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**Department of English**

# **The Perception of Arabs and Islam in Edward Said's Orientalism**

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements of The Master degree**

**in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Civilisation**

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## ♣ *Dedication* ♣

*I would like first of all to thank my precious  
parents :*

*" Bouziane " and " Rachida "*

*The source of tenderness , help and support*

*I wish that I had realized one of your dreams .*

*I am pleased to dedicate the fruit of my efforts*

*to my sister : Soumia*

*To my brothers : Oussama and Abdallah , the angel  
of our family*

*And to my sweet partner and friend : Ikram*

*≪ Amina ≫*

## ♣ *Dedication* ♣

*If I write anyone the most beautiful expressions in the world , I write them for my parents*

*"Mohammed "and "Fatima Zohra "*

*Who have been my constant source of inspiration and gave me the strength and will .*

*I dedicate also this work to my brothers*

*" Khaled " and " Hichem "*

*And to all my friends and my teachers who encouraged me .*

*≪ Ikram ≫*

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**General**

**Introduction**

## General Introduction

Considered one of the most significant world literary theorists, the American-Palestinian writer Edward Said (1935 – 2003) is known all over the world for having played a seminal role in the founding and development of the postcolonial study field. Additionally to his talent and recognition as a theorist, Edward Said is also a musician and critical thinker whose works deal immediately and primarily with the Eastern – Western connections. These works are of great cultural and literary value, the fact that allows them to be well-known all over the world and win several awards.

Orientalism is one of these landmark works published in 1978, which had a great success. Through this thesis Said wanted to prove that the Western depictions of the East are definitely inaccurate cultural representations. In fact, Orientalism emphasized the idea that Western negative attitude towards the Orient is obvious in their writings as they present it as a "weak" and uncivilized culture contrasted with the "rational" and developed West ( Grzesiak , 2014 ) .

By reference to the Western literary works, there is an important question that invades the reader's mind: Literary speaking; did Western writers, intellectuals and artists have interest in the Eastern issues? If so, how did they perceive Arabs, Turks and Islam? And was the perception they had about the Oriental culture positive or negative?

In this research work, following a historical and literary approach, the attempt is to reveal the kind of attitude that Western writers had towards the Eastern world.

This work is divided into two chapters. The first one deals with the personal life of the writer Edward Said, and his literary works considered as major ones are listed. Moving later to speak about the historical background of the concept of Orientalism and its main meaning. More importantly, it seemed paramount to shed light on the point that Edward Said stressed on in the book, which is that Orientalism was a totally Western invention and creation to dominate and colonize the East under the pretext of civilizing it.

With regard to the second chapter, it starts with an analysis of British artistic depictions of the Orient. The next title sheds light on the major British literary works including novels, poems and travellers' accounts which dealt with the East and its

peoples. Lastly, as women represent a valuable category of Oriental culture, it was substantial to analyse the Western attitude towards them as presented in the literary works.



# **Chapter One**

*Understanding*

*Orientalism*

# Contents

I . 1 . Introduction

I . 2 . A Brief Account Of Edward Said's Life and  
Achievements

I . 3. The Scope Of Orientalism And Its Origins

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## 1. 1. Introduction

Edward Said is a literary theorist and a very prominent figure in the political, literary and even the artistic stage. Much of his works are inspired or much more influenced by his Arabian Palestinian roots. He had always been focusing on the Oriental issues, and more importantly on the Eastern-Western connections. One of his lustrous books is Orientalism which helped find new concepts that are examined in this chapter.

Hence, this chapter is launched with a summary of most important stages of Edward Said's life, and a set of his notable works.

Additionally, the second part deals with the origin of the concept of Orientalism and its main meaning and definition. Then, comes the last part to analyse how the West uses orientalism to be able to conquer and colonize different parts of the East.

## 1.2. A Brief Account of Edward Said's Life and Achievements

Controversial in his works, Edward Said, the Palestinian literary critic, is recognized as one of the most influential theorists and public intellectuals of the twentieth century , and the founding father of the critical theory field of post colonialism which is implicitly or explicitly related to his own ideas<sup>1</sup> . Said is also an outright defender of the Palestinian people's political rights in freedom and the construction of a dependent state .

Edward Said was born on November 1, 1935 in Jerusalem to Palestinian parents Hilda who had a Palestinian father and a Lebanese mother (McCarthy, 2010, p.10) and Wadie Ibrahim Said, a rich businessman, who lived in the United states (U.S) for a period of time and participated in the First World War with the American army , the fact that was granted for , the U.S citizenship (Tunner and Rojek , p. 224). In 1947, Said joined the St.George boys school in Jerusalem where he didn't last long as he moved with his family to Egypt, the next year, at time of the creation of Israel's nationhood

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.notablebiographies.com/supp/Supplement-Mi-So/Said-Edward-W.html>

(1948) and the split of Palestine into Jewish and Arab lands. In Cairo, Said spent most of his childhood and joined the Egyptian branch of Victoria College (VC), an upscale British preparatory school. About his experience in this school, Said doesn't really show a great admiration towards it. Yet, he perceives it as "an unjust colonial stricture" (Said, 2000, p. 557). In his book Between Worlds, Reflections on Exile, and Other Essays (1998), Said mentioned some of the strict aspects he faced in this school; he affirmed that as soon as the student is registered in the VS, he is given a manual which contains rigorous regulations that he has to abide, to keep control over the system of the school life. These instructions included "the kind of uniform we were to wear, what equipment was needed for sports, the dates of school holidays, bus schedules, and so on" (ibid, p.556). More importantly, Said stressed on the policy of imposing and portraying the English language inside the school, he contended that it was their biggest concern, as the first thing you would read in the opening page of the manual given to students was: "English is the language of the school; students caught speaking any other language will be punished" (ibid). Yet, the shining side of this school, for Said, was that many public figures including famous political figures and paramount businessmen were generated from this school citing Omar Al Sheriff, the famous Egyptian actor and Hussein, the King of Jordan (Said, 1999, p.201).

From Said's book between worlds, we can see that he lived, a somehow, confusing childhood roving between Jerusalem and Cairo. Tellingly, He maintains:

With an unexceptionally Arab family name like "Said", connected to an improbably British first name (my mother much admired Prince of Wales [Edward VIII] in 1935, the year of my birth), I was an uncomfortably anomalous student all through my early years: a Palestinian going to school in Egypt, with an English first name, an American passport, and no certain identity, at all (Said, 1988, p.3-4).

