



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF ISLAM AND IMPERIALISM IN  
SELECTED WORKS OF JAMES JUSTINIAN MORIER***

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SELECTED WORKS OF JAMES JUSTINIAN MORIER**

**By**

**AKRAM POURALIFARD**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**November 2014**

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## DEDICATION

To Ali, by whom I sip pleasure of life



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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment  
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**November 2014**

**Chair : Associate Professor Noritah Omar, PhD**

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The attitude of the Orientalist world towards the legacy of the East is generally considered as one of the major trends of postcolonial criticism. From among several places of interest, Persia has long been at the center of consideration for such scholars for various reasons. One of the most noted and disputed Orientalists who has extensively studied Persia is James Justinian Morier (1780-1849), the British diplomat in Persia in early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A plethora of scholarly analyses have investigated Morier's look at Persia for cultural and national concerns. However, his works have not been studied critically from a religious-cultural perspective. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to investigate five of Morier's novels concerning Islam, Persia and the East, namely *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (1824), *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* (1828), *Ayeshah, the Maid of Kars* (1834), *Zohrab the Hostage* (1833), and *The Mirza* (1841), to survey the accuracy of the images rendered from Islam, the Prophet (pbuh), and the Muslims. Since Morier has commonly been considered as an Orientalist who is fair and objective in his writings, especially in the *Hajji Baba* sequel, his portrayals are generally assumed to be factual, even when documenting the cultural, national, social, or religious concerns. Edward Said's perspective of the colonial discourse on the East is the major reference deployed in this investigation for its analysis. Said defines colonial discourse as the systematic discipline with which European culture was able to manage the Orient in its different phases. The occasional discrepancies of representations in the above mentioned novels, however, demand another critical framework which is resolved using Homi K. Bhabha's theory of ambivalence in colonial stereotype. To explain this concept, Bhabha asserts that in colonial discourse analysis, the point of intervention should shift from the ready recognition of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the processes of justification made possible through stereotypical discourse. So, for him, the colonial discourse permits a fluctuation in the interpretation of the images rendered by colonial writings. The findings of my study revealed previously unsaid facts about Morier's representations. In his portrayal of the Muslim, the 'stereotypical discourse' gives way

to a variety of praiseworthy and degenerate types of characters and there scarcely is a ready recognition of negative images. Morier's representation of Islam and the Prophet (pbuh), however, is more applicable in demonstrating Said's standpoint. For him, Islam and the Prophet (pbuh) suffer an irreparable degeneration compared to the Muslim, who is portrayed as capable of 'administration and instruction'. This study's findings show that Morier's representation of the Muslim may, in many respects, be seen to be true, but his renderings of the Prophet(pbuh) and his judgment of Islam are a combination of misunderstandings and adversity, and therefore, cannot be accepted as scientific or reliable documentation.



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**A MEMBACA PASCAKOLONIAL ISLAM DAN IMPERIALISME DALAM  
TERPILIH PERBUATAN JAMES JUSTINIAN MORIER**

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Sikap dunia Orientalisme terhadap warisan Timur umumnya dianggap sebagai salah satu arah aliran utama kritikan pasca-kolonial . Di antara beberapa tempat-tempat menarik , Parsi telah lama menjadi pusat kritikan untuk ulama di atas pelbagai sebab. Salah satu Orientalis yang banyak mengambil perhatian dan yang dipertikaikan juga yang telah menakaji Parsi secara meluas adalah James Justinian Morier (1780-1849) , diplomat British di Parsi pada awal abad ke-19. Penganalisis ilmiah menyiasat pandangan Morier di Parsi untuk keperluan budaya dan negara . Walau bagaimanapun, karya-karya beliau belum dikaji secara kritikal dari perspektif agama dan budaya. Oleh itu, kajian ini adalah suatu percubaan untuk menyiasat lima novel Morier ini mengenai Islam, Parsi dan Timur, iaitu *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (1824), *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* (1828), *Ayesha, the Maid of Kars* (1834), *Zohrab the Hostage* (1833), and *The Mirza* (1841), untuk meninjau kebolehpercayaan imej yang diberikan dari Islam, Rasulullah (saw), dan umat Islam. Sejak keseluruhannya Morier dianggap sebagai Orientalis yang adil dan objektif dalam tulisan-tulisannya, terutamanya dalam sekuel *Haji Baba*, gambaran beliau secara amnya dianggap sebagai fakta, walaupun mendokumentasi mengenai kebudayaan, kebangsaan , sosial, atau agama.

