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**Mohammad Qasem Noori**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5616-4082>

*Assistant Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Education, Baghlan University, Afghanistan, qasemnoori24@gmail.com*

**Mohammad Ekram Yawar**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3198-5212>

*Dr., Türkiye, ekramyawar93@gmail.com*

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## **A Historical Study of the Importance of Orientalism and the Role of Contemporary Islamic Movements**

### **Abstract**

*Many of the definitions of "Orientalism" contain their Western meaning; the ambiguity of this term with its negative connotation, especially in relation to European colonialism, is acknowledged. Edward Said's efforts to disambiguate it did not reduce this complexity, but rather became the focus and basis of criticism in an anti-Western discourse. The emphasis on the opposition between the Eastern (Orientalized) and Western (Westernized) worlds creates a distance in the researcher's mind between the subject and its truth; a distance that causes the construction of an unfair image of the subject. The change of this term in dealing with the subject indicates a change in the Westerners' approach to it, and unfortunately, these changes are ignored by critics, especially Muslims. The lack of attention to the role of time in providing definitions, especially in the field of Islamic studies in the West, has affected this opposition, and criticizing a frozen concept has deepened the depth of disagreement. This article attempts to address the contemporary challenge and paradigm shift of Orientalism by examining the context of the construction of the term "Orientalism" in European culture, its territoriality or applications, our understanding of Orientalism, the role of Orientalists in the transformation of Western*



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thought with the presence and cooperation of Muslims in Islamic studies. Finally, we have put forward the discussion of empathetic Orientalism by listing its most important factors.

**Keywords:** Orientalism, Islam, Muslims, East, West

## Oryantalizmin Önemi ve Çağdaş İslami Hareketlerin Rolü Üzerine Tarihsel Bir Çalışma

**Öz**

“Oryantalizm” tanımlarının çoğu Batılı anlamlarını içerir; bu terimin özellikle Avrupa sömürgeciliğiyle ilişkili olarak olumsuz çağrışımlarıyla birlikte muğlaklığı kabul edilmektedir. Edward Said'in muğlaklığı giderme çabaları bu karmaşıklığı azaltmamış, aksine Batı karşıtı bir söylemin eleştiri odağı ve temeli haline gelmiştir. Doğu (Doğululaştırılmış) ve Batı (Batılılaştırılmış) dünyaları arasındaki karşıtlığa yapılan vurgu, araştırmacının zihninde özne ile hakikati arasında bir mesafe yaratır; bu mesafe, öznenin adil olmayan bir imgesinin inşa edilmesine neden olur. Konunun ele alınışındaki bu terim değişikliği, Batıların konuya yaklaşımındaki bir değişikliğe işaret etmektedir ve ne yazık ki bu değişiklikler eleştirmenler, özellikle de Müslümanlar tarafından göz ardı edilmektedir. Özellikle Batı'daki İslami çalışmalar alanında tanımların yapılmasında zamanın rolüne dikkat edilmemesi bu karşıtlığı etkilemiş ve donmuş bir kavramın eleştirilmesi anlaşmazlığın derinliğini artırmıştır. Bu makale, “Oryantalizm” teriminin Avrupa kültüründeki inşasının bağlamını, bölgeselliğini veya uygulamalarını, Oryantalizm anlayışımızı, İslami çalışmalarda Müslümanların varlığı ve işbirliği ile Batı düşüncesinin dönüşümünde Oryantalistlerin rolünü inceleyerek Oryantalizmin çağdaş meydan okumasını ve paradigma değişimini ele almaya çalışmaktadır. Son olarak, en önemli faktörlerini sıralayarak empatik Oryantalizm tartışmasını ortaya koyduk.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Oryantalizm, İslam, Müslümanlar, Doğu, Batı

### Introduction

Postcolonial studies is a relatively new field of study that studies the cultural-political interaction of colonial and imperialist Western countries with Eastern countries. Among the pioneers of these studies are researchers such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Karim. H. Karim and Ziauddin Sardar, all of whom have an Eastern origin in common. Among them, Edward Said's works and studies have received the most attention from researchers, and his works have also received an unprecedented response in our country. "Two major works by Edward Said can be examined in this field: one is Orientalism and the other is Culture and Imperialism. Edward Said's main argument in both books is that the main element of European culture that has made it hegemonic on a global scale is the image of European cultural identity as a superior identity compared to all other cultures. It is from this perspective that, in Edward Said's opinion, Orientalism, as a long-term European tradition, has a special place in the European cultural experience. In this view, the East has played a decisive role in defining the cultural identity of

the West as non-West. In this sense, Orientalism is a way of thinking based on an ontological and epistemological distinction between the East and the West. Orientalism is a dominant tool for constructing ideas about the East, issuing judgments about it, considering some views as permissible, others as impermissible, and others as forbidden, and thus shaping the East.

