexandria, being a force that corrupts the soul of foreigners who lived in it. And in another passage, Nessim says to Justine “Why don’t we leave this city, Justine, and seek an atmosphere less impregnated with the sense of deracination and failure?” (Durrell 147). Nessim’s plea to his wife expresses the hold the city has on them, a strong influence that drives them to unreasonable behaviors and brings them unhappiness.

The only time the author describes the city in a positive manner is when he speaks about the weather in Alexandria “In autumn the female bays turn to uneasy phosphorus and after the long chafing days of dust one feels the first palpitations of the autumn, like the wings of a butterfly fluttering to unwrap themselves. Mareotis turns lemon-mauve and its muddy flanks are starred by sheets of radiant anemones, growing through the quickened plaster-mud of the shore” (Durrell 43). Although he attempts to draw a positive account of Alexandria, he focuses on the realistic part of his account of the city; which is the weather. And sometimes the location of cafés and railroads but he never gives justice to the portrayal of the social classes and diversity of the population that does not only include the presence of the Europeans at the center of the story. He continuously excludes the natives, who remain minor characters, given no depth nor complexity to their personalities. They serve as a counterpart to display the superiority of the West in comparison to the Orient.

It is a universally known fact that Egypt is a Muslim land. Its history stands as a monumental heritage of Islamic history. And even though it melts a hybrid of nationalities and religions, the identity of Alexandria remains a part of an Islamic state. Yet, in the novel the author describes the city as a morally decaying place, where sin is the norm; “the Arab

quarter of every town, through every house of ill-fame, since you know what happens to parentless children in Egypt” (Durrell 82). The author is referencing to the child prostitution that happens in the dark parts of the Arab towns. He continuously paints Alexandria as a city where premarital sex is a common practice; however, it is not the only reality of the Arabs, as there are parts of their lifestyle that are faithful to their religion where premarital sex is frowned upon by the Muslims. Durrell's inability to include religious practices, which are an inevitable encounter while living in a Muslim country, could be seen as misleading for the Western reader. The stereotypical attitude of relating the Orient subject with sex has been a repetitive theme in western literature. Egypt is still viewed as the land of Cleopatra and Cæsar. Thus the western author becomes fixated on sex and forbidden love.

In various analyzes of this quartet of novels, the vividness that Durrell achieves in the description of the city of Alexandria, the place where the plot unfolds, has been successfully rendered. He provides a detailed and realistic description of the city; however, once the characters are introduced, the city falls back to its mysterious nature, having a complex identity of its own similar to a main character. The relationship between the narrator-writer of the novel with *Justine*, the protagonist, displays the typical western gaze in the face of the enigmas of the Arab culture: “I was bewitched by the illusion that I could really come to know her; but I say now that she was not really a woman but the incarnation of Woman admitting no ties in the society we inhabited” (Durrell 61) says the narrator of his lover. In addition, like *Justine*, the city seems to resist being decoded by Darley's foreign eyes, seeing that many of his perceptions are displayed as simple, incomplete, or alien when confronted with the natural ability of Clea or Balthazar to inspect the city's mysterious essence. This elusive nature stems in part from the city's complexity, similar to that of *Justine*, described by the narrator as “a true child of Alexandria, which is, neither Greek, Syrian nor Egyptian, but a

hybrid" (Durrell 28). This draws a parallel between Justine's character and the city of Alexandria, mysterious and untamable.

The author of the novel reveals that he is "rebuilding" (Durrell 18) Alexandria in his mind based on his recollection of the city through his memory. In addition, since he is a western white man, the way Alexandria is registered in his memory is affected by Orientalism that Edward Said defines as "a Western style for domination, restructuring, and having authority over the orient" (3). Durrell mentions the word 'rebuilding' when talking about the city, which is linked with the word "restructuring" in Said's definition. Both words are similar with one another. Consequently, Durrell portrayed the city, particularly, the Arab quarter and its natives in a biased and prejudiced manner.

In their book *Simianization: Apes, Gender, Class, and Race*, Wulf D. Hund and Charles. W. Mills investigate the origins of the racist description of Oriental people as the product of sexual unions between men and animals. As a result, they are looked at as beasts. Reading the novel, the author describes the natives in a similar manner: "we Europeans in such disharmony with the fearful animal health of the blacks around us" (Durrell 56). Durrell paints them as having animalistic features and traits. Another scholar who studies the Western discourse about Africa is MandisiMajavu. In his book *Uncommodified Blackness: The African Male Experience in Australia and New Zealand*, he argues that Africa was considered "as a contagious continent incubating pestilences of all sorts in hot muggy jungles" (38). Similarly, Durrell's diction matches that of the stereotypical racist western white man. He uses the same word "pestilences", to describe Justine's room in the native quarter: "Our room bulging with darkness and pestilence" (Durrell 56). Moreover, the description of the muddy streets full of soil, rats, and swarms of flies is similar to that of muddy jungles that are used by the white man to describe African land.