Perspektif Edward Said, wacana kolonial di Timur adalah rujukan utama digunakan dalam penyiasatan ini untuk analisis. Said mentakrifkan wacana kolonial adalah disiplin yang sistematik dengan budaya Eropah yang mampu untuk menguruskan timur secara berperingkat-peringkat yang berbeza. Ia bercanggah sekali dengan pentafsiran dalam novel yang di atas, bagaimanapun, menerusi satu lagi rangka kerja kritikal yang diselesaikan dengan menggunakan teori Homi K. Bhabha ini adalah bertentangan dalam stereotaip penjajah. Untuk menjelaskan konsep ini, Bhabha menegaskan bahawa dalam analisis wacana penjajah , titik campur tangan harus beralih daripada pengiktirafan bersedia imej sebagai positif atau negatif, demi memahami proses justifikasi yang dibuat

yang mungkin melalui wacana stereotaip. Jadi, untuk beliau, wacana kolonial membenarkan turun naik dalam tafsiran imej yang diberikan oleh tulisan-tulisan penjajah. Hasil kajian saya mendedahkan fakta-fakta yang tidak pernah didedahkan oleh representasi Morier sebelum ini. Dalam gambaran beliau mengenai Muslim, 'wacana stereotaip' memberikan cara untuk pelbagai jenis kepujian dan watak merosot dan ia hampir merupakan kepada pengiktirafan imej negatif. Representasi Morier terhadap Islam dan Rasulullah (saw), bagaimanapun, adalah lebih sesuai dalam menunjukkan sudut pandangan Said. Baginya, Islam dan Nabi (saw) mengalami satu degenerasi yang tidak boleh diperbaiki berbanding dengan Muslim yang digambarkan sebagai mampu 'mentadbir dan mengarah'. Penemuan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa representasi Morier terhadap Muslim, dalam banyak aspek, dilihat sebagai benar, tetapi pentafsiran beliau terhadap Nabi (saw) dan penghakiman beliau terhadap Islam adalah gabungan salah faham dan sukar dipercayai, dan oleh itu, tidak boleh diterima sebagai dokumentasi saintifik atau boleh dipercayai.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The attitude of the Orientalist world towards the legacy of the East is generally considered as one of the major trends of postcolonial criticism. Persia<sup>1</sup>, on the other hand, for various reasons, has long been among the centres of consideration for Orientalists of whom James Justinian Morier is the focal point of this study. Scholarly analyses have repeatedly investigated Morier's view of Persia considering Persian life and thought. Ava Inez Weinberger's *The Middle Eastern Writings of James Morier: Traveller, Novelist, and Creator of Hajji Baba*, as an instance, has examined Morier's works for the Persian life, culture and national specifications. In the present study the author has investigated Morier's novels for the strategies of colonial discourse that he utilised in representing Islam (the rules and precepts), the Prophet (pbuh) (the founder), and the Muslims (the followers). Moreover, the nature of the images in terms of being repressively negative or stereotypically ambivalent, is the other field of inquiry on which this author intends to concentrate. The last and similarly important point of scrutiny will be conceptualizing the ideology of imperialism behind the representations of the three aforementioned subjects in selected novels by Morier.

To examine the representation of the Muslim world in the selected works of Morier, this study needs to be located in the Saidian assumption of colonial discourse analysis for the colonial look through which Islam is viewed in the selected texts. I will, furthermore, explore realms of discrepancy in the portrayal of Muslim identity in the study's data which falls in the field of H. K. Bhabha's theory of ambivalence in stereotypical representation. The main endeavour of this inquiry, hence, is to answer the question of authenticity and factuality of the Muslim world's portrayal in the selected narratives of J. J. Morier.