In other words, the relationship between Western and Eastern culture is a discursive relationship, that is, a relationship of power and domination. Using very general decisions, Orientalism divides the East into different languages, ethnicities, races, colors, and cultures, and behind all these divisions lies the fundamental dichotomy between us (the West) and them (the East) (Bashirieh, 2006). In his book *Culture and Imperialism*, Said, referring to the existence of these two sides and the confrontation between East and West, believes that in studying the relations between the West and the territory under its domination of others, it is not only the recognition of an unequal relationship, but also an entry into the study of the development and formation of the concept of the cultural experiences of the West itself; in addition, the continued unequal presence of power in the West against the non-West can have a considerable justification and explanation when we also have a precise understanding of cultural forms such as novels, ethnography, historical discourses, a certain type of poetry and operas in which hints and allusions based on these differences abound. Said sought to argue that when seemingly neutral cultural sectors such as literature and critical theory dominate a weaker culture, covering it with ideas of the immutability of the European essence and the fixedness of non-European features, the storytelling of geographical conquests and notions of legitimacy and guilt have dramatic consequences, showing how the experiences of the stronger side have obscured the reliance on and interference with the weaker power (Said, 2003).

### **1. Historical Discourse of Orientalism**

Since the 19th century, the space of science and knowledge, especially academic studies in the West, has flourished greatly, and Orientalists, like other fields of knowledge, were expected to conduct more detailed studies on the phenomenon and subject of their study, the East. However, it was during this period that the powerful European governments made extensive efforts to exert their influence and dominance over Islamic societies and established a new relationship with these societies, using every means possible. As a result of this process, conditions were formed that created a fundamental change in the course of Orientalist studies. During this period, many Orientalists acted in their studies of the East in a way that presented an image of the East and the West's relationship with it, based on which the domination and influence of the West over Islamic societies was considered legitimate. In short, Orientalist studies became the scientific and research arm of the powerful and colonial Western

governments. According to Said, the various views that Orientalists have expressed about religion, society, language, history, and the East can be called overt Orientalism; but since the 19th century, and simultaneously with the expansion of the influence of European powers in the Islamic realm, another type that should be called covert Orientalism has emerged. In this type, the East has been depicted in Western literary works and travelogues in an imaginary, unreasonable, and superstitious manner, and it has been pretended that the East is not worthy of a free life and that the West considers it necessary to guide the East in various fields. In scientific and philosophical research, it is suggested that the ability of Easterners in scientific innovation and development is less than that of Westerners, and that Westerners should catch up with them.

He points out that Orientalist explanations of Islam (and the East) have been formed around four main axes: first, there is an absolute and systematic difference between the West and the East; Second, Western representations of the East are based not on the reality of modern Eastern societies but on textual and subjective interpretations; third, the East is static and monotonous, unable to determine its own identity; fourth, it is dependent and submissive” (Hemmati, 2007). Said distinguishes three meanings of the word Orientalism. The first meaning, which is the most accessible explanation and introduction of Orientalism, is an academic explanation of this concept. From this perspective: “Anyone who teaches, writes or conducts research about the East is an Orientalist, and what he does is Orientalism” (Said, 2016). This feature allows a wide range of academics, including historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and linguists, to be included among those who research, write, and teach about the Orient, and they can be called “Orientalists” and their field of academic activity “Orientalism.” The second concept of Orientalism has an “imaginative” aspect, implying a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction between East and West, and therefore a multitude of writers have accepted the fundamental difference between East and West and made it the starting point of their work (Hemmati, 2007). Many politicians, philosophers, theorists in the fields of politics and economics, poets and writers, especially many storytellers and novelists, whose works Said has extensively explored and in his book *Culture and Imperialism* has provided numerous examples of their way of thinking and looking at the imperialist West and the colonial East, have accepted a fundamental distinction between East and West in terms of culture, customs, people, thought, destiny, and the Eastern view of existence. Said traces the third meaning of Orientalism back to the eighteenth century, which is a Western style of establishing dominance, restructuring, and having authority over the East

that was in the hands of the French and British powers from the early nineteenth century until the end of World War II, and continued after World War II with American dominance. In fact, in brief, regarding the history of this type of Orientalism, which has been linked to colonialism for more than two centuries, we should look at the goals and policies of the two powerful colonial powers, England and France, in the nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century, and then at the imperialist policies of the United States in the twentieth century. “England in India and Napoleon in Egypt recognized the potential of employing Orientalists such as Sir William Jones (Franklin, 2011) to build their empires and linked the intellectual tradition of Orientalism with overt political domination.