2.5. Orientalist Eroticism in *Justine*

The East has been both a source of fascination and disturbance for the West for a long time, especially with the rise of travel writing that depicts the east as an exotic land full of mystery and savagery. It has been shaped by tales of phantasm and fantasy that are charged with sexual discourse “and in this, a central figure emerges, the very embodiment of the obsession: the Oriental woman” (Hussein 153). All of this is related, naturally, to the type of gaze that Europeans project on the East and, particularly, on Egypt where luxury and eroticism serve to characterize a world that only exists in their imagination. Among the works that display this type of fantasy and mindset toward the East is Durrell's *Justine*.

They flash their sweet white teeth in little feminine smiles. They sigh. A white robed waiter with a polished ebony face brings coffee. A silver hinge flies open upon heavy white (like the thighs of Egyptian women) cigarettes each with its few flecks of hashish. A few grains of drunkenness before bedtime. I have been thinking about the girl I met last night in the mirror: dark on marble-ivory white glossy black hair: deep suspiring eyes in which one's glances sink because they are nervous, curious, turned to sexual curiosity (Durrell 59).

This paragraph reflects some of Durrell's colorful and sensual narration in *Justine*; of that city where different races, religions, and human types mix and intertwine. All those unknown worlds in a city where sexuality is always latent, as well as multi-colored layers of human realities: homosexuality, prostitution, holiness, madness, poverty in a setting of great beauty portrayed by the writer in sunsets, the imposing desert and the corners of the Egyptian port.

The overly mystical and sexual nature of the inhabitants of the city stems from the power Alexandria has on them. This obsession with relating Egypt with sex and love affairs goes way back to the tales of Cleopatra who married her own brother, which became a stereotypical image that defines the city. Moreover, in *Justine*, Durrell depicts it as “the city as one big brothel; a city of incest” (Hussein 153). This draws an undeniable parallel between the history of Cleopatra and the Orientalist thought.

Like Cleopatra, Justine represents the embodiment of Alexandria which adds to the city's exoticism. She represents the Oriental woman and as a result, Durrell's depiction of the city must match that of the Western thought about the land, sex, and savagery. The issue of love affairs and sexual encounters between Oriental women and Western men ought to be included in the context of depicting Alexandria and its women. “Hence, the Alexandrians become the recipients of some (European) desires and consequently the Quartet becomes a catalogue of the Western man's (Darley's) exotic exploits.” (Hussein 156). And this is quite evident in the novel, as Durrell depicts the women as prostitutes and belly dancers with no depth or ambitions. He records through the events of the novel and thoughts of the characters his own personal experience of sex and romance. Durrell's Alexandria keeps records of the narrator's love affairs with the females in the novel, who resemble Cleopatra; these Oriental women, full of lust, always fell for the Western charm of the narrator.

The author's description of the general mood of the city includes accounts of the intoxicating sensuality of Alexandria. This narrative is common to that of nineteenth-century travelers like Burton and Flaubert, and the idea of freedom to experiment with sex is associated with the Orientalist mystical land where the Western male can enjoy his sexual desires that are not obtainable in his country. Similarly, in *Justine*, the elements of love and sex are the central forces that drive the novel; they are associated with the oriental scene,

which in this case, is Alexandria. The author freely narrates the sexual identity of the city without any other point of view that challenges it, identifying it with the most despicable acts, which is child prostitution, pointing at one of the corners in the city: "It was a house of child prostitution." (Durrell 42) and in this case, without the natives' perspective about it, as they remain in the background as minor characters.

The narrator portrays himself as an Antony and his lovers as a Cleopatra that has been introduced to the west "largely inspired by the mythical Cleopatra that has pervaded the Western mind since Shakespeare's play, and superposed with the more recent image of the dancing girl, selling cheap sex to the Western man" (Baghli Berbar 180). This stereotypical image haunts the women in the novel and labels the city as a city of incest, infidelity, prostitution, homosexuality, and the sexual exploitation of children. The combination of all these features is what makes up Durrell's Alexandria. Furthermore, the theme of the love story between Cleopatra and Mark Antony is full of misconceptions and inaccurate facts, all of which are manipulated to appeal to the western reader.