As the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised becomes more transparent through analysing the representations of the native in the coloniser's written works, it is expected that an examination of texts concerning Persians as represented through the mind-set of the European travellers and diplomats, could shed a new light on Oriental and colonial studies.

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<sup>1</sup>. The term 'Persia' was used for Iran until 1935. As in the literary and historical discussions concerning the past, the term Persia is preferably used and so it will be used throughout this study instead of the modern term, 'Iran'.

Morier's novels are commonly acknowledged to have introduced Persian culture to the Western world. Weinberger (1984) is a Morier researcher who believes that "no English fiction-writer of his time portrayed Persian life and thought as vividly and realistically as Morier did" (p. i). It is a truism that literature has always had a crucial role in introducing the cultural, religious, socio-political... life of nations to peoples of different geographical territories. Morier's novels, among other literary works of the nineteenth century concerning the East, enjoys a decisive significance in making Islam known to the Occident. In his introduction to the Persian translation of *Hajji Baba*, Jamalzade (1960), the 20th century Persian novelist and critic, said that after the translation of *Robaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, there is no English book to have made Iran and Iranians better known to the Occident than Morier's *Hajji Baba of Ispahan*.

Criticism of Morier's works has mainly focused on the customs, life manners, and mental framework of the Persians in spite of the fact that the religious issues are of pivotal importance in his novels. A considerable part of Mohammad Tavallaie's (1998) *The Orientalist Construction of Persia* concentrates on the cultural problems and national propensities of the Persians upon which Morier's works have concentrated. Also, Ava Inez Weinberger (1984) devotes the second chapter of her PhD thesis to the examination of the 'vivid and realistic' way in which Morier has portrayed Persian life and thought. Concentration on the cultural aspects and national specialities of Persian life, therefore, has pushed the ideological and spiritual issues addressed in Morier's novels to the margin. My contention in the current investigation is that Morier's fictional works have questioned the rudimentary precepts of Islam in general and the religious belief system and practical principles of Shi'ite Muslims in particular. An extract from *Ayesha* by Morier (1834) questions the authenticity of the mission of the Prophet of Islam (pbuh):

Having established a parallel between Jesus Christ and Mahomet, showing the divine appointment of the one and the self-appointment of the other... He then proceeded to draw a parallel between Christianity and Mahomadenism \_ to show the evidences which existed for the former being vouchsafed to mankind by God for the remission of their sins, that it was ushered in by prophecy, and established by miracles performed in the person of our Saviour, and remarked that no such evidences existed in favor of Mahomadenism (p. 140).

Though Morier is not considered a renowned novelist in English literature, his works, particularly the *Hajji Baba* Sequel, are important both for Persia and Britain for a few reasons. Modarres Sadeghi (2001), a contemporary Iranian critic and novelist observes that Morier was mostly known as a travel writer rather than a novelist and his *Hajji Baba* was expected to be the third of the travelogues about the East and Persia he had produced earlier. For Britain, or rather, for the English speaking world, Morier's works generally, and *Hajji Baba of Ispahan* in particular, are among the pioneering fictional works that introduced the Persian culture and the Shi'ite Muslims of Persia to the Occident. Said Abdelwahed in his scholarly essay, "England and the East in James



Morier's *Hajji Baba of Ispahan*”, refers to the impact Morier's works left upon the literature of the following eras: “Morier's literary production is qualitative and quantitative that enriches the political thought of the up-coming generations of scholars and writers, and deepens the stereotypes of the East in the Western scholarship and academy” (p. 3).

The East has long been a matter of interest for the West and even some of the Eastern countries, among them Persia, have received special attention from the Western intellectual world. G. N. Curzon<sup>2</sup> (1892) is an articulate instance in asserting this significance:

Turkestan, Afghanistan, Transcaspia, Persia - to many, these names breathe only a sense of utter remoteness or a memory of strange vicissitudes and of moribund romance. To me, I confess, they are the pieces on a chessboard upon which is played out a game for the dominion of the world (vol.1, pp. 3-4).

