



Orientalism: From Expeditions to Colonialisation

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between orientalism and colonialism. More specifically, it analyses orientalism in its various ways before and during the nineteenth century to the present day, as well as its actual aims. For this purpose, the expeditions of some European orientalist, missionaries, and explorers are analysed and discussed. In addition to these expeditions, numerous writings and various viewpoints expressed by some authors in the social and human sciences are examined. The methodology used in the study is mainly based on critical literature sources. Overall, it appears that despite the attempts of some authors to challenge it, there is a direct and close link between orientalism, postcolonialism, and colonialism. Indeed, far from being a simple and innocent approach or discipline studying the relationship between the East and the West, orientalism served as a colonial ideology and prepare the ground to facilitate Europe's dominance over the rest of the world. Furthermore, the structure of international relations and the forms of relationship that certain European powers maintain with their former colonies reveal orientalist and neo-colonialist patterns.

Keywords: Colonialism, East, Expedition, Neo-orientalism, Orientalism, West

1. Introduction

According to some scholars, orientalism was officially born with the conference of the Council of Vienna in 1312, which adopted a resolution to create several chairs of Arabic language in various Western universities (Köse and Küçük, 2015, p.112). However, the publication of Edward Said's book in 1978 entitled (*Orientalism*) caused a great change and upheaval in the perception of Orientalist studies. It was a paradigm shift that Said had prompted by explaining that Orientalist studies are not simply a product of impartial knowledge about the Orient (Mertcan, 2007, p.14). Voyagers, artists, poets and some historians have described the East as a place of exoticism, despotism, barbarism and all that is negative. Whereas the West is the place of democracy, respect for human rights, development, progress, civilisation and everything positive (Şimşek, 2013, Arlı, 2004, Kalın, 2007, Bülent, 2002, Kahraman, 2002, Hüseyin, 2006). In this sense, Elias confines the civilising process to a purely European context, thus making Europe responsible for the theft of civilisation". According to him, "Civilisation is the sum of what the West believes it has achieved and the associated attitudes" (Goody, 2015). Said, who analyses Foucault's thesis

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on the strong links between discourse, knowledge and power and Gramsci's analyses on "hegemony", states that orientalism is not an innocent and objective knowledge, but a tool for the Western colonial powers to establish/maintain their domination. But it is not a simple "tool". The Orient is an integral part of Europe's material civilisation and culture. Orientalism articulates and represents this integral part as a form of discourse at the level of culture and even ideology with the institutions, vocabulary, research, imagery, teachings, as well as colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles that support this discourse (Said, 2004 cited by Mertcan, 200, p. 15).

Through orientalism, Said criticises the essentialisation of the difference between East and West in order to dominate the latter over the former, resulting in a relationship shaped by hostility. Orientalism is a process by which European (and later American) culture has gained power and consolidated its identity against a depreciated and repressed Eastern Other. The social sciences have played an important role in the stigmatisation and domination of the Orient (Gauthier, 2018, p.49). This process of stigmatisation, humiliation (in Badie's sense), domination and the spread of Western hegemony (in Gramsci's sense) over the rest of the world has continued to characterise relations between East and West. Thus, the main question of this article is to show how voyagers, explorers, missionaries and Orientalist works have contributed to propagating Western or colonial ideology. In addition, some examples of events taking place around the world and showing the types of relationship between the West and the East are briefly mentioned and discussed. It should be pointed out that the examples are not limited to a well-defined geographical area; they come from different continents. Nevertheless, this work aims to be critical, and makes a modest attempt to compare the various thesis on orientalism and postcolonialism, as well as the criticisms directed towards them. It is also important to point out that the article focuses mainly on the French colonial experience. Consequently, the French literature represents the basis of the references examined.