It is evident in the novel that Durrell, like his fellow European men, has a fixation with Cleopatra, this is clearly illustrated when he describes the "insensible figure of Melissa in the soft Bukhara rug. Together we staggered with her down the corridor and into the blessed privacy of my box-room where, like Cleopatra, we unrolled her and placed her on the bed" (Durrell 52). This comparison to Cleopatra draws a parallel between the western view of the oriental females and that of Durrell. Throughout the novel, Melissa is portrayed as "the typical eastern prostitute" (Baghli Berbar 180), her profession as a belly dancer and a prostitute, that pays her debt to people by offering them sex as payment. While Justine does not have to engage in prostitution, she is still sexualized by the author. Although she is

married to Nessim, it does not stop her from sleeping with other men, who fall in love with her just like the narrator does. She is well aware of the consequences of her actions

She lay beside me, breathing lightly, and staring at the cherub-haunted ceiling with her great eyes. I said: 'It can come to nothing, this love affair between a poor schoolteacher and an Alexandrian society woman. How bitter it would be to have it all end in a conventional scandal which would leave us alone together and give you the task of deciding how to dispose of me.' Justine hated to hear the truth spoken. She turned upon one elbow and lowering those magnificent troubled eyes to mine she stared at me for a long moment. (Durrell 28)

Justine is well aware of her wrongdoings yet she still leads a lifestyle of self-destruction. She does not only harm herself with her actions but also makes those around her suffer, particularly men. For example, the narrator's fear of Nessim's reaction, if he finds out about his affair with Justine, surrounds him with anxiety and a sense of danger. In addition, when Melissa's lover threatens him "For weeks her lover, the old furrier, followed me about the streets with a pistol sagging in the pocket of his overcoat. It was consoling to learn from one of Melissa's friends that it was unloaded, but it was nevertheless alarming to be haunted by this old man" (Durrell 25).

The feeling of danger sets in and contributes to the mood of the city. Although physical danger haunts the men in the novel, the spiritual danger is what eventually defeats them, "the spiritual danger of experiencing disintegration and madness like Nessim or undergoing moral undoing like the narrator who ends up emotionally strung on a deserted island" (BaghliBerbar 181). The male characters are affected by the force that Alexandria is as if it is an unenviable fate for anyone who falls for her beauty, a tragic tale similar to that of Mark Antony.

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, *Justine*, the first part of the *Alexandria Quartet*, is a practically unique reading experience: beautiful, sensual, difficult at first but progressively captivating; it creates a whole universe of characters and above all an almost mythical urban environment that attracts and repels at the same time. However, Durrell's ambitious attempt to depict Alexandria falls into the issue of inaccuracy as it is considered an Orientalist work that forces a false narrative on the reality of the East, including his racist attitude toward the natives and his sexual fixation with the Oriental female that is clearly depicted in the novel. The significance of Orientalism theory applied on the novel emphasizes Durrell's view that the West is superior to the East. Furthermore, it displays the misconceptions in Durrell's description of Alexandria in which he fails to provide an accurate representation of the Arabs. His racist approach to the natives displays one of the essences of the Orientalist theory.

General Conclusion

This research paper was written for the aim of analysing the Orientalist aspects in the novel *Justine* by the British writer Lawrence Durrell. Thus, his depiction and representation of the Orient was mainly formed on the Orientalist discourse. Orientalism represents the image that was drawn in the mind of the white man about the Other; whether it was real or a mere fantasy. The Western views about the East have been formed as the land of historical legends and strange customs that may not appeal to the Western mind.

The first chapter dealt with Orientalism and its historical framework as well as some prominent definitions related to this notion. Moreover, it is necessary to mention Edward Said's book, which is in itself a turning point in academic research. Through his book *Orientalism*, he tries to reach a conclusion which originally lies in stating that the facts presented by Orientalists about the Middle East and North Africa are invalid and misleading as they tried to form a new identity for the Orientals associated with inferiority and savagery.

Furthermore, in terms of western representation of the East, travel writings were among the most important sources adopted in revealing what the world knows today about the ancient civilization of the East. Thus, the emergence of this literary genre has resulted in the production of abundant literature. From this, many stereotypes, descriptions and clichés were presented in their literary works painting the features of the Eastern, barbaric, low and backward man in their eyes; enabling the western audience to see an Orient filled with hostility and cruelty.