After gaining knowledge of the East through careful study of Orientalist texts, Napoleon resolved to conquer the East in 1798. He took 23 scholars with him, whose work resulted in 23 thick books on Egyptology” (Schaar, 2000). Following the model set by Jones and the Napoleonic scholars, nineteenth-century Orientalists compiled and translated anthologies of their works, compiled dictionaries and encyclopedias, and developed the field of epigraphy. They compartmentalized knowledge in order to gain control over it. Orientalists also modernized various fields of knowledge by secularizing their studies and revising their studies in line with the increasing precision of the new sciences. Sylvester de Sacy and Ernest Renan of France and Edward William Lane<sup>1</sup> of Britain were the most influential Orientalists of the nineteenth century.

Said has critiqued and evaluated their work. Their work made Orientalism effective and aligned with the political interests and concerns of imperial rulers. Old stereotypes were recovered and recalled, but the updating and systematization of information and analysis also increased the analytical power of Orientalism, in which the principle was based on the inferiority of the Easterners, the superiority of the Westerners, the weakness and decadence of the East, the brilliance and splendor of the West.<sup>2</sup> In this way, Orientalism was revived, found a new structure, became more up-to-date, and paved the way for further imperialist domination of the East. At the same time, the discourse of Orientalism strengthened Western culture and provided themes, stereotypes, and even texts for figures such as Flaubert, Donneval, Lamartine, T.E. Lawrence, Breton, and Chateaubriand” (Schaar, 2000). The historical discourse of Orientalism in Europe gradually weakened during the First and Second World Wars. After World War II, European Orientalism, without an official empire, lost its function to some extent and its research and academic aspects became more relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> Sylvester de Sacy & Ernest Renan & Edward William Lane

<sup>2</sup> Flaubert & de Nerval & Lamartine & T.E.Lawrence & Byron & Chateaubriand

Hence, Orientalism turned to the new empire, the United States, and rushed to help this country develop its cultural empire. In the book *Orientalism*, Said first defines what Orientalism is not and then explains the various dimensions of Orientalism accordingly:

1. Orientalism is not simply a political subject or discipline that is passively reflected in the relevant culture, scientific research, or institutions.

2. Orientalism is not a large and disparate collection of books written about the East.

3. Orientalism does not express and represent some kind of evil conspiracy of "Western" imperialism to suppress and research the East, but; It is a kind of expansion and distribution of geopolitical consciousness among aesthetic, research, economic, social, historical, and linguistic texts, and it is also the construction and elaboration of not only geographical distinctions, but also of a series of interests and interests that, through things like social discoveries and perspectives, not only create but also maintain them, and above all, it is a sermon and discourse that is in no way directly and proportionately related to existing political power, but is created and continues to exist in an unequal exchange with various kinds of powers" (Schaar, 2000). Said examines his collection of writings on the Orient as a discourse. Foucault provided Said with a tool for describing the relationship between knowledge and the power that dominates the Orient, and Gramsci provided him with the concept of superiority or inferiority; in *Orientalism*, Said challenges, with the help of Gramsci's thought, the authority of Western knowledge over the Orient and the power that the West has imposed on the Orient. In fact, in his third definition of Orientalism, he introduces it as a discourse, in the Foucauldian sense of discourse. Sociolinguistic theory tells us that discourses or discursive formations are always associated with the exercise of power. Discourses are modes of expression with systems of meaning that are both created by and serve the perpetuation of dominant social systems. According to Foucault, in any society the production of discourse is controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed by certain simultaneous processes. The role of these processes is to ward off the dangers of discourse, to master its contingent occurrences, and to avoid its soulless and rigid materiality. Discourses are, in fact, highly controlled cognitive systems that control and demarcate both the mode and the means of representation in a given society. Thus, whenever colonial/Orientalist discourses seek to defend the silent and mute Orient, they are framed as a common discursive activity and, consequently, stubbornly present it as a hidden and inverted image of Western wisdom or its weak other. In other words, Orientalism becomes a discourse when it begins to systematically produce stereotypes about Orientals and the Orient, stereotypes such as heat and dust, crowded markets, terrorists, court prostitutes, Asian despots,

childlike natives, the mysterious Orient” (Gandhi, 2009). The concept of the Orient in Said’s thought implies a system of representation and identification, the framework of which is constructed by political forces. For Said, the existence of the Orient is made by the West, in relation to the West and for the West.