This interest has produced abundant literary works trying to provide a documentary account of Persian life. James Justinian Morier (1780-1849) is among the authors whose works have enjoyed a worldwide appreciation from the intellectual world for a realistic and scholarly delineation of the Persian life. His works, especially the *Hajji Baba* sequel, are considered to be the fruit of his six-year-long life in Persia as a British diplomat in the Qajar<sup>3</sup> era. Curzon in his introduction to *Hajji Baba Of Ispahan* refers to this approval: “No man could have written or could now write such a book unless he were steeped and saturated, not merely in Oriental experience, but in Oriental forms of expression and modes of thought” (p. x). Some part of the accounts he provided in his novels were naturally gained through his direct encounters and conversations with the Persians. Even this information which is based upon direct contact with the natives cannot be wholeheartedly dependable in that as Bernard Lewis (2001) remarks “no man talking with an inquiring foreigner in a foreign language in the Middle East, or anywhere else, will reveal himself in quite the same way as he would in the natural intimacy of his mother tongue” (p. 28).

In evaluating travel novels, moreover, the presuppositions and the mental background of the writer should be taken into account as the writer is deeply influenced by what he has already learned about the people of whom he is writing about. As Johnson reminds us “[b]ooks of travel will be good in proportion to what a man has previously in his mind... As the Spanish proverb says: ‘He, who would bring home the wealth of Indies, must carry the wealth of Indies with him...’. So it is in travelling; a man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge” (Boswell, 1949, p. 222). Morier's two

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<sup>2</sup> . George Nathaniel, 1st Marquis Curzon of Kedleston (1859–1925), British statesman: Viceroy of India 1899–1905.

<sup>3</sup> . The dynasty which ruled Persia for about 200 years through the 18th and 19th centuries.

Eastern travelogues indicate that he was extensively dependent on the archive of his Orientalist predecessors.<sup>4</sup>

With regard to the classification within which Morier's novels fall, the travel novel is the most appropriate designation as the novels are generally considered to be the fruit of his visits to and stays in Persia and some adjacent countries such as Turkey. His chance of contact with the real situation of life during these trips, however, must have been limited because of the nature of his mission as a diplomat. Sarah Searight (1970) has a reference to the point in her documentary work *The British in the Middle East*: "It is all too apparent that Morier was riding around with an armed escort and English companions"<sup>5</sup> (p. 189). Searight implies the self-evident fact that considering Morier's life conditions in Persia, the possibility of intimacy with the numerous local people and familiarity with their regional customs and cultural constructions is far from reasonability. He should, naturally have spent most of his time in the court and with the formalities of the royal life. In the first place, it is the argument of this current author in this study that the judgment passed on and the attitude taken towards the precepts of Islam, the Prophet of Islam (pbuh), and the practice of the Muslims are to be considered as major themes in Morier's novels, and in the second place, this current author argues that the judgments passed on Islam are not just. The images rendered from the Muslims are right only in certain circumstances and finally, the images portrayed of the Prophet (pbuh) indicate no dependence upon the historical and biographical facts.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Throughout its fourteen-century-long life, Islam has been perceived by the West through the lens of adversity. Edward W. Said (1979) believes that the West considers Islam as having militant hostility towards European Christianity and to overcome such redoubtable constants the Orient needed first to "be known, then invaded and possessed, then re-created by Orientalists" (pp. 91-92). Involvement with the Orient of Islam, on the other hand, as Sardar (1999) argues, built up such a wealth of material on the East that it was not even necessary for a Western traveller to leave his own fireside. The Orientalist travellers and writers, moreover, picturing the East and its legacy in their fictions or travelogues, were naturally influenced by the ideology of Orientalism which renders the works competent for examination in the light of colonial discourse analysis.

Regarding its attitudes in terms of culture, religion and social manners, Persia has been a source of both fascination and cynicism for the western consciousness, as it has shown a

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<sup>4</sup> . *Description de l'Arabic*, Foster's *Travels*, Malcolm's *Political History of Persia*, Herbert's *Travels*, *Les bourreaux en Gerogie* and many other historical sources serve for information of Morier's two travelogues.

