

Overcoming Orientalism: Edward Said and Mohammad Abdel-Wahad Al-Asry

| **Abdel-Karim Boli'youn** |

This essay compares between two books on orientalism and attempts to derive points of convergence by briefly presenting the intellectual propositions of both authors. The first book is *Orientalism: Knowledge, Power, and Establishment* published in 1978 in English by the Palestinian intellectual Edward Said who focuses on dismantling French and English Orientalism. This book caused a great stir among orientalists, followed by a Western movement in criticism or support of the book's contents, and inspired many critical publications in the Arab and Islamic world against the various representations of orientalism.

The second book is *Islam in Spanish Orientalist Visualizations: From Ramon Llull to Asín Palacios* by the Moroccan author Mohammad Abdel-Wahad al-Asri which is considered one of the few publications that face the challenge of defining Spanish orientalism. The author extensively studies the output of Spanish orientalists throughout their long history and takes into account their deep interest in Islamic and Arab legacy. He examines the development and origins of the concepts of Spanish orientalism, and delves into its epistemological past.

Driving Forces of Orientalism and Their Influence on Orientalist Art

| Rabi' Ahmad Sayyed Ahmad |

With the rapid increase of Ottoman military expansion, the entire continent of Europe was plunged into distress. Sensing imminent danger, internal religious strife in Europe was brought to a halt, and Europeans proceeded to open economic channels with the Islamic power emerging from the East. Interaction between the inhabitants of both areas -Europe and the Islamic Near East- further expanded with time, taking various forms. European expeditions and journeys into Muslim territory commenced in particular after the Renaissance. Through commercial exchange, missionary travels, tourism, and other instances of European excursion into the East, information and studies on the Eastern mode of living, art, and architecture was transported to Europe. Paintings depicting the banks of the Nile became familiar to Europeans, and oriental artistic products graced European exhibitions and living rooms, bringing in a lucrative revenue.

The richness of Islamic civilization had a marked effect on Europeans artistically, epistemologically, and economically. In fact, subsequent Western progress is linked to the European encounter with the Muslim East. Rather than returning the favor, the West faced the Near East with hostility and devised political, economic and military schemes against it. This study examines these themes and specifically focuses on the driving forces of orientalism and their effects on orientalist art.

Mutual Influence of Islamic and Christian Cultures According to Miguel Asín Palacios

| **Idris al-Kanburi** |

This essay examines the scholarly output of the Spanish Arabist Miguel Asín Palacios, a pioneer of Spanish Arabism during the first half of the 20th century. Palacios was a prominent representative of the school of thought which confirmed the Arab and Islamic origins of Spanish history in opposition to the school of thought which ignored the Islamic historical background of Spanish identity.

This essay focuses on two notable propositions of this controversial Arabist. The first proposition relates to the influence of Arab Islamic culture on European thought in the Middle Ages by concentrating on *The Divine Comedy*, a long narrative poem by Dante Alighieri. This proposition sparked a wide debate and divided the ranks of Spanish and European orientalists during the first decade of the 20th century, and a large amount of violent criticism was directed at Palacio. The second proposition relates to the effects of Christian mysticism on Islamic Sufism, and the opinion defended by Palacios, taking into account the view of French orientalist Louis Massignon who considered that Islamic Sufism was original and derived from the Quran. This essay explores the sharp contradictions which Palacios fell prey to, as he strove to take a medium position between the opinion which denied the historical originality of Islamic Sufism and that which confirmed the emergence of Sufism from the Quran.

Orientalism in Reverse and European Marks on Tunisian Travel Literature: The Burnos in Paris by Mohammad al-Miqdad al-Ouartani

| **Khaled Romdhani** |

Westerners have largely relied on Orientalism to comprehend and examine the East through organized scholarly efforts. Orientalists have studied Eastern religion, culture, literature, and architecture in their research, leading the West to produce stereotypic images of a static, magical and exotic East. Romdhani explores the relation between travel and the oriental mindset, and especially takes into account the narratives of Mohammad al-Miqdad al-Ouartani in his book *The Burnos in Paris* which revolves around the author's trip to France and Switzerland in ١٩١٣. Journeying presented an expedient intellectual experience to observe the connections between the transformation of ideas with the shaping of awareness and the emergence of shifts in society. It is worth noting that al-Ouartani's trip was not the first of its kind but followed a number of Arab and Tunisian journeys –before and during the period of colonialism- which were marked by a reformist approach.