After that and in 1951, Said was excluded from the VS because of his bad behaviour, he was ranked as troublesome student, and had been transferred to the US to further his studies there. Once again, Said had the feeling of being out of place as he assumed that his displacement to the US was a parental decision influenced by "the prospects of deracinated people, like us, being so uncertain that it would be best to

send me as far away as possible" (Said, 1988, p.7). In the US , he joined the Northfield Mount Harmon school in Massachusetts and then successfully furthered his high studies and obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree at Princeton university in 1957 , his master in the same field in 1960 , and his doctorate in philosophy in 1964 at Harvard University (Said, 1999, p.82-83).

Edward Said's academic career was very rich and honourable; gaining a status of an English lecturer , Said joined the department of comparative literature at Columbia University in 1963 where he gained the most prestigious position as a University professor in 1991 , and worked there until 2003 . Subsequently , Said snapped up a series of titles and academic positions , most importantly ; a member in advanced studycentre in behavioural science in 1975 and Parr Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University in 1977<sup>2</sup>. Said had also a deep relationship with politics and poured his whole interest into the Palestinian political issue . For that , he represented the Palestinian National Council ( PNC ) as an independent member from 1977 to 1991 (Wood , 2006 , p.198 ) .

Alongside with his focus on politics and his brilliance in literature , Said's love of music shouldn't be ignored . Said has a profound knowledge of music , the fact that made him believes in the ability of musical power of gathering players in the creativity of every musical performance ( Herrein , 2003 ) . This conjectural feeling was interpreted by said , alongside with Daniel Barenboim , an Argentine pianist and conductor , in the creation of a new orchestra in 1999 , formed from Arabs and Jews who thus have distinct religions and different traditions but all together representing the East ( ibid ) . Indeed , Said's artistic writings were numerous as well , some of the prominent ones are Musical Elaborations (1991), Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society ( 2002, with Daniel Barenboim ) , On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain ( 2006 ) , and Music at the Limits ( 2007 ) ( Karu , 2015 ) .

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<sup>2</sup> - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_Said](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Said)

In September 2004 , a national musical conservatory of music was opened with branches in Ramallah , Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nablus and Gaza City named in honour of Edward Said as a Palestinian accomplished classical musician.

Literary speaking, Edward Said is, above all, a literary critic and theorist and the writer of more than twenty books . His first book is entitled Joseph Conrad and the fiction of autobiography , expanded from his doctorate thesis and published in 1966 . In this book and by revealing Conrad's fears of personal disintegration , Said assumes that there is a strong link between Conrad's view of his life and the way in which his stories are formed and presented <sup>3</sup>.

Over the next few years and exactly in 1975 , Said published his second book Beginnings , a book which has been so widely discussed as it is a mixture between different fields especially history , philosophy , structuralism and critical theory in a literary critical work .In this book , the critic explores and shows the difference between the origin , which is divine , and the beginning which is human production ( Wood , 2003 ) . A year after the publication of the book ( 1976 ), Said was granted the first Lionel Memorial Award for his book .

Later ,the year of 1978 witnessed the publication of Said's path-breaking book entitled Orientalism , which shot to fame worldwide and granted a very great and good reputation for its author. Indeed , the book had been translated into twenty six languages and is required at many universities , colleges and libraries . Professor Edward Said has initially centred his critique on the west's historical , cultural and political patronizing views and negative perception of the east and assumes that their knowledge about it had never been " innocent " and " objective " ( Jhally, 2005 , p. 2 ) .

In addition, many scholars agreed upon the fact that the publication of Orientalism led to the foundation of a new field of research called postcolonial study , in different fields including arts , anthropology , philosophy , history and literature . ( Dexheiner , 2002 ) . As the work analyzes the interplay between " the occident " and " the orient " , " the self " and " the other " , it shaved the path for many other writers ,

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/141112.Joseph\\_Conrad\\_and\\_the\\_Fiction\\_of\\_Autobiography](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/141112.Joseph_Conrad_and_the_Fiction_of_Autobiography)

philosophers and colonial administrators to deal with otherness of Oriental culture and religion.

Yet , despite the dazzling success of this book , it faced a wave of objections on the other side . Besides the criticism of the famous orientalist Albert Hourani, Robert Graham Irwin, Ibn Warraq, and Kanan Makiya , the historian Nikki Keddie affirmed that orientalism had :

Unfortunate consequences... "Orientalism", for many people, is a word that substitutes for thought, and enables people to dismiss certain scholars and their works. I think that is too bad. It may not have been what Edward Said meant, at all, but the term has become a kind of slogan (Gallagher, 1994, p.144-145)

More seriously , the Anglo-American orientalist Bernard Lewis used words like "arbitrary " , " false " and " astonishing " to describe Said's work . In fact , he was definitely at odds with it and published his critical book entitled The question Of Orientalism in 1982 <sup>4</sup>.

Always with his continuous interest in the matters of the Orient in general and Islamic religion in particular ,Said published another prominent book which is Covering Islam in 1981 in which he analyzes the issues during and after Iranian hostage crisis , and more importantly , the unfair portrayal of Islamic life by the American Media which firmed the idea that Islam is monolithic entity and synonymous to terrorism ( Khan, 2004 ,p.1 ).

Actually , professor Edward Said was an active author , and the publication of his books rolled through the years : he wrote , After The Last Sky : Palestinian lives ( 1986 ) , Nationalism , Colonialism and Literature ( 1990 ) and the World , The Text And The Critic ( 1993 )

Since Orientalism , Said's thoughts on Literature and Art continued to evolve over time , and were encapsulated in his most ambitious work Culture and Imperialism

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1982/aug/12/orientalism-an-exchange/>

( 1993 ) which is considered a sequel of his landmark book Orientalism. In this book , he examines the overlooked connections between culture and the western imperial endeavour . In fact , he also clarifies the main difference between imperialism and colonialism and argues that imperialism is " thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others " ( Said , 1993 , p . 7 ) . Hence , he confirms that imperialism has survived the disappearance of the colonial empires . Overall , the main theme was the impact of mainstream culture on imperialism and colonialism .