<sup>5</sup> . Sarah Searight, *The British in the Middle East* (Athenum, 1970, p. 189).

special appeal to the literary sense of Orientalists. Tavallaie's (1998) remark on Persia is worth mentioning here: "Persia has always occupied an ambivalent place in the European imagination. It has been the location of exotic fantasy and an embodiment of the mysterious East, while at the same time supplying a ready source for ethnocentric Western humor" (p. 26).

As mentioned earlier, the history of the relationship between the Islamic East and the Christian West is fraught with misunderstandings and distrust, the result of which has been internecine events such as the Crusades. The image represented as a result of such misconception, thereby, will hardly be trustworthy. Meredith Jones (1942) posits in this regard that by the 18th century "the Occidental conception of Mahomet and his teachings came more from literary sources than from actual observation of the Muslim peoples. The few accounts drawn from first-hand information are both late in their appearance and negligible in their influence." (p. 202). Therefore, it seems that an examination of the relevant literary works for the authenticity of the images they have offered from the Muslim East could be of significant contribution to Islamic and Eastern studies.

Edward Said and H. K. Bhabha have taken ostensibly contrastive stands on the image presented from the East by Orientalists. While Bhabha (1994) believes in the 'ambivalent' stereotypical discourse of the Orientalists concerned in the cultural, national and religious aspects of the East, Said (1978) insists on a 'monolithic' discourse presenting a fixed and straightforward image of the Orient. Bhabha (1994) believes that the 'productive ambivalence' of the colonial stereotypical discourse allows for "the wide range of the stereotype, from the royal servant to Satan, from the loved to the hated; a shifting of subject positions in the circulation of colonial power" (p. 79). Bhabha (1994) considers a space for colonial discourse in which the racial and cultural differences are both recognised and disavowed. For him, this is done by 'affixing the unfamiliar to something that is established' (p. 105), in a form that is repetitious, by which he means stereotyped. The third space in which some Muslim characters in the novels under examination are placed, accounts for the fluctuations Morier exhibits in approaching them. This current author will elaborate on this theme in the fourth chapter under Bhabha's theory of ambivalent stereotypical discourse.

Since Morier has commonly been considered as an orientalist who is fair and objective in his writings, especially in the *Hajji Baba* sequel, his portrayals concerning the delineation of the cultural, national, social, and religious issues of the Muslim world are generally assumed to be factual. The findings of this current investigation indicate, however, that Morier's representations of Islam and the Prophet (pbuh) imply that both of these categories suffer an irreparable degeneration compared to the Muslims as the followers of the Prophet (pbuh). For Morier, and according to the ideology of Orientalism, the Muslim is capable of administration and instruction. This study, accordingly, looks into the conformance of Morier's representation of Islam, the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims with the historical realities of these entities. To sum up, the

problem of this study is to evaluate the representations of the Muslim world in chosen fictional works of J. J. Morier for their authenticity and conformity with the facts of the world of Islam.

### 1.3 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The corpus of this study includes five novels of James J. Morier, namely *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (1824), *The Adventures of Haji Baba of Ispahan in England* (1828), *Ayesha, the Maid of Kars* (1834), *Zohrab the Hostage* (1833), and *The Mirza* (1841). The reasons behind the choice are two: 1) the Orientalist outlook overshadowing the artistic fabric of the selected novels which makes them appropriate candidates for analysis in the light of the theoretical framework of this study, and 2) the degree of accuracy with which the Persian Muslims are represented in the above novels which demands two factors: a) the semi-realistic structure of the setting and characters, b) the specific identity of the Muslims, i.e. Shi'ite Muslims, both of which are incorporated in the selection especially the *Hajji Baba* sequel. Although the second reason is less detectable in *Ayesha*, *Zohrab* and *The Mirza*, because of their predominantly imaginative nature, the idea of verisimilitude makes these fictitious works equally appropriate. In fact, the characters are the Persian Muslims, and the setting is Shi'ite Persia and Ottoman Turkey and the themes are the cultural, social, political and religious turn of events in these scenes.