The Orient is an idea of an alien and backward other in contrast to the advanced West. For Said, the Orient is not a lifeless and motionless truth and reality in nature. The East has a thought, a language, and an image that its people create due to human dynamics and that cannot be limited to a specific place or place. In his opinion, Orientalism is much more than a subject for sermons and lectures about the East, but a valuable sign of the exercise of Euro-Atlantic power over the East. Edward Said says: “I study Orientalism as a dynamic exchange between different authors and a huge set of political considerations shaped by the great empires of England, France, and America and created in the intellectual and imaginative realm of those writings related to this field” (Said, 2016).

An important feature of Orientalist discourse is its reliance on a dualistic language.<sup>3</sup> Said argues that Orientalism is a dualistic style of thought and worldview that is based on “an ontological and epistemological distinction” between what is called the East and the West. Sardar (1999) argues that such a dualism “is a vital force in the West’s self-identification” (Izadi & Saghaye-Biria, 2007).

Said also argues that Orientalism employs an essentialist discourse that generalizes providential characteristics and features to the East and the Islamic world. He examines writers, novelists, journalists, philosophers, political theorists, historians, economists, and practitioners of the British Empire as Orientalists who accepted the basic West/East distinction as the basis for their work on the Orient. Indeed, Orientalism has come to denote the ideology that justifies and justifies Western imperialism. In Edward Said’s view: “The French, the English, and to a lesser extent the Germans, Russians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians, and Swiss have played a major role in shaping what he calls Orientalism. Orientalism is a way of understanding the Orient based on its special place in the experience of Western Europe. The Orient is not just the West’s next-door neighbor, it is the West’s largest, richest, and oldest colony. The East is the source of civilizations and language; the East is the cultural defender and one of the most profound and restorative notions of the “other” for the West. Furthermore, the East is a major contribution to the definition of Europe (or the West) as a concept, idea, personality, and experience opposed to the West. But none of these Easts is yet conceivable. The East is a

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<sup>3</sup> Binary language

complementary part of European material civilization and culture, and Orientalism is the retelling and representation of that part—both culturally and ideologically, as a mode of discourse, with the support of organizations, interpretations, doctrines, vocabularies, research, and even colonial bureaucracies and practices. In short, Orientalism, for Said, is a Western way of dominating the East, of restructuring it, and of perpetuating Western authority. For Said, the result of this Western Orientalism is to ignore the reality of the East and its people. This kind of Orientalism is patriarchal, egocentric, racist, and imperialistic” (Azdanloo, 2004). Orientalism, after about two centuries of its formal existence, has become a well-known discourse. “The characteristics of the Orientalist discourse can be summarized as follows:

1. The classical tradition of studying a region with linguistic and written means, so that anyone who teaches, researches, and writes about the Orient is an Orientalist.
2. It is based on the specific place of the Orient in Western European experience.
3. It is a pervasive style of thought and history that goes back to antiquity and is based on an epistemological and ontological distinction between “the West” and “the Orient.”
4. It is a Western style of mastering, restructuring, and knowledge of the Orient.
5. It is a so-called authoritative library or information archive.
6. It is a system of representing the Orient in Western knowledge, consciousness, and empire.
7. The subject [of this view] is not the East as an empirical object that exists; rather, the East, as Orientalized, is the object of European discourse” (Mehdizadeh, 2008).

## **2. The Emergence of Contemporary Islamic Movements Against Colonialism**

In parallel with the formation and growth of Orientalism, since the 19th century, Eastern thinkers and intellectuals have faced new challenges because during this period, the decline of the power of the Islamic world and the plundering of Muslim countries were painful and unbearable for them. "The dominance of this situation over the Islamic world, that is, the military, political-economic and intellectual superiority of the West against the decline of the military, political-economic and intellectual power of Islamic countries, created a kind of identity crisis among Islamic thinkers and intellectuals. Those who compared the glorious past of the Islamic Caliphate during the Abbasid and even early Ottoman eras with the current deplorable situation, found the military, political, economic and even intellectual domination of the West over the Islamic world intolerable. The military, economic and political domination of England over India, the extensive economic and political penetration of the West into Iran and the Ottoman Empire, and the military defeats of these two powers in the 19th century, forced



many of the political and intellectual elites of these countries to think about finding a solution to the current chaotic situation and finding a suitable solution for the future.