Some of the other books he published over the next few years are: 'Peace and Its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process' (1995), 'Out of Place: A Memoir' (1999), and 'Reflections on Exile and Other Essays' (2000).

On 25 September 2003 , Edward Said died at a New York hospital after a long-suffering from the Leukaemia disease ( George Wright , 2003 ) .

### **1.3. The Scope of Orientalism and its Origins**

Orientalism, a term that has been often questioned , a new concept that had its significant impact on the Western world and the Eastern one alike , since the 1970s .

Indeed , Orientalism has been defined as the representation of Eastern world by Western world, more deeply , as the study of language , culture , history , life , religion and traditions of Easterners by Western travellers , scholars , administrators , writers , artists and so on. Also , it is a term that is used by art historians literary and cultural Studies scholars to study , describe , and portray the Eastern world and its peoples<sup>5</sup> .Originally speaking ,Orientalism derives from a Latin word " Oriens" meaning "East" , the opposite of the term "Occident" which means the "West" . The Western concern with the Eastern world can be traced back to crusades; the religious clash and hostility between Muslims and Christians over the control of the Holy land that began in the seventh century . However , when they didn't succeed to recapture the Holy land , the crusaders opened channels to get to the Middle Eastern

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<sup>5</sup> - <http://www.ukessays.com/essays/arts/orientalism.php>



world . Thus , returning crusaders brought with them stories about the daily life of Easterners which both impressed and astonished the westerners and later created a great contact and familiarity with the orientals . As a result , the East became an intriguing destination for travellers who were among them writers , artists , painters , novelists who were impressed by the charm and magnificence of the Oriental world , and begun painting and writing about the East and its peoples and their experiences there . Scholars counted that there were approximately seventy travel books written during the period between 1775 and 1825 , and one of the most renowned works were the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu , a British gifted and insightful author of the 18<sup>th</sup> century , who travelled with her husband to Ottoman Empire , and published her letters that described the habits , manners and beliefs of Turkish women and her experience among them.

To be sure , Lady Montague's work became an important and favourite source of information for many writers and novelists . Furthermore , in addition to travelogues , this period was also marked by the prosperity of scholarship on Eastern history , literature and religion . Among those scholars were George Sale who translated the Quran into English in 1734<sup>6</sup>.

William Jones also informed Western readers for the first time with prominent Oriental texts such as Arabian Nights , which nailed a great success and paved the path for several writers to write their own oriental tales and stories. Thus , the beginning of Orientalism perception was marked by the translation of some Eastern works and writings into English by Western scholars as an attempt to know more about the oriental culture , life and beliefs . However , later , these oriental studies became in a close relationship with racial attitude and stereotypes , in which the West began to see the Oriental culture , literature and art as exotic , inferior and underdeveloped to their ideals , and started portraying and describing the orientals as savage , uncivilized , barbaric , strange , dangerous and backward others who are in a complete need of civilization , Christianizing and later dominating and controlling<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> - <http://www.enotes.com/topics/orientalism/critical-essays/orientalism>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

Likewise , Westerners have a terrible racial attitude and stereotypes towards Eastern women who have been portrayed as aggressive , prostitute , subservient, sexually available , and using their feminine and bodies for sexual pleasure and to get what they want . And a lot a lot of stereotyping that harmed the Oriental identity and tarnish its image in front of the world .There were also a lot of terms that describe them as sexually available to strange white men as "comfort women " , " dragon lady" , "yellow cab " and "Sarong party girl " . Indeed , there were many scholars , writers , artists , philosophers, novelists and painters who contributed in the shaping of this vision and notion about the Eastern world by the elaboration of theories , novels , epics , painters , social descriptions and political accounts . Among them was William Shakespeare who is best known by his play *Othello* ( 1604 ) in which his racism is clearly stated by choosing a black character to represent the Eastern man , and describing him as exotic , black and dangerous . Therefore , this representation reflects the Western attitude toward the orient in general and the Arabs in particular . and establish the concept and the notion of Otherness . ( AkramAlzu'bi , Riyadh Kitishat ,2013 , p. 41 ) .

These concepts of Western racism and stereotypes towards the Easterners are closely related to Edward Said 's ideas of Orientalism . Many scholars put the beginning of postcolonial studies in literature , history , art and philosophy back to the publication of Said' s *Orientalism* ( 1978) which is a controversial work that focused on the way in which Western scholars , writers , painters and artists viewed , portrayed , described and represented the Eastern culture , literature , and daily life .

Deeply speaking , orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and the " Occident " . and there was a very large groups of writers, intellectuals , economists, and imperial administrators, who have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny and so on . ( Said , 1978 , p. 3 ) . Moreover , Said declared that the Occident has created the notion of the " Self " and the "Other" in which the self is powerful , civilized and privileged whereas

they considered the "Other" as inferior, savage and underdeveloped. He argued that the Orient is constructed and represented with racism and prejudice in which the Occidentals view them by their own culturally – determined and limited historical perspectives<sup>8</sup>. He also showed that this creation of the "Other" and "the self" has given the Occident the upper hand to represent, describe and constitute the Orient as they want and wish (Ghaforian, Moosavinia & Niazi, 2011, p.105)

Furthermore, Said asserted that the study of the West to the Easterners not in order to understand and know them but in order to be able to control and dominate them, and the Western knowledge of the Eastern world goes hand in hand with settlement, expansionism, exploration and domination. (ibid, p. 104). He expressed that by saying Orientalism is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient... It is a reflection of the relationship of imperial and intellectual domination of a West which feels it is superior to an 'inferior' East." (Said, 1978, p. 3). Thus, the Western study and description of Eastern world fulfilled two needs; the first to gain access to and dominate over the resources of Eastern lands, and second to create an identity for the dominant group. As Said has mentioned in his book that Orientalism has helped Westerners to define their self image by constructing an "Other" as an opposition to the non-European. because by this "Other", they can strengthen its own identity and superiority (Ghaforian, Moosavinia & Niazi, 2011, p. 105).