French Colonial Education in Morocco: Structure and Transformation

| **Anas al-Senhaji** |

A considerable amount of research has been produced on colonial education, varying between historical, political, and psychological analysis of this topic. The opinion of the majority maintains that the educational system founded and run by the French in Morocco only served the imperialist objectives of France. The French masqueraded their imperialist schemes in Morocco under the guise of an educational system that was granted numerous designations which al-Senhaji presents in his essay. Many studies affirm that French education in Morocco during the colonial phase did not adhere to the needs of Moroccan society, but was in reality a part of the imperialistic schemes of French colonialism in the country. What was the nature of the pre-French protectorate educational facilities in Morocco? What profound structured transformations did these facilities undergo during the era of the French protectorate? Al-Senhaji explores these questions, among others, in this essay.

Orientalism in Reverse

A Critique of the West from Within: A Glimpse into the Thought of Hossein Nasr

|Mahmoud Haidar|

This essay examines the opinions of the contemporary Muslim philosopher, Sayyed Hossein Nasr, on the clash of modern Western civilization with Islam. To elucidate these views, Haidar presents four fundamental principles pertaining to Nasr's experience in the West. Haidar strives to epistemologically demonstrate this experience through a new thesis entitled "Orientalism in Reverse" that contradicts and counters the concept of classical Orientalism. This thesis, which may be described as "Occidentalism emerging from within Western civilization", relies on a number of principles relating to Nasr's arguments against Western viewpoints on faith, atheism, and secularism.

Prophet Muhammad's Biography with Reference to the Quran: An Orientalist Perspective

| **Salima Saleh** |

The personality and divine message of Prophet Muhammad has long captivated orientalist, regardless of differences in their thought and geographical dispersal in the West. This deep interest has driven orientalist to write extensively on topics such as prophecy and the divine message, the origin and language of the Holy Quran, revelation and writing, and the personal traits of Prophet Muhammad. The study of Prophet Muhammad is critical in most of these works due to his pivotal status.

This essay discusses how orientalist biographers of Prophet Muhammad regard the Quran. Opinions vary between denial of the divine source of the Quran, or a neutral stance which considers the Quran an essential source for writing the biography of Prophet Muhammad, or the view which finds no problem in referring to the Quran to examine the biography of Prophet Muhammad but considering no need for such a reference.

(Works examined: Mahomet- Paul Achard ; Bible et Coran- Jacques Jomier; Mahomet- Roger Arnaldez)

A Critique of the Influence of Historical Oriental Methodology on the Quranic Views of Mohammad Shahrour

|Mohammad Hassan Zamani - Salam Sajt|

Mohammad Shahrour and other similar-minded researchers have heavily relied on the methodologies and intellectual and philosophical resources of orientalists when presenting explanations and new readings of religious texts. Such propositions which are disguised as products of innovative thought or modernist tendencies, or which claim imperfections in Islamic legacy, have stirred a wide debate in the Islamic world. This essay examines an aspect of the methodology of Mohammad Shahrour in his interpretation and reading of religious texts, and explores and criticizes the oriental historical methodology which influenced the viewpoints of Mohammad Shahrour on Quranic topics.

Historical methodology, known as historicism, is one of the fundamental methodologies which orientalists have relied on in their studies on Islam in general and the Quran in particular. Shahrour's viewpoints on Quranic topics were influenced by this methodology, similar to other scholars whose opinions and methodologies were influenced by Western thought and methodology in the study of Islamic legacy. This is followed by a critique of the aforementioned historical methodology by shedding light on the solid Islamic roots of religious texts. This essay employs a descriptive and critical methodology.