2. Orientalism, a Multidimensional Concept

Said (1995) defines Orientalism as a political doctrine imposed on the East because it was weaker than the West, which suppressed the difference of the East by fusing it with its weakness. He thus argues that orientalism is a system of representations framed by a whole series of forces that brought it into the science of the West, into the consciousness of the West and later into the empire of the West. Orientalism also designates a set of knowledge and powers specific to the West. Through this knowledge the West has constructed and ordered its relations with the East unconsciously, shaping its concepts, normalising it

within its institutions, setting it within its prejudices, and eventually assimilating it into its history. This process has also resulted in the portrayal of the East as inferior in the Western imagination, thus depriving it of all reflexivity and therefore of all free action. However, far from being a 'construct of the mind', Orientalism nevertheless covers a concrete geopolitical space, a space of 'life, history, customs' which, inadvertently, designates a 'raw reality that is obviously beyond anything that can be expressed in the West'. Though, the West alone claims to possess the truth and to determine its own fate in relation to this reality, as it inexorably precedes it in its sovereign civilisation (Said, 1980, p. 3). In other words, Orientalism is a set of geo-economic views, which are transmitted through aesthetic, scientific, economic, sociological, historical and philological texts. Orientalism is not a geographical division (the world is divided into two unequal parts, East and West), but a series of interests. These interests are not only created; rather they are also institutions sustained by scientific discoveries, philological analyses, landscape descriptions and sociological explanations (Said, 1998, p.26). Since Orientalism is a cultural and political entity, it is not an empty field devoid of archival treasure. On the contrary, everything that has been thought, said or even done about the Orient has been shaped into certain patterns within an intellectual approach (Said, 1998, pp. 26-27).

Authors such as Al-Hallaq and Al-Soleman (2021) believe that Said's definitions are general and consider Orientalism to be a homogeneous science, whereas it is made up of several other independent disciplines. Thus, we can speak of Chinese and Indian orientalism, Iranian studies, Turkish studies, African studies and so on. Moreover, they argue that the relevance and critique of Orientalism lies in the necessity of approaching Orientalist discourses and texts in terms of their content and concrete meaning, rather than reducing them to Western products onto which a simplistic vision and preconceived ideas are applied. Likewise, Gauthier (2018, p.50) also notes that the imaginary relationship between East and West described by Said is not only negative, but 'fundamentally ambivalent, made up of fantasies, covetousness and admiration as well as negative judgements, contempt and condescension'. On the other hand, although China is not part of Said's geographical Orient, some Chinese authors will consider that the definition of Orientalism as a discipline, a style of thought and an institution of domination is relevant to thinking about China's situation in modernity (Villard, 2018). Indeed, according to Zhang Kuan, the West is seeking to impose a biased and pejorative image of China, so Chinese and Third World intellectuals are called upon to resist this hegemony. For his part, Wang Yichuan talks about post-orientalism, defining it as a "historical moment and intellectual position that should enable Eastern countries to free themselves forever from Western cultural domination. It constitutes an offensive ideology of affirmation of a new cultural sensibility for humanity. It is an approach that is part of the expansion of the "spirit of nativist culture" and

the updating of a Chinese cultural subjectivity capable of proposing an alternative version of modernity” (Villard, 2018).

It should be noted that some authors believe that postcolonial studies began in 1978 with Edward Saïd studies which was based upon the first outlines of postcolonial thought. These outlines can also be identified as early as the 1950s, in the midst of the decolonisation era, with the nationalist anticolonialism of the Martinican psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon, the Tunisian writer Albert Memmi, or the Afro-Martinican writer and politician Aimé Césaire (Benessaïeh, 2010, p. 2). However, Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt in 1798 can be seen as a blueprint that marked the beginning of the establishment of orientalist knowledge both in the project of conquering Egypt and in the actual conduct of the expedition. Napoleon was inspired by Volney’s book “*Voyage en Egypte et en Syrie*” (1787) to prepare his troops for the local conditions and the Egyptian people. The idea is that “men, places and experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book or text acquires more authority and use even than the reality it describes. Napoleon was one of the first to openly recommend the expertise of a written text to inform himself of what he would find on site” (Saïd, 1995).