#### **1.4. Orientalism As a Pretence of Colonization**

As it is already mentioned, orientalism is the representation of Eastern world by Western world, more specifically, it is the study of the Easterners or the Orient by Western or Orientalist scholars, travellers, administrators and so on. Initially, the East had charmed and attracted the Western and became a new and perfect source for the artists, painters and writers. As a result, many orientalist scholars began to translate some works and writings of the East into English in order to understand and know more about the Orient culture, the fact that enables them to conquer and dominate the

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<sup>8</sup> - <http://www.ukessays.com/essays/arts/orientalism.php>

Eastern world . However , later , this cultural movement was not always representative of what and how the East really was. Yet , it became in a close relationship with a racial attitude , distortions and stereotypes and the west begun to see the Eastern culture , Literature and Art as inferior , odd and imperfect to their ideals. In other words , the Oriental culture became, for them an " other " , " strange " and " unknown " <sup>9</sup> .

To be sure, orientalism is closely related to the notion of the "self " and the " Other " in which the self is privileged and has the authority to reconstruct the doltish , inferior and weak Other .Broadly speaking , the term " Other " is usually used by cultural , literary and social critics in order to understand the way in which one group excepted and marginalized another group . By declaring someone " Other " the persons begin to understand what makes them similar from or opposite from another . In other words , the term "Other " is a manner of speaking , and a way for groups to reinforce their superiority and sublimity <sup>10</sup> .

In Orientalism , the terms "Other " and "self " can be translated to the " Us " versus "Them" , " the West " and " the rest " , the "centre" and the "margin" , the " rational West " and " irrational East " . As Said wrote , " the self is the familiar ( Europe , the West , "us " ) and the other is the strange ( East , The Orient , " them " ) " ( Said , 1978 , p .43 ) .All these concepts are created by the Westerners to define and portray the Easterners as strange , uncivilized , underdeveloped , savage , inferior and worthy for colonization and imperialism whereas they see themselves as the civilized , the powerful and the best .These representations are due to the creation of binary opposition of the "self " and " other " which places the former in a strong and privileged position which allows him to define , portray and elucidate the " other " as he wants and wishes , and places the "other" in the position of silent , powerless and disabled object of study . So , by the process of "Othering " the West treat the " Other " or the East as " not fully human " and savage , whereas they consider themselves as the " true human " and the embodiment of " true self " . As Said has stated in his book Orientalism, " By creating the Orient as a contracting image to the

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<sup>9</sup> - <http://www.ukessays.com/essays/arts/orientalism.php>

<sup>10</sup> - Ibid

west thorough history certain clichés and stereotypes of Oriental world and its people have extended into almost realms of live " .( Said , 1978 , p. 1 ) .

Many westerns scholars , political and literary figures such as Shakespeare, Austin , Flaubert Conrad, George Peele and others contributed to the shaping of this vision about the Easterners or the Orient . Thus , the imaginary line between the East and the West becomes clear , obvious and ostensible . In this point , it seems suitable to recall Kipling 's words that the " East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet " . (Ghaforian ,Moosavinia , Niazi , 2011 , p. 105 – 106 ) .Thus , Orientalism imposes restrictions on thought and action and was able to create an image where no clear differences between observed and imagine reality were made . The western knowledge about the Eastern world is not produced from truth and reality , but from previous archetypes that show and visualize all Eastern societies as similar to each other and dissimilar from Western societies .

As Said argued " Orientalism stands for a mode of discourse , a system of knowledge that only creates the Orient without having any correspondence to reality" . ( Said , 1978 , p . 2 - 6 ) . This previous knowledge makes the Eastern world as contradictory to the Western world , and constructed the Orient as negative reflection of Western culture <sup>11</sup> .More seriously , it is important to stress on the point that the West created this knowledge and stereotypes not only to tarnish the image of the Orients but in order to have the right to colonize and control them , and their justification and excuse was that the East has to be civilized and represented by the hand of the West . As Said opens his book with the quote by Karl Marx : "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented." . According to Said , Orientalism has three dimensions ; first , it refers to all the scientific and academic disciplines whose purpose is to study and write about Oriental cultures and customs ( Said , 1978 , p. 2 ) . A second dimension refers to Orientalism in a more general sense as a style of though , the ideological suppositions, images, and fantasies about a region of the world called the "Orient" . ( ibid, p. 199) . And the third dimension speaks of Orientalism as a source of power for dominating , restructuring , and having authority over the Orient (ibid , p. 3).

<sup>11</sup>-<https://mashrabiyya.wordpress.com/2011/05/23/critical-examination-of-edward-saids-%20%20%20orientalism>

According , Edward Said assumed that Orientalism was used to colonize the Orient and states :

" Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" ( Said , 1978 , p .3 )

Following this line of quotation by Edward Said , one can say that the notion of Orientalism created by European in order to study and understand Eastern culture , civilization and religion , was just a pretext in order to control and colonize the Easterners and to justify their superiority over them ( A Khan , 2006 , p 1 ).

The scrutiny of the Orient and the knowledge collected by Western scholars and travellers during the age of discovery was employed in the mid –eighteen century to serve racial and paradigms of power . As Michel Foucault declared in Discipline and Punish, "to see is to produce knowledge and to have power ".So , the Orient is just a European invention and construction to justify the domination of Occident over the Orient and to allow and facilitate a relationship of control and power between the West and the East . Therefore , the emergence of Orientalism as a system of representation synchronizes with the rise of European colonization and exploitation of Eastern lands and peoples and consequently , between the 1815 and 1914, European directly controlled and dominated over 85% of the globe . Through his book Orientalism , Said tried to introduce the historical facts of European colonial predominance and imperialist exploitation that enabled the western scholars to gaze over the "strange other" and to study this foreign Otherness for European purposes and objectives. He asserts that the Western study of Eastern peoples was based not in a wish to know the Orient, but rather to as a means to conquer and defeat them and to dominate and control over the wealth of their lands .He is concerned about how the knowledge of the Easterners constitutes power structures and how through this knowledge the Westerners were able to impose colonial domination . It gives the Occident the power to know , to

estimate and then to dominate and govern . knowledge as LoombaAnia shows " is not innocent but profoundly connected with the operations of power"(Loomba,1998,P43).