The main issue and major question for them was: What was the reason for the remarkable economic, social, intellectual and military advances of the West and the decline of Muslim power in the same fields? And how can the Islamic world and the East be freed from this regrettable situation?" (Hamdi, 2017). In fact, on the one hand, Orientalism has been a justification and intellectual tool for the continuation of colonialism, and on the other hand, the thoughts and opinions of Muslim thinkers have been the inspiration, driving force and motivation of the scattered forces, bored, angry and dissatisfied with the current situation of Islamic societies. These forces have crystallized in various Islamic societies over the past two centuries, especially in the twentieth century, in the form of Islamic movements in countries such as Egypt and some North African countries, Pakistan, Jordan, Afghanistan, and some countries on the Persian Gulf.

Hence, the relationship between Orientalism and contemporary Islamic movements should be considered a contradictory and antagonistic relationship because Orientalists have served colonialism, but genuine Islamic movements have risen against colonialism and imperialism. In fact, for this reason, in recent times, Muslim movements and struggles have found a new nature and direction. The type of involvement of Muslims, and especially Islamic elites, in politics in the contemporary period is fundamentally different from the past. Most of the past religious movements in the Islamic world, which had a sectarian flavor, were formed in line with sectarian beliefs and, of course, in reaction to the policies of religious governments, especially the caliphate or monarchies claiming religious legitimacy. Their demands also varied in terms of political, social, and intellectual issues. While most of the earlier movements were involved with local governments and considered their "other" to be mostly local and indigenous rulers, the new Islamic movements had larger goals and considered their "other" to be the Western world and its affiliated forces in Islamic countries.

Contemporary Islamic movements also aimed at the broad political, social, and economic development of the Islamic world against its main rival, the West, rather than the spread of sectarian beliefs or the overthrow of local governments (Hamdi, 2017). The most important feature of Islamic movements that has attracted the attention of Orientalists has been their combined political and religious nature; in the sense that religion has been considered to determine the framework of political action of these movements, and this has always been considered a weak point and a dark feature of these movements.

Bernard Lewis has said in this regard: “Islam is fundamentally incapable of distinguishing and separating politics from religion (Sayyid, 1997). In contrast to the religious approach of Islamic movements, Orientalists have always had a secularist approach to Islamic movements due to the intellectual and political context in which they themselves lived, and from this perspective have followed the revival of the Islamic world. “In the secularist perception of Islamic revival, important dimensions of Islamic movements are ignored. Most studies conducted within a secular framework on political Islam, sometimes unconsciously - face challenges in accepting the concept of the inseparability of religion and politics in Islamic countries.

This perspective often ignores the role and importance of religion in social and cultural development and sees the rise of Islamic political movements in Muslim societies as the result of a deviation in processes such as economic crises, social issues, insecurity or extremism, and not as a genuine natural reaction of the aforementioned societies seeking to create an indigenous model to live their Islamic life in the modern world, especially in an era when their identity and even their very existence are threatened” (Shahin, 1998). This is while Islam has always been the most important point of support for these societies and the forces that emerged from their hearts in the revival of Muslim societies over the past two centuries, although it has emerged in the form of various trends and tendencies, sometimes moderate and sometimes radical. “In the national struggle against colonialism, Islam was a force that mobilized and motivated the people against the influence of foreign domination and also strengthened their national identity. The various forms of struggle for independence in each of the colonized countries have played an important role in the evolution and continuation of the path of the Islamic movements in each of these countries (Shahin, 1998). With the revival of Islam and Islamic movements in the contemporary era, under the influence of the Orientalist discourse, the presentation of a frightening and ghostly image of Muslims and Islamic movements has become very voluminous and dominant. As a result of the insight derived from Orientalism, Muslim activists, in addition to being considered reactionary, are in a sense denied their existence or at least not considered to belong to the present era. They are considered ghosts or the dead who have appeared in the form of ghosts. They are presented as reflections of past times and living beings who are dead but still exist; “those who look back on medieval civilizations and have been crushed in the mill of our modern (Western) culture.” Sometimes it is said that Muslims belong to cultures and societies that are dying and have no life of their own. They remain with us like ghosts and blend into the present era. It is said that ghosts do not really exist, they are illusions and fantasies, perhaps they look exactly like Muslims. Ghosts are scary, even if ghosts do not really exist,

they have a purpose. When you encounter something unknown at night, you can blame it on the ghost and blame it on him. Similarly, when there was an explosion at the federal building in Oklahoma City, the presence of Muslims in the vicinity was useful in explaining the bombings that night.