By surrounding himself with a number of scholars whose mission was to record everything that was said, seen and studied, Napoleon reinforced this trend and legitimised the expertise of the ‘scholars’. The publication of the thirty-three volumes of *Description of Egypt* between 1803 and 1828 marked the collective appropriation of one country by another. The colonial project of the nineteenth century shifted from the imposition of brute force to establishing the “hegemony of possessing minorities” (Saïd, 1995). For Napoleon, it was therefore a question of restoring the region of “present-day barbarism to its former classical greatness” in order to “formulate the Orient, give it form, identity and definition, fully recognising its place in memory, its importance for imperial strategy and its ‘natural’ role as an annex of Europe”. The colonial project is thus accompanied by an appropriation of the colonies and the colonised as much at the level of geographical and political domination as at the cultural and intellectual level (Saïd, 1995).

It is clear that since Saïd’s pioneering work, the implicit ideology conveyed in Orientalist discourses has been reflected in literature, scholarship, as well as in various artistic expressions. The relationship between the production of representations of otherness, the arts and colonialism is well established. The European colonisation of Egypt, the Middle East, North Africa and Asia made possible, or at least created the necessary context, for the emergence of a literature with a colonial flavour as well as schools of so-called Orientalist painting (Gardaz, 2005, p. 174). Moreover, the numerous archaeological discoveries and significant advances in the various fields of orientalism not only upset preconceived ideas about so-called

'oriental' religions, but also unleashed the most diverse passions with regard to oriental exoticism. Egypt was undoubtedly the country that most fascinated the French at the end of the eighteenth century (Gardaz, 2005, p.175).

Based on the example of Silvestre de Sacy, Saïd demonstrates how the early stages of modern Orientalism were focused on making apparent the information gathered by the Orientalists. Thus, the majority of their writings are a collection of exemplary excerpts from eastern literature. Therefore, the Orientalist's role is to make the body of information on the East that is available to him edible and understandable. Ernest Renan, as a representative of the second generation of Orientalists, was more concerned with solidifying the official discourse of Orientalism, systematising its institutions and establishing its intellectual and administrative institutions. Renan does this by proving the inferiority of the East through the philological study of semantic languages. In contrast to Western languages, he claims that Eastern languages are inorganic, static, wholly ossified, and incapable of self-regeneration. As a result, in order to modernise them, Westerners must exert control over them (Saïd, 1995).

All of these discourses sought to devalue and denigrate the Orient in order to justify its domination. Thus, contemporary Orientalism also sees itself as a hero who saves the Orient from darkness, alienation and strangeness. Neo-Orientalism is a term that refers to an ethical neo-culturalist approach to problematizing Islam, as well as the interactions between Islamities and Westernisms. It is founded on the necessity of defending democratic and contemporary values as well as a revival of the postulates of classical Orientalism. In a context of progressive ideologization of relations between Middle Eastern and Western countries, which favors a comeback of the essentialist reading of the Islamic field, it also describes a rebirth and rehabilitation of the classical Orientalism thesis. Neo-Orientalism is based on a few postulates, such as the idea that the "Arab-Islamic world" is a cohesive, immovable, and extraordinary entity to which only a portion of the social and human sciences norms would apply (Moos, 2011, pp. 3-4).

The British historian Bernard Lewis and the international relations professor Samuel Huntington are two authors who have significantly contributed to the shift from classical Orientalism to its current form. The What Went Wrong paper by the first author, a byproduct of old Orientalism, had an important impact on "culturalising" or "Islamising" the events of September 11, 2001. The linguistic framework and syntax to translate these events were provided by the second author through his well-known book, *Clash of Civilizations*. The idea of a new international scene, where the end of bipolarity will give way to the collision of cultural identities, dominated the post-Cold War era. On this occasion, Huntington intended to popularise a theory known as The Clash of Civilizations, which had previously gained recognition