The novel as a literary genre is constituted upon narrative which deploys specific strategies to convey meaning. Examining these meanings and strategies which are employed to represent the practical and ideological principles of Islam in Morier's selected works, will provide this investigation with a chance of seeing into the objectives of the ideology of orientalism which is commonly detectable in Orientalist literary works. The colonialist and Orientalist writings of the nineteenth century have had a meaningful emphasis upon the representations of the East to which the Islamic essences as an indispensable feature of the region are no exempt. Edward Said (1978) believes that during the modern Orientalism (the representations of the Orient after the last third part of the eighteenth century) "the range of representation expanded enormously" (p. 22).

As one of the key terms of this study, Islam refers to one of the major world religions characterised by the acceptance of the doctrine of submission to One God and Mohammad (pbuh) as the chief and last Prophet of God (pbuh), and Muslims are the people or nations that practice Islam. A Muslim follows the Qur'ān, the written revelation brought by Muhammad (pbuh) which was transmitted to him by Gabriel. According to the Qur'ān, the ultimate purpose of humanity is to be in the "service of God," to worship him alone and to construct an ethical social order. An individual's aim, as the Qur'ān prescribes, should be the ultimate benefit of humanity, not the immediate pleasures or ambitions of the self. Muslims believe that Muhammad (pbuh)

was the final prophet and that the Qur'ān is the final and unaltered revelation of God, consummating and superseding all earlier revelations. Muslims also believe in a final judgment when individuals will be judged according to their deeds.

The reason behind the appeal of Morier in this study is that his works are universally appreciated for their significant contribution in laying the foundations of the 19th- and 20th-century European and Western knowledge about the Persian culture, society and morale. The way, therefore, Morier has represented Islam in general, and the Shi'ite Muslims in particular, to the non-Islamic world, is highly worthy of consideration for Persian and Islamic studies. The paradigm of Islam and the related concepts, therefore, mark the selection of the works for analysis and the exclusion of those which bear no pertinence to the East and the Islamic world.

#### **1.4 Conceptual Theory**

The main concern of this study is to unravel the representations of Islam, the Prophet (pbuh), and the Muslims in the selected novels of James Justinian Morier. The cultural considerations and precepts of the Islamic belief system, therefore, will be the core of discussion, the analysis and evaluation of which draw upon the principles of postcolonial theory with a special focus on the critical ideas of H. K. Bhabha and Edward W. Said.

Post-colonial literary criticism, the general critical approach this study utilises to examine its data, is defined by Tyson (1999) as a theoretical framework seeking to understand the political, social, cultural and psychological operations of colonialist and anti-colonialist ideologies. The concepts such as language, voice, speech and silence, and mimicry are deployed as key instruments in postcolonial criticism and the connection between literature and language is considered of paramount consideration for this theory for the role it performs in achieving the political objectives behind the artistic and entertaining construction of literary works, particularly, the novel. In this way, the principles of postcolonial literary theory provide the means to look into the strategies which have invested the colonial system with ways of instilling the superiority of Christian Europe in the unconscious of the Muslim Orient.

The reason the current author consider Morier's novels in the category of postcolonial literature is not that it is the product of the experience of colonisation as Ashcroft et al. (1998, p. 168) defines this literature, but the fact that such novels are the result of the colonising look the novelist casts on his subjects as an Orientalist. It is not, either, foregrounding the tension with the imperial power that makes the novels postcolonial, but highlighting of the disadvantages of the Oriental which emphasises the tension between the powerful and the oppressed – the axis of postcolonial framework. Leela Gandhi's (1998) definition of post-colonial reading makes it appear as the most appropriate instrument for analysing the data of this study: "it is a form of

deconstructive reading most usually applied to works emanating from the colonizers (but may be applied to works of the colonised) which demonstrates the extent to which the text contradicts its underlying assumptions (civilization, justice, aesthetics, sensibility, race) and reveals its (often unwitting) colonialist ideologies and processes” (p. 192). Ghandi’s implication of the deep structure of the artistic works, especially in terms of political grounds, aptly highlights the concentration of postcolonial theory on the axioms of dominance-subjugation and power-oppression.

In addition, the critical standpoints of Said and Bhabha, as the constituent components of this approach, are closely followed in analysing the data of the investigation. The definition of these critical outlooks, then, is the concern of this part of this inquiry.