Ghosts are scary, despite not existing. Muslims also create fear, even if they are the weakest and most deprived segments of society, they can frighten powerful liberal institutions, and unlike ghosts, they are not almost everywhere and always. Ghosts can walk through walls. Borders cannot stop them. Muslims, it seems, are like that too, and they have infiltrated the very fabric of our European homes. They are in places where they are least likely to be: Bradford, Bosnia, in state schools and universities, in secular Turkey, in Egypt, in Chechnya, and even, it was rumored, in Oklahoma” (Sayyid, 1997). In this approach, Islamic societies in which Islamic movements have been active are seen as sick or deadlocked societies, driven to this path by desperation to solve their own problems, and in this path jihad and martyrdom have been chosen as the inevitable means or solution; “Islamic forms of struggle that lead to jihad or martyrdom are related to the emergence of new nations that encounter obstacles in their path or, as in the case of Iran, find themselves at war with other countries.

Despite the differences between the cases of Iran, Palestine, Chechnya, Algeria and Afghanistan, what they all have in common is that [jihad] was inspired by Islamic movements with a very clear goal and the enemy chosen to fight was also very clear” (Khosrokhavar, 2005). In contrast to the aforementioned approaches, which present a frightening picture of Islamic movements for the West, is the approach of people like Fred Halliday. In his opinion, “the claim that Islam is a strategic challenge to the West, whether it is created by Islamists or by their enemies, is without foundation. They are particularly threatening because of the poor economic conditions of the countries that are claimed to be threatening. The theory of the clash of civilizations, while dealing with a deterministic concept of civilization, reduces conflict to a conflict between like-minded individuals. In his view, the fundamental concern of Islamic movements is the state, how to resist an opposing and oppressive state, and how to seize and maintain it using various techniques. Rather than being a continuation, however brief, of the Islamic conquests of the Arab and Ottoman eras, the current dynamics and movements of Islamic countries are more internal and, of course, more often destructive, complex, and intricate. The recent spread of Islamic politics among the countries and famous movements of the Islamic world is not considered much of a threat to the non-Muslim world. This awakening is more internal and, in fact, a reaction to the former weakness and domination of the Islamic world.

The fact that this movement is accompanied by condemnation and criticism from the outside world and possible violence against it should not hide the fact that Islamic revival and reconstruction are more related to the Islamic world than anything else; "The issue, therefore, is not that the Islamic world threatens the outside world, but rather that Islamic awakening, in its various forms, can provide solutions to the problems that Muslim societies today are grappling with " (Halliday, 2003).

### **3. Reproduction of Orientalism**

Scholars such as Said, Sardar, and Karim have shown that Orientalism is the dominant ideology in the West's relations with the Islamic world. Orientalism employs a realistic narrative in which a different social and cultural reality of the East is taken for granted, a reality that is different from its Western counterpart. This narrative has been discovered through the efforts of Orientalists and is taken for granted. A kind of demonization has been a constant feature of this way of thinking. Today, Orientalist narratives of the East and the Islamic world, and in particular, Islamic movements, are projected and repeated in a new context.

Indeed, these narratives have been continuously reproduced by the media, especially the mass media. Karim shows the repetition of Orientalist images of Islam and Muslims in the American media and explains that the image of Islam as a threat has become the dominant discourse in America. "Orientalism functions as a dominant framework, based on the historical experiences of political and economic imperialism, through which Western institutions exploit the lands belonging to a region called the "Middle East," a nomenclature that embodies a particular perspective and is not derived from natural and inherent ideas about this region.

The process of imposing political and economic domination requires planning and an effort to control the ideological arena so that, by creating a context in which the activity of domination is justified and understandable, it is not only not questioned but also appears completely rational. Thus, ideological justifications for domination emerge and emerge in the discourse of Western institutions, including media organizations, universities, corporations, military apparatuses, and other organizations.

The media industry, along with other organizations, also presents in specific ways an image of the Middle East, its societies, and the movements active in the region that reinforces Western dominance. For example, media discourse frames the violent and sometimes frightening actions of movements in the region without considering the complexity of political and historical issues and historical power relations, while these issues are in fact rooted in

historical power relations. In this discourse, Islam has replaced communism as the most important other, as a key base of opposition to Western values.