through the writings of Lewis (Moos, 2011, pp. 14-15). The term “clash of civilizations” was first used by Bernard Lewis in 1957 at a lecture at Johns Hopkins University, and it was later immortalised within his work *The Middle East and the West* of the 1960s. Bernard Lewis is regarded as not only one of the most influential contemporary authors in the fields of Middle Eastern history and politics but also an important source of inspiration for the neo-Orientalist movement in the United States and in many ways in Europe (Moos, 2011, pp. 14-15). Accordingly, one can clearly see an attack on Islam, Arabs, and all Muslim countries in Bernard’s way of thinking. Neo-colonialism and neo-orientalism are both combined within it. Through particularly during George W. Bush’s presidency in the United States, Huntington performed the similar function. He was one of the authors whose work was crucial to the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the Bush administration. According to Huntington, the world will be divided into large “civilisational blocs” based mainly on culture and religion, and these blocs will live together peacefully so long as they both respect each other’s sphere of influence. These civilisations included those of Western, Latin American, Islamic, Slavic-Orthodox, Hindu, Japanese, Confucian, and African descent. Additionally, Huntington argues that Islamic and Confucian cultures will fight with the US. Therefore, it is necessary to stop both their individual unifications and communication between them (Milquet, 2013). According to Francis Fukuyama’s “end of history” theory, liberal democracy would replace all other societal structures after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, he believes that only a liberal democracy is capable of upholding a permanent peace, and he predicts that some cultures will oppose its eventual arrival. Given that Islam and Islamic civilisations are anti-modern, they are consequently seen as the principal opponents of the “end of history,” which gives America the right to fight such a civilisation or some of its subsets (Milquet, 2013).

3. The Concept of Colonialism

According to Butt (2013), colonialism is a polysemous term and as such is difficult to define. In general, it is described through three characteristics. These are the domination of one people by another, the imposition of the culture and customs of the colonial power on the colonised and finally the exploitation of people by colonial forces. “A variety of forms of historic and contemporary interaction between different peoples have been described as colonial or neo-colonial in character, and this poses problems”. According to (Robert Young, 2001 cited by Butt, 2013), “colonialism involved an extraordinary range of different forms and practices carried out with respect to radically different cultures, over many centuries”. He gives “examples including settler colonies such as British North America and Australia, and French Algeria; administered territories established without significant settlement for the purposes of economic exploitation, such as British India and Japanese Taiwan; and maritime enclaves, such as Hong Kong,

Malta, and Singapore” (Butt, 2013). For his part, Aimé Césaire (1965) argues that colonialism is neither evangelisation, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease, and tyranny, nor an extension of the law. On the other hand, he adds, from colonisation to civilisation, the distance is infinite; from all the colonial expeditions accumulated, from all the colonial statutes drafted, from all the ministerial circulars sent out, we cannot succeed in achieving a single human value. Colonialism is more of a collection of untruths that have been spread, making it the ultimate and most pervasive cruelty. It is a blatant rejection of civilisation. After the definition of these key terms, the next section aims to illustrate the various connections between them and the discussions they spark among historians and other writers.

3.1 Orientalism and Colonialism

With regard to the definitions given above, it is clear that colonialism and Orientalism are closely linked. These two concepts have a complex interaction that takes many different forms. They can be understood by examining the different descriptions of the expeditions taken by Orientalists after Napoleon, including those by Lamartine, Denon, Gautier, etc. The relationship between orientalism and colonialism is also visible and perceptible among some anthropologists and social science authors. Anthropology is the science that is most accused of having served the colonial project, and has long been discredited. This science is generally criticised for its essentialist and ethnicist project, which is closely tied to Orientalism and emphasises the past primarily in terms of its cultural components, detached from social evolution and dynamics (Castillo, E. G. and al., 2008, p. 123).

Expeditions by Orientalists to the East are not just undertaken for leisure, adventure, or a desire to interact with diverse cultures. Their specific aim was to spy on the Orient in order to better understand it and aid in its domination. In light of this, Todorov regarded these expeditions as a direct mirror of colonial ideology in an article he wrote in 1982 titled *Travel Narratives and Colonialism*. In the same paper, he suggested calling the body of travel writing from the Renaissance to around 1950 *Colonial Travel Narratives* (Moussa, 2002, p. 91). By focusing on the Mediterranean East in his renowned book *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said sought to “unmask the “Orientalist discourse,” that is, the imperialist thought patterns of European voyagers, writers, and scholars, primarily French and English in the nineteenth century, from Bonaparte’s Egyptian expedition until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire” (cited by Moussa, 2020, p. 149).