Orientalism , hence , justifies colonial domination that is the consequences of the ideology of imperialism . (Ghaforian ,Moosavinia , Niazi , 2011 , p. 104 ) . Moreover , Orientalism is a form of discourse which arises in order to maintain , justify and reinforce the spatial configuration of " Imaginative geography " .Said put this notion of "Imaginative geography " in his works in order to clarify and describe the ideological motive Of dominant groups that are looking for control of lands and peoples<sup>12</sup>.Said claimed that "imaginative geography " is a process created by the Western colonial power with territorial ambitions to justify the conquest of territorial landscapes and the imposition of new system of supreme power and sovereignty over the Easterners . Imaginative geography thus, is considered as a tool of power and a means of subordinating and dominating a territory . Said declared that imagining land is an harbinger to imperial project , and when a group casts an imaginative gaze upon an area they desire , automatically this area becomes sites of exploration and projection (Field, 2011, p. 182-83) .

As a matter of fact , Said was heavily influenced by Michel Foucault , the French philosopher and historian who developed the theory of imagined geography , and established the connection between gaze , knowledge and power in his later work Discipline and Punish ( 1975) Thus , as Said wrote ,the Orient appeared as "a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire."( Said , 1978, p . 202 )

### 1.5. Conclusion

Despite the great clamour that happened about the concepts presented in the provocative book of Orientalism, one has not to deny the literary and cultural value it gave . Basically , it can be said that the main concept derived from the book is the painful reality that the West established Orientalism as a pretence to get control upon the Eastern lands .And for Edward Said there is no wonder that he remains

<sup>12</sup> - <http://www.arthistoryunstuffed.com/post-colonial-theory-edward-said/>

one of the best known names in postcolonial literary in general and theory in particular.



# Chapter Two

*The Western Perception*

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## 2.1. Introduction

In its basic context, orientalism had an extremely political and imperial concept, yet , it has expanded later to reach the fields of literature and Art where a large number of British writers , artists and intellectuals were attracted by both the luxury and the mystery of this part of the world . This fascination led to the creation of a new artistic movement called "orientalism". This genre includes many titles, in both prose and poetry, on the different aspects of the Eastern culture, especially, women. As a matter of fact, the image presented in the British literary texts was often negatively stereotyped .Alongside with literature, photography and painting as one of the seven recognized arts contributed in reflecting this image.

So, the first part of this chapter will shed light on the portrayal of the orient in British Art stressing particularly on painting and photography .The second part will examine some chosen titles from the broad British orientalist archive evoking the orient . Moving later to analyse the perception of women in British literature .

## 2. 2. Depictions of The Orient in British Art

The East represented a center of fascination for the British artists as well who took keen interest of it and used their historical and literary backgrounds and imagination to portray it. .Hence , several orientalist paintings , prints and drawings were established where the main themes were the oriental public baths , the Turkish harems and the religious sites .

In Art , orientalism refers to imagery, depictions and representations of the Orient or the Easterners . Actually , Orientalist works are generally composed of three main categories ; the first one is tradition of reportage which is a serious attempt from the European artists to record the experience of the Eastern world and to bring the orient world and life . Second comes the tradition of political Orientalism which is a category directed against the Islamic world beginning from images resulting from war such as Ottoman captive in Titian 's"Pesaro Madonna " to Delacroix' works and other nineteenth century painters who popularized this genre of Orientalist painting

with their depictions of bathhouses, slave markets and harems. The third category of Orientalist painting concentrates on the " Otherness " in its subjects .In fact , the major theme in these paintings are " sexuality " in which they deal with fleshly female body , configured in intimate settings of the harem and the Turkish bath , moral corruption and great wealth .

Many of these Orientalist paintings are collected either from artist ' sketches or from photographs taken by the artists or bought from photographers who sold their works to tourists ( Denny , 1993 , p. 219) . As early as the fifth century , European had already begun their artistic oscillations between reality and fantasy , during their study to the orient or the Easterners .

Among the Europeans , the British who dominated the field and engaged strongly in it . Undoubtedly British artists were attracted to the East by a combination of fascination, a desire for adventure and political motivations. The British interpretation of the Eastern world has been made based on a biased , partial and imperialist view . By way of example , The exhibition " The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting" explores this interpretation, which is one of the best exhibitions of Orientalist painting held to date as it shows how the British painters sought to represent the East from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries . The aim of the exhibition is to discuss the motivation , seeking to interpret British painters in Eastern world bringing together over 100 paintings for the most famous British painters such as John Frederick Lewis , who portrayed the inhabitants , cities and landscape of Cairo which is a city much admired by British painters for its traditional and beautiful architecture, in addition to Syria , Turkey and Palestine(Almarcegui , 2009 , p. 156 ). " The Lure Of The East "is structured in six sections ; the first section is specified to Eastern portrayal and how travelers disguise themselves in Eastern clothes in order to feel more secure or to demonstrate their sincere solidarity with the Eastern culture . The second section shows the daily life of orientalist painters . Then the third section , " The Holy City " collects the representation of Jerusalem based on the biblical and imaginary geographies . Furthermore " Mapping The Orient " , the forth section , was an important and interesting section which represents a Portrait of Eastern cities between 1850 to 1920 , a period that witnessed an expansion of Eastern cities and the fall of the Ottoman Empire . Moving to " HaremAnd Home "

the fifth section which depicted a prominent element which is the possibility of seeing for the first time and in public the harem of H. Brownie .a feminine and private space painted by a women which shows another story of Orientalism that has not yet been told . The last section " The Orient in Perspective " focuses on the interest of British painters in the Eastern landscape and the introduction of its architecture in the paintings . ( ibid , p 157 – 158 ) .

Certainly this impressive collection " The Lure Of The East "contains major works by renowned British painters such as John Frederick Lewis ( 1804 , 1876 ) , an English painter who was a wonderful expert in the Oriental paintings represented by 30 works . He settled down in Egypt in 1841 , returning to London in 1851 with numerous paintings and materials that would confirm his high reputation in London as an artist Ethnographer . He was known by his painting entitled "On the Banks of the Nile, UpperEgypt," ( 1876 ) in which he describes a springtime spectacle in rural Egypt with a group of traveling Bedouin and their camels . In his painting , Lewis gave an accurate and realistic details about the life , landscape and clothes of the Egyptian Bedouin ; men wore the traditional head scarf or what is known by " kufiah " , and a heavy outer dress of wool and cotton , and female peasants who crossed a field of white flowers to bring water from the Nile . concerning John Lewis 's work , John Ruskin ( 1856 ) pointed out :

Let him examine, for instance, with a good lens, the eyes of the camels, and he will find there is as much painting beneath their their drooping fringes as would , with most painters , be thought enough for the whole head ( Bloom and Weeks 2014, p. 734).