“The production of media texts takes place within a macro-framework in which Orientalist ideologies that survive in political and cultural institutions are systematized through the economic imperatives and necessities of the media industry. Media images of terrorism justify and glorify approaches to American foreign policy. Media organizations, governments, and the military produce versions of political issues and world events through an Orientalist lens.

Muscati<sup>4</sup> argues that media depictions of war, by dehumanizing Arabs and Muslims while framing them as a threat to others, fueled public support for American intervention in the Gulf War and Iraq (Wilkins, 2009). Karim used critical discourse analysis to analyze various Western discourses about Muslims to show that Western perceptions of Muslims fall into four categories: “violence, lust, greed, and barbarity.”

The study found that these Orientalist stereotypes of Islam and Muslims do not serve them well because “central and mainstream images of Islam are widespread throughout the world and influence the way hundreds of millions of media audiences understand and perceive Muslims (Karim, 1997). This study showed that Western discourse attempts to reinforce and perpetuate Orientalist stereotypes of Muslims in public discourse. It also showed that the West has the power to prevent and prevent these Orientalist stereotypes and can present Muslims in more positive images. In another study, Karim (1996) focuses on how Western transnational media support a global narrative of Islam that reconstructs the Islamic East as the West’s main rival.

Karim believes that in the post-Cold War era, media narratives portray Islam as a source of instability in Third World countries and an attack on the new world order. Karim shows the repetition of Orientalist images of Islam and Muslims in Western media and states that the image of Islam as a threat has become the dominant global discourse. A clear understanding of why stereotypes are important in the dissemination of information needs to be developed. Gorham, who has studied the issue of media stereotypes, states that “stereotypes are important because of what they do and what they mean” (Gorham, 1999). Merskin supports Gorham’s idea that the importance of stereotypes lies in their meaning because “when a person is constructed as an alien, that person is no longer recognized as human; the frightening and threatening alien is certainly a human being in human form” (Merskin, 2005). Today’s media

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<sup>4</sup> Muscati

stereotypes about Islamic movements are very dangerous because they give the public a kind of information about these movements and, if the public's attitudes and beliefs about these movements and their activists and leaders are negative, they may lead to a political backlash and a strong reaction against them.

Karim used critical discourse analysis to analyze various Western discourses about Muslims to show the Western understanding of Muslims in four categories: "violence, lust, greed, and barbarity." The study showed that these Orientalist stereotypes of Islam and Muslims do not benefit them because "central and mainstream images of Islam are spread throughout the world and influence the way hundreds of millions of media audiences understand and perceive Muslims" (Karim, 1997). The study showed that Western discourse tries to reinforce and perpetuate Orientalist stereotypes of Muslims in public discourse. The study also showed that the West has the power to prevent and prevent these Orientalist stereotypes and can present Muslim activists and Islamic movements in more positive images.

In another study (1996), Karim focuses on how the transnational media of Western countries support a global narrative of Islam that reconstructs the Islamic East as the main rival of the West. Karim believes that in the post-Cold War era, media narratives portray Islam and Islamic movements as a source of instability in Third World countries and an attack on the new world order. Karim shows the repetition of Orientalist images of Islam and Muslim activists in Western media and argues that the image of Islam as a threat has become the dominant global discourse. Apart from the historical and theoretical roots of Orientalism, the dominant discourse of media Orientalism in introducing oneself and representing others can be summarized in the framework of Table 1.

*Table 1: Framework of introducing oneself and the other in Orientalist discourse (Mehdizadeh, 2008).*

Self-Representation Frameworks (West)	Other Representation Frameworks (Muslims)
Development and Modernity	Backwardness and Petrification
Tolerance	Bigotry and Violence
Peacemaking	Evil and Warmongering
Rationality and Responsibility	Madness and Extremism
Victim of Terrorism	Promoter of Terrorism
Women's Liberation	Oppression of women

Based on the aforementioned framework, the mainstream media in the West repeats stereotypes about Islamic movements that were previously narrated in a different way in the narratives of Western novelists and playwrights, and today, in a wide variety of formats, genres, and media types in news, notes, reports, editorials, and publications, motion pictures, television series and documentaries, commercials, educational programs, short films, computer games, and they produce and reproduce stereotypes such as violence, fundamentalism, terrorism, extremism, brainwashing, and the like of Islamic movements. In this process, radical and moderate forces and movements are not separated from each other, and even the roots and context of their formation and activity are often ignored.