Then, the second chapter of the research work was about the literary analysis of the novel *Justine* (1957). As the examination of the novel has the objective of reflecting the aspects of Orientalism in the book, this research arrived at the conclusion that Durrell's attitude towards the East, and particularly Egypt, was mostly negative as he provided many Orientalist stereotypes about the oriental Alexandrians being inferiors, beggars, and primitive

General Conclusion

as well as his bias towards the city; presenting Alexandria as an exotic, evil and dangerous land that is responsible for the sins of its inhabitants. Hence, it is noted in the writings of Durrell that he ranges from excessive sensuality to extreme prejudice that distorts the reality of the Islamic religion and the Egyptian culture.

As for the second research question, the author's portrayal of the Other in his novel was based on the preconceived image that he had in mind about the MENA region, that is to say, he provided those similar typical orientalist prejudicial descriptions and images formed in the last centuries which served as an explicit justification for the orientalist mind that Durrell adopted. Consequently, the chosen novel is considered as a perfect example for orientalist fiction to expose the western narrative of the Arab world. As a result, *Justine* is basically an orientalist literary work that displays the biased examination of the so-called Orient.

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Résumé

Ce mémoire porte sur l'examen et l'analyse du roman *Justine* par Lawrence Durrell en utilisant la vision Orientaliste. Il tente d'explorer la perception occidentale de l'Orient en abordant la question de la représentation de l'Orient dans le roman en mettant en lumière certains traits et aspects ainsi qu'en extrayant des images sur le lieu et sa population évoqués dans ce récit littéraire. Ainsi, en traitant de ce sujet, des approches historiques, descriptives et analytiques sont adoptées dans laprésenteétude. Ce mémoire se compose de deux chapitres, le premier chapitre comprend un contexte général du concept d'orientalisme qui est considéré comme le point déterminant dans le cours des études orientales avec un accent sur l'écriture de voyage, suivi par le contexte de l'écrivain qui a affecté sa perception. Alors que le deuxième chapitre concerne la partie analytique qui montre comment la notion d'orientalisme est présentée dans l'œuvre littéraire de Durrell. Au final, on peut dire que *Justine* de Lawrence Durrell est similaire premiers récits orientalistes qui présentaient l'Orient comme une terre exotique et mystérieuse peuplée d'êtres inférieurs, non civilisés et arriérés.

Mots clés : Roman anglais, Orientalisme, l'Orient, *Justine*, stéréotypes

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص وتحليل جوستين للكاتب لورانس دوريل باعتبارها رواية خيالية من منظور استشرافي. تحاول استكشاف التصور الغربي عن الشرق ومعالجة كيفية تصوير الشرق في الرواية من خلال تسليط الضوء على بعض السمات والجوانب وكذلك استخلاص صور عن المكان وسكانه التي تم التلميح إليها في هذه الرواية الأدبية. وبالتالي ، تم اعتماد المناهج التاريخية والوصفية والتحليلية في هذه المذكرة . تتكون هذه الرسالة من فصلين ، الفصل الأول يتضمن خلفية عامة لمفهوم الاستشراق الذي يعتبر النقطة الفارقة في مسار الدراسات الشرقية إلى جانب التركيز على ادب الرحلات ، تليها خلفية الكاتب التي أثرت على تصوره. بينما يتضمن الفصل الثاني الجزء التحليلي الذي يعرض كيف يتم توضيح مفهوم الاستشراق في عمل دوريل الأدبي. في النهاية ، يمكن القول أنرواية جوستين للورانس دوريل كانت مثل أقدم الروايات الاستشرافية التي قدمت الشرق على أنه أرض غريبة وغمضة يسكنها اشخاص دون المستوى ، غير متحضرين ومتخلفين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرواية الإنجليزية ، الاستشراق ، الشرق ، جوستين ، صور نمطية

Summary:

This study aims at examining and analysing Lawrence Durrell's *Justine* as a fictional novel from an Orientalist scope. It attempts to explore the western perception regarding the East by addressing the question of how the Orient was depicted in the novel through shedding light on some traits and aspects as well as extracting images about the place and its population that have been hinted at this literary narrative. Thus, historical, descriptive and analytical approaches are adopted in this paper. This dissertation consists in two chapters, the first chapter includes a general background of the concept of Orientalism which is considered as the defining point in the course of Oriental studies along with a focus on travel writing, followed by the background of the writer that affected his perception while the second chapter is concerned with the analytical part that displays how the notion of Orientalism is demonstrated in Durrell's literary work. In the end, it can be said that Lawrence Durrell's *Justine* was like the earliest Orientalist narratives that presented the Orient as an exotic and mysterious land populated by uncivilized and backward inferiors.

Key words: English novel, Orientalism, the Orient, *Justine*, stereotypes