of the leaders and preachers in the Muslim countries to divert the attention of their subjects from internal problems.

For the West: it must depart from its triumphant, condescending approach to every Arab and Muslim nation. In agreement with his colleague, Associate Professor and former Ambassador Clovis Maksoud, Ahmed suggests that the West talk with the Arabs and Muslims instead of talking to them, and make some effort to genuinely understand Islam. The bottom line then is that education harbours a solution: the madrasah curriculum must change, and the Western Islamophobia must disappear.

Ahmed writes with passion, sincerity and integrity. He does not show any fear to tread where the less courageous may seek to conceal one’s positions. In describing Bush’s much-publicized Freudian slip in his use of “crusade” to describe the war on terrorism, Ahmed bluntly states that the US President, in this crusader mode, has rolled back the post-modern age back a thousand years with its intent on war and rearranging the map of the Middle East. I cannot think of any writer who has summed up the situation so aptly.

Ahmed’s book is an immense contribution to understanding a contemporary, dangerous world. No course on contemporary Islam or global studies should be deemed complete without this work. Both the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds owe Ahmed a great debt for this piece of honest, hard-hitting scholarship. Every imām in Western mosques would benefit greatly from reading this book and taking his advice seriously. For my cynical pre-evaluation of the work, I must conclude that I owe Professor Sonn an apology: Ahmed’s book is evidence that she does not lie.

Khaleel Mohammed


As a highly welcome offshoot of the publication of Edward Said’s seminal work *Orientalism* (1978), Western literary Orientalism has emerged since 1980s as an independent sub-field of English studies. Central to this field is the

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critical study of the representation of the “Other” by English men of letters down the ages. Among the prominent English literary figures who have depicted the “Other” in their own varied ways are Goeffrey Chaucer, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, John Dryden, Addison and Steele, Dr. Johnson, William Beckford, Sir William Jones, S.T. Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Thomas Moore, Robert Southey, Lord Byron, P.B. Shelley, Matthew Arnold, Alfred Tennyson, Joseph Conrad, W.B. Yeats, James Joyce and E.M. Forester. A spate of doctoral dissertations, mostly in British and American universities, and books have appeared, examining the image of “other” faith communities, ethnic groups, cultures and civilizations in literary texts of the above mentioned authors. This field of Western literary Orientalism has assumed greater relevance and significance in our times in view of the ever-growing and closer interaction among various communities all around the world, especially on account of the overall globalization, emergence of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nation states and intercivilizational encounters at every conceivable level.

Naji B. Oueijan’s work under review represents a valuable addition to the body of literature in the above field. His masterly and judicious assessment of the British Romantic poet Lord Byron’s (1788–1824) literary Orientalism draws attention to a brilliant example of cross-cultural sympathy and objectivity, demonstrated by Lord Byron in representing an alien faith and culture — Islam and Muslims.

Being a Christian Arab and with his impeccable academic credentials, Oueijan enjoys the distinction of possessing thorough familiarity with both Christian and Islamic traditions. As a result, his book under discussion stands out as an extensive and substantial contribution to the field. More significantly, his work, like many others dealing with Western literary Orientalism, goes a long way in pointing to the prevalence of negative stereotypes of and the note of sheer hostility towards the “Other” in the literary texts, mirroring the religious and socio-political milieu of the period in which these were composed.

Take the relationship between Christianity and Islam as an illustration. Regrettably, since the beginning, the encounter between these two major faith communities has been shot through with religious bias. It was mainly in polemical terms that the West learnt first about Islam and Muslims. Islam was perceived in the Christian West as a heresy and Muslims were cast in the role of an evil enemy, as irrational savages given only to violence and lust. Sexual promiscuity was ascribed to them as well. Little wonder, then, that the early specimens of literature such as the *Chanson De Geste*, the oral poetry of medieval France and Middle English Romances conjure up the image of Islam
as a despicable form of paganism. These project, in dark colours, the Islamic practices of the segregation of women, polygamy, and divorce and ascribe even idolatry to Muslims, branding the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him) as Muslims’ object of worship. The literary works of Langland, Lydgate, Marlowe and Shakespeare retain some of these medieval misperceptions. Until seventeenth century in the West the Qur’ān was regarded as the product of the Prophet’s mind. Worse, it was seen as the “Turkish Alcoran”, identifying Islam only with the Ottoman Turks whom the West dreaded as a fierce adversary in the politico-military domain. It was widely held that the Prophet’s coffin hangs in mid-air in the shrine of Makkah! With the passage of time and as a result of direct diplomatic, trade and travel links between the West and Islamic lands and the publication of authentic, scholarly works on Islamic faith, history and culture gradually helped dispel these common misconceptions.

Naji B. Oueijan’s work under review ably demonstrates how the English Romantic poet Lord Byron contributed to building the bridge between the two major faith communities — Christians and Muslims. Since his childhood, Byron was drawn towards the writings on the Orient. For example, with avidity he studied the Arabian Nights, English translations of Oriental literature, especially the ones by Sir William Jones, and George Sale’s English translation of the Qur’ān. He spent some time in Albania and Turkey and gained first-hand knowledge of Muslim life and culture there. As a result, he discerned many positive features in both Islamic faith and the Muslim way of life. What struck him most was the economic freedom, and honour and respect enjoyed by Muslim women in family and society in the Ottoman Turkey, something unimaginable for women in England. He was impressed, in an equal measure, by the artistic and literary marvels of the Qur’ān and its life-ennobling moral precepts on charity, generosity and hospitality. Byron’s “Oriental Tales”, composed in 1820s, are a testament to his cross-cultural sympathy and his catholicity of mind.

Oueijan has done a masterly job in compiling and explicating the Eastern elements in Byron’s poetry — the Eastern locales, flora and fauna, architecture, characters, names, ranks, customs and costume. His elucidation is reflective of his insights into Byron’s poetry and his enviable grounding in Oriental material. His annotations are destined to help readers gain a better understanding of Byron’s poetry. These are particularly helpful for the Western readership. For, without Oueijan’s valuable notes western readers would find it hard to decipher the Eastern allusions embedded in Byron’s poetry.
The massive bibliography appended to the book indicates Oueijan’s familiarity with relevant material. Intriguingly enough, however, Professor Adnan M. Wazzan’s excellent writings on the subject, some of which appeared in *Islamic Studies*, have escaped his notice. Equally regrettable is the consistent misspelling of the present reviewer’s name in the citations. These minor blemishes apart, the book under review reinforces the need for such cross-cultural studies which are likely to promote and strengthen cordial intercivilizational relations.

A.R. Kidwai


The present study arises from dissertation research completed at the Centre for Mass Communication, University of Leicester, England and is informed by theory and methodology of content analysis and audience reception, as well as by post-modern and post-colonial criticism.

The coverage of Islam and Muslims in the Western media has long been a topic of interest and concern to Muslims. The work under review investigates certain aspects of this issue such as specific content and the impact of print media on informing and shaping the opinions of an audience, but it does not address other important ones, such as the ownership of the media.

In her study, Poole uses several methods in order to establish quantitative measures by which to assess the tenor and effect of media coverage of British Muslims. The work is comprised of an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction describes how the author initially assumed that local coverage of British Muslims should be more diverse than that given to global Islam. While “an ethnocentric vision dominates current representations of Islam which are reductive and predominantly negative”, proximity

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