

## Covering Islam Edward Said

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in this classic work now updated the author of culture and imperialism reveals the hidden agendas and distortions of fact that underlie even the most objective coverage of the islamic world from the iranian hostage crisis through the gulf war and the bombing of the world trade center the american news media have portrayed islam as a monolithic entity synonymous with terrorism and religious hysteria at the same time islamic countries use islam to justify unrepresentative and often repressive regimes combining political commentary with literary criticism covering islam continues edward said s lifelong investigation of the ways in which language not only describes but also defines political reality

from the iranian hostage crisis through the gulf war and the world trade centre bombing the west has been haunted by a spectre called islam as portrayed by the news media and by a chorus of government academic

and corporate experts islam is synonymous with terrorism and religious hysteria at the same time islamic countries use islam to justify unrepresentative and often oppressive regimes in this landmark work for which he has written a new introduction one of our foremost public thinkers examines the origins and repercussions of the media's monolithic images of islam combining political commentary with literary criticism edward said reveals the hidden assumptions and distortions of fact that underlie even the most objective coverage of the islamic world

evaluates the american media's coverage of news stories concerning islam and shows how misconceptions about the middle east have been promoted

this is the first systematic critique of edward said's influential work *orientalism* a book that for almost three decades has received wide acclaim voluminous commentary and translation into more than fifteen languages said's main thesis was that the western image of the east was heavily biased by colonialist attitudes racism and more than two centuries of political exploitation although said's critique was controversial the impact of his ideas has been a pervasive rethinking of western perceptions of eastern cultures plus a tendency to view all scholarship in oriental studies as tainted by considerations of power and prejudice in this thorough reconsideration of said's famous work ibn warraq argues that said's case against the west is seriously flawed warraq accuses said of not only willfully misinterpreting the work of many scholars but also of systematically misrepresenting western civilization as a whole with example after example he shows that ever since the greeks western civilization has always had a strand in its very makeup that has accepted non westerners with open arms and has ever been open to foreign ideas the author also criticizes said for inadequate methodology incoherent arguments and a faulty historical understanding he points out not only said's tendentious interpretations but historical howlers that would make a sophomore blush warraq further looks at the destructive influence of said's study on the history of western painting especially of the 19th century and shows how once again the epigones of said have succeeded in relegating thousands of first class paintings to the lofts and storage rooms of major museums an extended appendix reconsiders the value of 18th and 19th century orientalist scholars and artists whose work fell into disrepute as a result of said's work

freedom of speech and expression is considered in the west a high public good and an important social value underpinned by legislative and ethical norms its importance is not shared to the same extent by conservative and devout muslims who read islamic doctrines in ways seemingly incompatible

with western notions of freedom of speech since the salman rushdie affair in the 1980s there has been growing recognition in the west that its cherished value of free speech and associated freedoms relating to arts the press and media literature academia critical satire etc episodically clash with conservative islamic values that limit this freedom for the sake of holding religious issues sacrosanct recent controversies such as the danish cartoons the charlie hebdo affair quran burnings and the internet film the innocence of muslims which have stirred violent reactions in the muslim world have made the west aware of the fact that muslims religious sensitivities have to be taken into account in exercising traditional western freedoms of speech featuring experts across a spectrum of fields within islamic studies freedom of speech and islam considers islamic concepts of blasphemy apostasy and heresy and their applicability in the modern world

edward said s orientalism now more than fifty years old has to be one of the most frequently cited books among academics in a wide range of disciplines and the most frequently assigned book to undergraduates at colleges among the common questions raised in response to said s book did scholars in western europe provide crucial support to the imperialist colonialist activities of european regimes are their writings on islam laden with denigrating eroticized distorting biases that have left an indelible impact on western society what is the orientalism invented by europe and what is its impact today however one question has been less raised or less has been done about the question how were the orientalist writings of european scholars of islam received among their muslim contemporaries an international team of contributors rectify this oversight in this volume