The first half of the nineteenth century is seen by Moussa (2002, p.103) through the eyes of three

voyagers to the Orient. The first voyager introduced is Denon. He is an artist who took on the role of chronicling an expedition to Egypt whose scientific findings eventually overshadowed its military goals. Nevertheless, he definitely saw a colonial attempt, and he immediately questioned its legitimacy. The second is a writer and journalist by the name of Gautier. After visiting an Ottoman capital that was undergoing change, he did not hold back in criticising what he called “the Europeanisation of the East,” which he viewed as the symptom of a loss of identity, the ramifications of which he saw in France itself. These were reforms introduced by Pasha Mohammed Ali, reforms intended to modernise a visibly weakened Ottoman Empire. Introduced first in the Turkish army, these reforms, from the 1830s, spread to other areas of society: law, administration, culture. This is the period known as the *Tanzimat*, marked by a great opening of Türkiye to Europe. It is clear that this is not a question of colonisation, since these transformations were desired by the Sultans. But it is also clear that France saw this as an opportunity to exert control over the Mediterranean and to play an active role in the famous Orient issue. Lamartine is the third voyager presented by Moussa. He is a poet engaged in political action, who used his influence to encourage a strong colonialism in the Mediterranean, even if he dreamed of a peaceful cohabitation between East and West. Through these three voyagers, Moussa showed that on the one hand, they support the colonial ideology and its mission to civilise non-European peoples, but also remain critical of Western approaches and methods. Thus, their voyage reports contain a variety of discourses that may intersect, sometimes in contradictory ways.

Beyond these three voyagers, Moussa (2013, pp. 168-175) mentions another one called Volney who had a great influence on Denon. Indeed, despite the different historical circumstances and periods of their travel to Egypt, Denon did not hesitate to copy Volney and make the same description of the Orient during his expedition. Both perceived the oriental space as the materialisation of despotism, misery, barbarism, irrationality and savagery. In short, they present a number of stereotypical images of the East, which they see as “a veritable antithesis of the Enlightenment.”¹ In his travelogue, Volney, as cited by Moussa (2007, p.186), writes the following about his arrival in Alexander:

“As he goes ashore, a host of unfamiliar objects assail him through all his senses; it is a language whose barbarous sounds and pungent, guttural accent frighten his ear; it is clothing of a strange form, figures of a strange character. Instead of our naked faces, our heads swollen with hair, our triangular headdresses, and our short, tight clothes, he looks with surprise at these burnt faces, armed with beards and moustaches; at this mass of cloth rolled into

¹ For more details on the stereotypical images of the East, especially of women, see (Moussa, 1999). Flaubert said in his travel writings that ‘the Oriental woman is a machine, and nothing more; she makes no difference between a man and another man’. (Moussa, 1999, p.196).

folds on a shaven head; at this long garment which, falling from the neck to the heels, veils the body rather than clothes it; and at these six-foot pipes ; and those long rosaries with which all hands are furnished; and those hideous camels that carry water in leather bags; and those saddled and bridled donkeys that lightly carry their riders in slippers; and that poorly supplied market of dates and round and flat bread rolls; and that foul crowd of walking dogs that, under a one-piece drapery, show no more than two female eyes”

In addition, Moussa (2020, pp. 150-160) tried to compare two other French voyagers and their perceptions of the Orient. These include Chateaubriand with *'Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem'* (1811) and Lamartine with *'Le Voyage en Orient'* (1835). According to him, despite a colonialist temptation in Lamartine's writings, he tried to bring the East and the West closer together while Chateaubriand widened the gap between them by considering the East as the enemy of the West. While he described Constantinople as the 'capital of barbarian peoples', Lamartine saw it as the 'climax of a representation very favourable to Islam, a religion, according to him, based on the love of the one God and founded in practice on great piety.