Lewis owns also another notorious paintings called " A Frank Encampment in the Desert of Mount Sinai, 1842, " which is a masterwork painted in 1856 which shows the aristocrat repose in his tent during a hunting expedition . The critic John Ruskin proclaimed that the picture is among the wonderful pictures in the world <sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://en.qantara.de/content/british-orientalist-painting-at-the-tate-gallery-the-lure-of-the-east>

In accordance with painting , another visual Art was used to depict the orient and its various features which is photography . In fact , orientalist photography was somehow different from painting as it promises to give an accurate capture of oriental reality displaying the things as real as they are .

To be sure , orientalist photography nourished the orientalist discourse and then most of its themes were iterate and not really unique turning around the subjects of eastern nature , landscape , architecture and indigeneous portraits of people . The depictions included as well the far Eastern countries including India , China and Japan ( Rosenblum , 1997 , p.122 ) .

One of the most renowned names among the photographers in general and the orientalist ones in particular is " Roger Fenton " ( 1819 – 1869 ) , famous of war photography and orientalist fantasies . One of his superb photographs is *The Pasha and The Bayadère* ( 1858 ) . The photograph presented a pure oriental scene in which the pasha watches his bayadère dancing accompanied with the musician who dutifully casted his eyes away <sup>14</sup> .

To take another example , " Francis Frith " ( 1822 – 1898 ) an advocator of orientalist photography was well-known for his accurate photographs which give very vivid details about the scene . Frith had 3 trips to Middle East during the period between 1856 and 1860 , which enabled him to explore and depict the different aspects of this landscape . In fact , his series of photographs *Egypt , Palestine , photographed and described* published and distributed between 1858 and 1860 represents a " Cairoic view " reporting not only the historical monuments of Egypt , but also the streets of this city ( Cairo ) the fact that gives an idea of the repose of Eastern life ( P and J . Starkey , 2001 , p.175 ) . Typically his *View Of Boolaqq* gave negative image about the city as being dirty and patched . It can be said that it photographically conforms with what Sophia Poole have written about it:

The first impression received on entering this celebrated city is that it has the appearance of having been deserted for perhaps a century , and suddenly

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<sup>14</sup> <http://lp.playerpage343.info/1432077422/vlc/LP2/?pid=2777&distid=24973&clickid=6949292301432077413>

repeopled by persons who had been unable , from poverty or some other causes , to repair it ( 1842 , p .64 ) .

### **2.3. Islam, Arabs and Moors Through Orientalist Authors' Eyes :**

As literature is considered as reflection of beliefs and a code of product of a social , political , and cultural status , several British writers used it to portray their perceptions and ideas about the Orient ( especially Turkish and Arabs ) as exotic , backward , uncivilized and sometimes dangerous people. In fact ,this perception is mainly derived from different sources including the returning fighters who fought Muslims in the crusades ( 1095 – 1270 ) who , based on religious fanaticism of wars , gave a mistaken image about them . Besides , the Moors were engaged in piratical activities and used to attack european fleets , ships and ports ( Elaskary , 2008 , p. 105 ) . Thus , travellers and captives who lived in the landscape of MENA wrote about it as " the throne of piracy and the nest of devils " ( ibid , p. 106 ) . In fact , a conflict between the East and the West is the expected result of such encounters ( stone , 2006 ) .

Following a chronological order , it is appropriate to begin from the Elizabethan era , during which , the term Moor was broadly used . For Elizabethans , there was no clear identity of the Moor . It was a term indicating Arab , Oriental , Muslim and sometimes African . Yet , there is one thing that was agreed upon which is that , without any doubt , a strong articulation exists between Moors and negativism . Most of Elizabethan writers described the Moors as cruel , greedy , inferior , devilish and aggressive . The Turks as well , have never been heal from these negative descriptions . It is sure that the historical background the writers had , was used as a source material in the Elizabethan literary works , especially in plays , to describe the different aspects of the Western-Eastern encounters with a great sense of racism towards Islamic identity ( kitishat , 2012 , p.66 ) .

At this point , it would be vital to stress on the towering figure in that era William Shakespeare 's works who used the threat of the Turkish terrorism and Islamic conversion as a theme in mainly half of his plays . He mentioned words like " infidels " and " savages " in *King Richard III* ( 1591 ) , " Mahomet " in *King Henry VI* ( 1597 ) , "

Turk "in *Hamlet* ( 1600 ) to all these audiences to the thrilling advance of the Ottoman empire .

In fact , Shakespeare is best known for his play is *Othello* ( 1604 ) in which he staged the advance of the Turk to the gates of Venice by choosing a black character to represent the Eastern man . Shakespeare emphasized the color to embed the concept of otherness . This oriental character is accused by magic and witchery as "Barbatanio " claimed that his daughter "Desdemona " could never love such a black Moor . He believed ' she is abused , stolen from me and corrupted by spells and medicines brought from mountebanks ' ( *Othello* , act I , scene iii , p. 72 – 6 ) .

Another substantial Elizabethan playwright who shed light on Islam and Turks in his plays is Christopher Marlowe . By far the best illustration is his prominent play *Tamburlaine* ( 1589 ) in which his reference to the Quran and the prophet Muhammed is remarkably revealing the theme of triumph of Tatar conqueror . Indeed , the negative attitude about Islam reached its climax in this play as the writer had a very limited and confused knowledge about Islamic institutions ( Al Otaqi, 2012 , p.184). For instance , he affirms that the prophet Mohammed was the " holy" and " sacred " sub-god of Muslim (idem) . In addition , he made some Muslim characters such as Sabina revolt against their religion , the fact that gave an image about them as being shaky and unfaithful to their religion .

Ouejan commented that by presenting the oriental atmosphere full of cruelty and treachery , Marlowe amused his Elizabethan audience and showed them the orient they wanted to see ( 1996 , p .17 ) .

In the course of the 17th century , people started writing their adventures when travelling to MENA as traders and tourists . This is what added a new source of information about the Orientals , to the British literary repertoire . One of those notable travellers' accounts is "Rare adventures and painful peregrinations" written by William Lithgow in 1632 . Lithgow showed a positive attitude towards the eastern countries he visited ( Egypt , Algeria , Palestine .. ext ) but a negative one towards its inhabitants . He was pleased by the beauty of the country describing it as a fruitful and sunny land



.Bycontrast , he described the Moors as being barbarians , cruel , savage and uneducated people ( Nelson and Alker,2010,p.178). The bottom line here is that he gave a negative perception about MENA , as if he was saying that they have a beautiful country but they don't deserve it .