the islamic orient studies the travel accounts of four british travelers during the nineteenth century through a critical analysis of these works the author examines and questions edward said s concept of orientalism and orientalist discourse his argument that the orientalist view had such a strong influence on westerners that they invariably perceived the orient through the lens of orientalism on the contrary the author argues no single factor had an overwhelming influence on them she shows that westerners often struggled with their own conceptions of the orient and being away for long periods from their homelands were in fact able to stand between cultures and view them both as insiders and outsiders the literary devices used to examine these writings are structure characterization satire landscape description and word choice as also the social and political milieu of the writers the major influences in the author s analysis are said foucault abdel malek and marie louise pratt

using many examples covering islam demonstrates that the media and the

government business establishment have produced a dangerously misleading and oversimplified portrait of islam and muslims based on ignorance inaccuracy and prejudice

this work presents key selections from said s works whether writing on the hebron massacre or on the fight for palestinian self determination said s uncompromising intelligence casts light on every subject he tackles

this book the image of the west in contemporary arab culture is distorted and devoid of friendliness because those who painted this image lacked free and independent thinking away from dogma or the influence of the old dominant powers in the arab region it is difficult to separate anti west and anti jews hence jews occupy a large portion of this book since it is the easiest and quickest way to demonize the west the book reviews the most prominent names that contributed to demonizing the west within the arab east over an entire century the list includes the names of writers poets translators singers and actors in theatre and cinema they reflect the level of thinking of the broad masses to this day one thing in common among these names is that they all conform and strengthen what already exists they reflect the level of thinking of the broad masses there is no one among them who thinks alone if one of them wants to say something he waits to hear it from millions before him here lie the biggest challenges facing arab culture the book discusses a large number of anti west jews and arab rulers texts furthermore the book discusses films songs and television series the book includes seven studies on the challenges facing arab culture

this book presents an in depth cultural and political analysis of the issue of political islam as a potential source of tensions and conflict and how this might be peacefully resolved looking at modernity from an islamic point of view the author analyses issues such as law knowledge and human rights

winner of the new yorker book award for nonfiction from one of the most important intellectuals of our time comes an extraordinary story of exile and a celebration of an irrecoverable past a fatal medical diagnosis in 1991 convinced edward said that he should leave a record of where he was born and spent his childhood and so with this memoir he rediscovers the lost arab world of his early years in palestine lebanon and egypt engrossing said has an almost proustian feel for smells sounds sights and telling anecdotes the new york review of books said writes with great passion and wit about his family and his friends from his birthplace in jerusalem schools in cairo and summers in the mountains above beirut to boarding school and college in the united states revealing an unimaginable world of

rich colorful characters and exotic eastern landscapes underscoring all is the confusion of identity the young said experienced as he came to terms with the dissonance of being an american citizen a christian and a palestinian and ultimately an outsider richly detailed moving often profound out of place depicts a young man s coming of age and the genesis of a great modern thinker

the noted critic and a palestinian now teaching at columbia university examines the way in which the west observes the arabs

how did the victorians perceive muslims in the british empire and beyond talking about victorian britain s conceptions and misconceptions of the muslim world this book helps in understanding the apprehensions and misapprehensions about islam in the nineteenth century

can there be dialogue between muslims and christians can we overcome the long history of antagonism between the two largest religious communities in the world who occupy nearly sixty percent of believing humanity in the muslim christian dialogue 20 essays address these vital questions as they explore the promise and problems of dialogue between the two great traditions here muslims and christians speak of their faith with passion and insight as they seek to move beyond mutual antagonism and caricatures the muslim as terrorist the christian as crusader toward mutual understanding the essays cover a range of issues from the encounter of islam and christianity with modernity to islam in africa from the role of women to the understanding of jesus in islam and christianity and the role of the prophet muhammad in muslim piety rather than seeking to convert the other these internationally known scholars and religious leaders contribute to mutual understanding between christians and muslims

eminent columnist and legal expert a g noorani delves into the rich and complex history of islam and presents the case for a reformist modern interpretation of the faith and its scripture

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