As noted above, many of the social science authors played a crucial and historic role in the domination and military conquest of the East. Indeed, colonisation was one of Tocqueville's key concerns throughout his political career. Despite his democratic struggles, aspirations and efforts, especially with the publication of his book *Democracy in America*, a detailed examination of his texts on colonisation shows that he is a colonist and orientalist. This is reflected in the positions he took during his engagement in favour of the French colonisation of Algeria. In fact, Tocqueville was strongly in favour of military intervention in Algeria where he made two voyages. In May 1841, he made his first voyage, which lasted one month and during which he visited Algeria from West to East. In November 1846, he undertook his second voyage, which lasted two months. These texts are known to us under the title *Reports on Algeria* (1847). In his texts, he argued that in order for France to maintain its power, its greatness and above all its influence in general world affairs, the colonisation of Africa was necessary, including the domination of Algeria (Mourad, 2006, pp. 78-85). These details show once again that “Tocqueville was a completely atypical Orientalist, insofar as if he shares some of the traits of the Orientalists recognised as such, he fundamentally differs from them. Moreover, through his modernity, he has been, so to speak, of all centuries, since his colonialist thought and engagement certainly owe to the categories that the West has constructed of the East, but whose durability finds strange echoes in our most contemporary history, which is today dominated by American hegemonism” (Mourad, 2006, pp. 84). In an article published in 1953, Marx said the following

about India:

“England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying the material foundations of Western society in Asia”. He added that “the British were the first conquerors superior, and therefore, inaccessible to Hindoo civilisation. They destroyed it by breaking up the native communities, by uprooting the native industry, and by levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society. The historic pages of their rule in India report hardly anything beyond that destruction. The work of regeneration hardly transpires through a heap of ruins. Nevertheless it has begun”.

From this point of view, Said (1980, pp. 178-179) argues that in several of his articles, Marx reiterated his conviction that, even by destroying Asia, England was making a genuine social revolution possible. As a result, his economic analyses fit perfectly into a typical Orientalist enterprise, even if his feelings of humanity and his sympathy for the misery of the people are clearly engaged. The speech given in 2005 at Oxford University by the former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh seems to contain Eurocentric ideas and provoked criticism and strong reactions from the Hindu nationalist right and some intellectuals. He asserted that “our visions of the rule of law, constitutional government, a free press, professionalised administration, modern universities and research laboratories all emerged from the crucible where the old Indian civilising met the dominant Empire of the day” (Racine, 2006, p. 35).

On the other hand, the project of colonising Africa was implemented first by teaching Africans the language of the colonisers and evangelising them. For this purpose, pastors, priests or orientalist missionaries were sent to Africa with the aim of colonising Africans psychologically. In an effort to locate and learn about Africa, missionaries and explorers contributed to the mapping of Africa and thus to its discovery (Bart, Lenoble-Bart and Ricard, 2005, pp. 91-93). As Asare Opoku (1987, pp. 553-554) points out, missionaries entered Africa from the 1840s onwards with the main objective of spreading Christianity and European civilisation. They served as agents of European colonialism and spokesmen for Western culture. It should be noted that ‘European intervention during the colonial period was based on the premise that, in order to bring about progress, African culture had to be transformed, if not completely destroyed’. Consequently, the missionaries had clearly encouraged European intervention in Africa, seeing it as a morally justified enterprise. To illustrate the collusion between missionaries and colonisers in Africa, Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya said: ‘When the whites came to Africa, we had the land and they had the Bible. They taught us to pray with closed eyes, when we opened them, the whites had the land and

we had the Bible' (Boniface Camara, 2021, p. 163). For their part, Coquery-Vidrovitch and Moniot (1964, pp. 170-172) argue that 'it would be a mistake to see missionary expansion as a deliberate will to conquer'. However, they note that in a way, the action of missionaries helped to prepare the conditions for this colonial expansion. During the colonial occupation, the French particularly stood out by trying to impose their language and thus their culture (Asare Opoku, 1987, p. 561). For example, this situation has created a strong feeling and affection among Africans for the French language while at the same time despising their mother languages and local ones. As a result, the Black man has generally developed a feeling of inferiority and sees the French as modern and superior to his own ones (Fanon, 1952). "As a Nigerien who has visited various Niger towns and villages, I have seen, heard, and personally experienced many cases where the Nigerien undervalues and blames his Nigerien brother just because the latter speaks poor French. This is nothing more than the outcome of Orientalism's development of a Eurocentric ideology" (Sani Hamet, 2022, p. 14).