As it is mentioned before , pirates and crews from North African states , used to seize the English goods and imprison the traders and merchants to sell them later as slaves . After getting their freedom , these prisoners wrote about their experiences , the fact that created a new literary genre called captivity narativesthrough which the writers spoke about the cruelty of their Moor masters . By way of example , Francis Knight was the first who started writing these narratives by his work entitled "A Relation of Seven Years Slavery "(1640) , soon followed others like Joseph Pitts by writing "Faithful Account Of the Religion and Manners of Mahometans"( 1704 ) in which he described the different holy lands of Muslims ( Mecca and Medina ) and insisted on the Turkish cruelty towards him ( Auchterlonie and Pitts , 2012 ) .

Then , the down of the 18th century witnessed the appearance of a new literary movement which is "Romanticism". This movement characterized by the freedom of expression of feelings and thoughts allowed British writers to write more about their perception of the East, Islam and Muslims , especially poets (A.Shami , 2010 , p.9 ) .The first decade of the romantic era was marked by the earliest translations of the Arabian Nights , realized by Antoine Galland in 1708 . The Arabian Nights gained a great popularity among the British audience and had a huge influence and inspiration for the British writers . This laid to the development of a new genre called "The Oriental Tale " . The best example that seems to fit in this category is William Beckford's "CaliphVathek" ( 1786 ) characterized by Oriental characters and setting . Yet , the protagonist of the tale Caliph Vathek who is the ninth caliph of Abassides is presented as a man of fancy who loves women and provides everything for his pleasure ( Beckford , 1786 , p.29-30). Of course this is a negative perception of Muslim Turk given to Tritishreaders .

Moving to the romantic poetry whose pioneers , such as Wordsworth , Coleridge , Byron , Southey and Moore , presented several works which were full of hatred speech and humiliation to Islam . In particular, Robert Southey emphasized on Islam in his works based on his several journeys to MENA . His first poem is entitled "Mohammad", in which the main theme was the hiding of the prophet Mohammad and his companion Abu Bakr , in Gar Thour . The poet here denied Mohammad's prophecy.

"Roderick The Last Of Goths "is also another poem written by the same poet in 1814 , in which he gave a ' disgraceful picture of Islam and Muslims ' ( ibid , p .18 ) . This image is mostly remarked in the following part of the poem :

A countless multitude they came ,  
Syrian , Moor , Saracens , Greet renegade  
Persian and Copt and Tatar in one bond  
Of erring faith conjoined – strong in the youth  
And heat of zeal , --- dreadful brotherhood ,  
In whom all turbulent vices were let loose ,  
While conscience , with their impious creed accords  
Drunk as with wine , had  
Sanctified to the  
All bloody and abominable things ( Cochan , 2010 , p . 19 )

In these lines , the poet presented some good characteristics of muslim people of the countries mentioned but using irony . Indeed , he mocked the wrong faith and brotherhood they had .

With collaboration with Southey , Lord Byron also depicted the Orient in his poems . Mainly in "The Child Harold Pilgrimage"( 1802 ) where he talked about the beauty of Spanish girls likening them to Hour Alaeen . He affirms that there it is needless

to struggle for heaven to find the better life as prophet Mohammad have promised as everything , for him , it is found on earth . Notably" TheGiour"( 1813 ) also gave a devilish image of Muslim by presenting the giour , a Christian character , fighting against a muslim Hassan who killed his beloved Leila by throwing her in the sea . Here as well ,the concept of the other Muslim and the continuous clash between the East and the West is strongly revealed .

#### **2.4. The Literary Orientalist Approach to Women**

As it was said before, Edward Said affirmed that the West described the Orient as an exotic and uncivilized culture , shaping the image of superiority for themselves. Of course women had a large part of this kind of Western interest in the East . Orientalist writers presented women as being weak , oppressed and placed in the bad light of the Eastern atmosphere . They have also often denied that oriental culture valued Arab and Turkish women . In addition , the islamic veil has constantly been questioned , as the West believed that it was a sign of backwardness and female oppression .

Hibah Aburwein assumes that arab women were always negatively stereotyped due to the lack of knowledge about them. She also affirms that their image was often linked with sexual symbols presented as unveiledwomen , belly dancers and maidens servants in the harems ( p. 3).

In fact , one should not lose sight of the fact that Western male travellers were forbidden to get in some private spheres in oriental lands singling out "the harem " . Alev Lytle Croutier states that the word harem means " forbidden " or " unlawful " in Arabic language and explained that it is a private place established by Eastern men to allow their wives , children and servants to live in peace and security and act and freely , in seclusion . ( 1989 , p.97 ) . Yet , the great ignorance of western male travellers and writers of the aspects of this mysterious place led them to describe it in their accounts and literary works as they imagined it . Their conclusions were ultimately about eastern men's sexuality and their bad treatment of women who , they thought , were obliged to live in isolation , serving their husbands ( Huddleston , 2012 , p. 1 ).

Typically , the oriental heroines established by Byron reflect this perception . They are all young , beautiful and art admirers . Yet , they are " highborn " and " harem slaves " ( T.Hull , p . 73 ) . Particularly in "The Giaour"( 1813 ) , there is a clear negative representation of the status of Turkish women as was seen and observed by Western travellers , through " Leila " who was typified by her rebellious character . In the story , " Leila " falls in love with the giaour , the fact that she was hardly punished on by " Hassan " the pasha of the harem she belongs to . Hence , the Turkish woman is portrayed as a woman preyed upon and at the mercy of her harem's pashas , a woman who has no identity , no sound and no say even in the smallest detail of her life ( Crimes , 2011 ) .

Shakespeare as well , made a mention or much more an illusion to the Islamic veil in his play *Twelfth Night* ( 1601 – 1602 ) following the usual negative prejudiced view of the veil as a severe gloomy cover and a sign of oppression and sorrow . In the play , " Olivia " is a pure lady full of vitality and happiness whose life had completely changed and turned upside down after the loss of her father and brother . Olivia so , entered in a mourning , separated herself from the outside world and wore the veil . Hence , the veil is here a symbol of seclusion and sadness <sup>15</sup> .