One of the most prominent media productions in this field is the documentary *Warriors of God*<sup>5</sup>. In this episodic documentary, Christiane Amanpour, a journalist and anchor for the American television network CNN, discusses the approach of Islamic movements to the issue of jihad in the way of God. She examines this issue among various Muslim religions and sects in various Islamic countries.

This documentary covers almost all the orientalist stereotypes about the Middle East and Islamic movements; violence, irrationality, primitiveness, and backwardness. By focusing on the issue of suicide and martyrdom operations in Muslim countries and in the West, this documentary brings the audience to the conclusion that Islam is a religion of terror and terror, and that Muslims have no fear of killing themselves or others (i.e. Westerners or those who are with the West) because of their religious beliefs.

In the text of this documentary, we witness the interweaving of various topics to form a picture indicating the violence of Islam and Muslim movements; images of terrorist operations in the West, the murder of filmmaker Theo Van Gogh, the endorsement of martyrdom operations by Muslim movements in the Middle East, as well as many young Muslims in the West, indicate the institutionalized violence in the minds and thinking of Muslims, which is rooted in their religious beliefs. Images of congregational and Friday prayers in the company of the Kaaba, reciting the Quran, the call to prayer, holding rosary beads, and various other religious symbols and signs all indicate that violence and inflexibility among Islamic movements are rooted in Islam. Fearing death and disregarding death among them is a pervasive thing that is expressed in the expressions and words of many interviewees, both Shiites and Sunnis. This is an issue that is somehow tied to psychoanalysis, where people who are not afraid of death and at the

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<sup>5</sup> God's Warriors

same time are evasive of reason should be feared, especially since they are people who seek domination (they seek an Islamic empire).

The violence of Islamic movements is in many cases induced by the historical decontextualization of an event or phenomenon; this description has been made regarding the Palestinian movements and the operations that the Palestinians carry out against the Zionist regime, and the issue is not raised in the context of the issue between Palestine and this regime, what is the historical background of such events, but rather the Palestinian movements are represented as violent movements that attack Israelis, who are Jews, because of their religious beliefs, and there is no discussion of the occupation or invasion of Palestine by the Zionist regime.

Another image presented of the Middle East movements is the usual Orientalist stereotype of backwardness and reaction. The reason for these movements' opposition to people like the Shah of Iran or Anwar Sadat, who were friends of the West, is that these rulers' tendency towards modernism has been recognized, and Muslim movements are considered anti-progress. As a result, it is understood that because Islamic movements are in conflict with progress and modernity, they were in conflict with the aforementioned people, and this is one of the reasons for their opposition to the West, not because these movements were independence-seeking and anti-colonial. In today's orientalist stereotypes of Muslims and Islamic movements by the media, there is no distinction between moderate and radical approaches among Muslims.

In this documentary, the beliefs and approach of anti-oppression and defending the homeland of the Afghan nation, which are derived from a rich culture, are placed alongside the extremism and radicalism of the Al-Qaeda network, and as a result, a horrifying image of Afghans as supporters, promoters, or agents of terrorism has been portrayed. The documentary also depicts polarizations and confrontations, including:

Muslim terrorists are placed against Westerners and Israelis who are victims of terrorism, in other words, Muslims are placed against Christians and Jews, as a result, the audience comes to an inference of the opposition between Islam and the other two Abrahamic religions. Islamic values are presented against Western values; values such as hijab and prayer are presented in contrast to music and homosexuality.

American values are considered human values that Muslims are in conflict with and opposed to, as a result, Muslims and Islamic movements are dehumanized. In short, in this representation of Muslim movements, they are violent and at the same time unafraid of death, so the West should be afraid of them.



## Conclusion

More than two centuries of colonialism have passed in various forms, including post-colonialism, and Islamic movements have also revived in different periods in line with it. Since the beginning of the formation of contemporary Islamic movements, anti-colonialism has been one of their prominent characteristics and goals. Therefore, Orientalism, as an arm of colonialism, has tried to demonize and dehumanize this enemy of colonialism; in the past, the results of Orientalist studies were prevalent in the form of stereotyping Muslims and Islamic movements in novels and plays, but today, with the expansion of the media, especially mass media, those stereotypes are reproduced in the media space. It seems that as long as the dominant discourse in East-West relations is the discourse of domination, this situation will continue, and the only difference in each period is the form and format of its emergence and emergence, which will find a new emergence and emergence in each period depending on the means of discourse formation.

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