In contrast to the above writers and many others claiming to be postcolonial studies writers who see a univocal and direct causal relationship between exploration and colonisation, culture and imperialism, others such as Surun (2006, p. 22) dispute this evidence. Frederick Cooper (2005, cited by Surun, 2006, pp. 27-28) criticises the authors of postcolonial studies in the following way:

"They pluck history by extracting from very diverse chronological and geographical contexts selected pieces which they compare with each other and with other texts, without regard for the diversity of situations; they proceed to "leapfrog" by deriving a situation C from a situation A without taking into consideration the transformations which take place during the intermediate period B; they practice 'reverse history' by analysing the past with the help of current categories at the risk of anachronism and thus deprive themselves of a reconstitution of the categories of the actors, even if this leads to historical impasses; finally, they fabricate "artificial eras" - by associating, for example, the era of imperialism with the rationalism of the Enlightenment, "bourgeois egalitarianism", liberalism and globalization - to which they confer a coherence that they do not have and which they make succeed one another in blocks, thus paradoxically forging a new great metahistorical narrative"

For some authors, such as Christelle Taraud (2008), Jacques Frémeaux (2009) and Bruno Lecoquierre (2008), the debate focuses on the order and sequence of these two activities, i.e., exploration and conquest. Sometimes exploration preceded conquest, accompanied it, succeeded it or sometimes they took place

simultaneously (cited by Maistre, 2016, p. 77). Similarly, Gauthier (2018) argues that by linking discursive and domination, postcolonialism is highly ethnocentric and essentialist. Moreover, by advocating diversity, difference and the local, postcolonialism does not criticise today's world; it is its unconscious but effective puppet. It is deeply nostalgic for imperialism, the Nation-State, industrial capitalism, totalitarianism and positivism. Postcolonial analysis rejects the challenges of the present and locks itself into the comfort of literary criticism.

It is clear from some of the writings that there is a desire to deconstruct the thesis supported by postcolonial studies authors linking explorers and colonisers, and culture and imperialism. On the one hand, an attempt is made to show the incoherence of their analysis, on the other hand, the emphasis is placed on the period during which exploration and colonisation took place. However, it should be noted that whatever the period of exploration (before or during colonisation), it served as the basis and reference for the occupation of Africa and other parts of the world.

4. Conclusion

This work has attempted to study the discourses and practices of certain voyagers, explorers, missionaries and social science theorists in order to identify orientalist signs. Throughout this work, many aspects have been identified and analysed. First of all, the work focuses on the concept of Orientalism. At this point, a large number of authors agree that Orientalist studies were born in 1312. Nevertheless, the publication of Saïd's famous book in 1978 revolutionised this field of study by bringing about significant changes and progress. Many studies show that the field of Orientalism is not only vast but also very dynamic. Thus, Al-Hallaq et Al-Soleman (2021) speak of Chinese and Indian orientalism, Iranian studies, Turkish studies, African studies and so on. Moreover, they argue that the relevance and critique of Orientalism lies in the necessity of approaching Orientalist discourses and texts in terms of their content and concrete meaning, rather than reducing them to Western products. In addition, others speak of classical orientalism, neo-orientalism, modern orientalism and postorientalism. These different concepts were discussed in the second part of this work. Neo-orientalism is mainly seen as a continuation of classical orientalism, with some nuances in approach. Bernard Lewis is considered to be the representative of this new approach. Then, another point dealt with concerns the concept of colonialism. Here it was shown that far from being synonymous with civilisation as claimed by some European authors such as Vico, Herder, Montesquieu, Locke and Mill, colonialism was a crime and an immense savagery against peoples deemed uncivilised. Indeed, Montesquieu in his *Spirit of the Laws* believes that colonialism was necessary and helped to

civilise non-European peoples. As Parekh (2002, pp. 79-82) reported, “Europe had discovered freedom and had a great talent for it; the rest of the world knew only the “spirit of slavery”. In the whole history of Asia “it is impossible to find a period when freedom of spirit was discovered”. Africa was in “the same slavery”; so was America before it became a European colony, and so was Persia throughout its history.” Montesquieu had an asymmetrical approach to Eastern and Western society. Since he did not like non-European societies, his understanding of their ways of thinking and living was limited. According to him, if there was goodness outside Europe, it had to be like in Europe. Finally, the last part of the work discusses the relationship between orientalism and colonialism and the real reasons behind the Orientalists’ curiosity in travelling to the East. In summary, it is clear from this study that, despite the attempts of some authors to challenge it, the link between orientalism and colonialism is obvious. Orientalism was and remains a discourse in the manner of Foucault (1969) whose main purpose was the legitimisation of colonialism and the exploitation of the countries of the East by the imperialist and European powers.