Indeed , there are also female orientalist who shed light on the oriental female character , based on their influence by the general western stereotype of female oppression , notably Charlotte Bronte who pointed out a set of female oriental traits and features in her well-known novel *Jane Eyre*( 1847 ) . The image that Bronte gave to her reader about eastern women is shaped by the long-held notions of negativism of the orient and Eastern inferiority to the west.

Throughout the novel, Bronte has obviously exposed the notion of otherness by presenting her protagonist " Jane Eyre " as an educated civilized and smart English woman , accompanied by a series of other female characters who , either implicitly or explicitly , own exotic oriental characteristics . One of these characters is mainly " Bertha Mason " , who was of course given the traditional negative stereotypical perception about the orient . In the story , Mr. Rochester gave a description of Bertha to be "a wife at once intemperate and unchaste" ( Bronte , 1847 , p. 302 ) . Hence , the readers get the idea that

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<sup>15</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelfth\\_Night](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelfth_Night)

oriental women are sexually passionate , uncivilized and lustful . Additionally , he made a comparison between Bertha and western women degrading her value and magnifying them by saying " unlike the good , solid , dependable English women , Bertha was drunk and was sexually promiscuous" ( *ibid* , p. 395 ) . In fact the author gave her oriental character the most noxious characteristics of oddness , stupidity , fancy and exotism .

At the end of the novel , Jane described an eastern land ( India ) as a devilish and location by saying " if I go to India , I go to premature death " ( *idem* ) .

By way of contrast , western women writers gave a totally different idea about oriental women as female travellers were allowed to get in the female spaces and then started writing their observations based on personal experience rather than imagination which means that their description was more accurate and real .

Notably , the female aristocrat writer " Lady Marry Montague " ( 1689 – 1762 ) appeared on the literary stage to contradict all those false misrepresentations and the negative stereotypes about Eastern women in general , and Turkish ones in particular . During the journey she had undertaken with her husband , a British ambassador , to the Ottoman empire in 1717 , Lady Montague kept a journal and started writing some letters to her family describing the turkish habits , manners and beliefs .

During her living in the Ottoman empire Lady Montague strived to get rid of her Western barriers so as she could maintain a degree of objective detachment in her observation and description of the oriental culture ( Fenea , 1981 , p.331 ) . Accordingly , she immersed herself in all aspects of this culture by participating in the female turkish activities like visiting the bath , getting involved in their conversations and even dressing their clothes and learning their language . Montague herself wrote "I ramble everyday , wrap'd up in my ferige and asmak , about constantinope and amuse myself with seeing all that curious things" ( cited in Hulsband , 1965 , 405 ) .

Additionally, Montague argued that the reports she is going to give includes some hands information that were never given in the preceding writings ( *Ibid* , 315 ) . In other words , being a lady , she had the opportunity to visit some exclusive female places

including the harem , and women's bath contrary to the previous western travellers who had never gained entrance to these places .

Furthermore , Lady Montague showed a great admiration towards the majesty of the Turkish dress , the fact that incited her to wear it and even get herself painted in it . More importantly , she shed light on the Islamic veil and presented it as a symbol of freedom .( Grundy , 1999 , p.148 ) . Indeed , Lady Montague argued that the veil is a cover that allows women to go anywhere without being identified , it protect them from the sexual harassments outside ( Petit , 2007 , p.16 ) .

When describing the bath scene , Montague showed admiration towards the equality between the ladies and their servants and described the bath as a place where women get amused , chatting and drinking coffee . Hence , her description came counter to Robert Wither's one in his "the grand signor 's seraglio" ( 1650 ) in which he accused turkish women of having sex between each other in the bath .

Finally , it is important to mention that Lady Montague used a very important technique in her letters called familiarizing . This means that she used the turkish women as a mirror to show that english women lack freedom when she mentioned that "Eastern women are perhaps freer than any ladies in the universe " ( Halsband , 1965 , p .171 ) . Hence , she refuted all the previous negative stereotypes about women oppression in the Orient .

## **2.5. Conclusion**

To be sure, the motif of orientalism had been a very substantial subject in British literary texts. Yet, through the analysis of the above reports, it is obvious that the image given about the aspects of the oriental culture was somehow confused and unreal . Indeed , most of the Western writers , scholars , artists , intellectuals agreed upon the fact that the East was mysterious , backward , undeveloped , uncivilized inferior land where women are still oppressed, put in the second position of the Oriental society and treated as slaves . More importantly, they perceived them as sexual objects who were sexually available, and easily submit to foreigners.

**General**

**Conclusion**

## **General conclusion :**

Edward Said was , in fact , a man of contradictions ; he adhered to the Christian religion , and at the same time he has always defended Islam in his works , he has both advocated the Palestinian right to freedom , and had been always closed to Israelis and hence he was attacked by Israelis as a terrorist, and by Palestinians as too accommodating to Israel .

Concerning the concept of Orientalism , there is no doubt that it spread in the world after the publication of Said's book Orientalism ( 1978 ) . To be short , it is an exaggerated way of perceiving the Orient as exotic , backward and uncivilized . This perception includes the religion of Islam which was unfairly reported as a religion of terrorism and a sign of backwardness .

Women also , had a large part of this description and writers often assumed that in Oriental culture , women had no value and stripped from freedom . This was always related with the Islamic veil seen as a sign of oppression and persecution

According to Said, Orientalism dates from the period of European Enlightenment and colonization of the Arab World. It provided a pretence of rationalization for European colonialism based on a self-serving history in which "the West" constructed "the East" as extremely different and inferior , and therefore in need of Western intervention or "rescue" .

Breaking the words down , it can be said that the West whether Christian or dischristianised has never really known neither the Oriental culture nor Islam . Even since they watched them appear on the world stage ( Ottoman and Andalusian civilizations , for instance ) , they have never ceased to insult and slander them in order to find justification for waging war in them . Even today , there are many Westerners for whom the Oriental culture is just an uncivilized one and Islam , for them is reduced to their ideas : fanaticism , fatalism and polygamy . deeper than this , the oriental. Yet , no one can deny that civilization has realized many achievements that remain rooted in history and Islam is nothing other than " submission to God " .



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