According to Said, Orientalism is a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient”. In the light of this definition, Aoun (2019), drawing on the writings of Bertrand Badie, analyses various events that have characterised relations between the West and the East, in particular the Middle East and part of Africa. Long before the 19th century, Africa was the victim of violence and all kinds of humiliation linked to the slave trade and many other painful events. Then the indigenous populations of America, Africa and Oceania were subjected to the violence of colonisation for over a century. Some of these events led Europe to deny the humanity of the “Other” and to genocide. This relationship based on prejudice, stereotypes, stigmatisation and humiliation continues to define the international system. The Middle East is a good example of the neo-colonialist orientalist view with which the West views the East. This part of the world has become the battleground for all forms of violence. We can cite as examples the war in Afghanistan and the role played by America, the invasion of Iraq, the blatant bias of certain powers in the face of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the war in Syria, the targeted assassinations perpetrated by America (the example of the Iranian general Soleiman and many others), and so on (Aoun, 2019).

The 1960s coincided with the independence of several African countries, particularly francophone ones. Immediately after independence, various forms of cooperation and economic agreements were signed, enabling France to maintain contact with its former colonies and gain access to strategic resources (Noirot, 2012). These include scientific and technical cooperation, military cooperation and cultural cooperation. The various kinds of cooperation are an opportunity for African countries to emerge from extreme poverty and achieve genuine socio-economic development. Unfortunately, the reality on the ground shows a negative side to these partnerships. As far as cooperation is concerned, Unesco (1980) points out that

instead of a sincere and beneficial exchange, we are witnessing a simple transfer leading to effects of domination and an import of research carried out by African leaders trained in the West, who serve as intermediaries in the transmission of cultural and technical models not adapted to local realities. Other authors who have written on this issue have reached more or less the same conclusion. Yves Le Coadic, for example, considers that scientific exchanges between France and developing countries have not achieved the expected goals. These exchanges have focused on “economic and political operations with dramatic consequences, operations known as aid, assistance, transfer, transmission, spread, in short, the pernicious scientific and technical arsenal of neo-colonialism” (Le Coadic, 1984, p. 777).

In addition, one of the terms symbolising the strengthening, evolution or continuity of relations between France and its former colonies is clearly *Françafrique* (Kebe, 2019, p. 35). The Franc CFA is considered to be the instrument of this *Françafrique*. Its main mission is to perpetuate the old colonial order in complicity with a large part of the African elite. As a result, only leaders who are entirely subordinated to France and serve its interests come to power. Any leader who opposed France was usually dethroned by a coup d'état or other political conspiracy (Médard, 2002). The examples of former Burkinabe president Thomas Sankara, former Nigerien president Tandja Mamadou and several other coups d'état in which France and other foreign powers are suspected are quite illustrative. We also remember the military intervention by France in 2011 to dislodge former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo from the presidential palace, an act of sheer neo-colonialism and a violation of the sovereignty of an independent country. Other authors condemn the actions of the international court and its neo-colonialist way of operating. In fact, from its foundation to the present day, most of the cases prosecuted, the arrest warrants issued and the people judged by the ICC have been Africans (Mégret, 2014, p. 28).

This work examined the concept of Orientalism and its role in the spread of colonial and Western ideology from pre-19th century to the present day. Numerous writings on Orientalism, its several definitions and criticisms have been consulted and analysed. It is clear that the link between Orientalism and colonialism has been the subject of debate by a number of authors. Nevertheless, the events that have taken place around the world and the ways in which the West maintains relations with the East raise many questions. In particular, the structure of international relations and the kinds of relationships mentioned above that certain European powers maintain with their former colonies reveal Orientalist and neo-colonialist aspects.

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