Said’s theory of Orientalism is considered as one of the offshoots of postcolonial theory which shows a special focus upon ‘colonial discourse’. Two concepts of Orientalism and colonial discourse need to be clarified as the key components involved in the theory. Said (1978) defines colonial discourse as the “enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage... the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-enlightenment period”, and Orientalism, he maintains, is the “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (p. 3). The emphasis he puts upon the concepts of ‘dominating’, ‘restructuring’, and ‘having authority’ in his definition renders his theory as a component for unveiling the mythical structure of imperialism as it comprises the ideas of power and domination as the main concerns of imperial ideology. The binary opposition of power and hegemony in the definition, moreover, authorises the rules of this theory for analysing the selected novels of this study, although Persia is not canonically considered to be a colonised country.

Ever since its publication in 1978, Said’s *Orientalism* has proved to be a unique contribution to Islamic studies. To explicate the process of enacting the authority of the West over the Orient, Said draws upon the conspiracy of the Orientalists and the colonial and imperial forces which are at work in the framework of the knowledge-power relationship. This has caused him to be generally acknowledged among the postcolonial critics, as the initiator of the idea of the intimate connection between language and the forms of knowledge developed for the study of cultures and the history of colonialism and imperialism, which endowed his literary theory with the idea of discourse. Said’s contention in associating the idea of Orientalism with the concept of discourse is to be taken in consideration for the key role it plays in analysing the orientalist writings.

Said’s (1978) idea of ‘representation’ is of elemental significance in postcolonial literary theory. It implicates the definition of the object “with the identity of the person identifying” (p. 247) through which Orientalism justifies the “white man’s difficult civilizing mission” (p. 245). As literary works, especially novels, have usually been used as one of the best vehicles to carry judgments into the beliefs of people, and the idea of

representation has appealed to the sense of many literary men in this regard, including James Morier, it can be of supreme utility to the current analysis.

Closely related to the concept of discourse is Said's Foucauldian view of the responsibility of criticism. Drawing on Foucault's stress on power relationships as expressed through language, and the relationship between language and power, Said (1983) reiterates, criticism "must think of itself as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination and abuse; its social goals are noncoercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom" (p. 29). The concept of domination, accordingly, appears to be the first priority in Said's perception of criticism that is in line with the current discussion. Logically, the significance of this undertaking accounts for Said's (1979) emphasis upon the analysis of colonial discourse in deciphering the works of colonial writers, which causes him to introduce orientalism as a type of discourse that invents or Orientalises the orient for the purpose of imperial consumption.

Said (1993) introduces the concept of contrapuntal reading into postcolonial literary theory, which is considered to have an essential role for offering the opportunity for the colonised to articulate his ideas, history, culture and identity against the imperial assumptions which are naturalised, and, consequently, taken for facts in cultural productions such as novels. Contrapuntal reading suggests a "way of reading the texts of English Literature so as to reveal their deep implication in Imperialism and the colonial process" (Ashcroft, 1999, p. 55). This tool implies a "responsive reading that provides a counterpoint to the text, thus enabling the emergence of colonial implications that might otherwise remain hidden" (Ashcroft, 1999, p. 56). The projection of oriental discourse in reacting to the unity of religion and government in Islam is, for instance, one of the cases which can aptly be decoded utilising Said's 'contrapuntal reading'.

To delineate the idea in a practical context, Said (1993) says that:

contrapuntal reading as I have called it means reading a text with an understanding of what is involved when an author shows, for instance, that a colonial sugar plantation is seen as important to the process of maintaining a particular style of life in England . . . the point is that contrapuntal reading must take account of both processes, that of imperialism and that of resistance to it, which can be done by extending our reading of the texts to include what was once forcibly excluded. (pp. 66-7)

Therefore, Said's critical concepts will function as a major part of the theoretical framework of this study for its potentiality in examining the concepts and representations used in the narratives under study and decoding the diverse ideological practices of colonialism such as the issues of domination and subjugation, the notions of power, its provenance, its consequences and the their interrelations.

Bhabha's (1994) idea of fixity as an important 'feature of colonial discourse' in constructing the image of the 'Other' is a 'paradoxical mode of representation' in colonial discourse which signifies the racial, cultural and historical difference and is used to imply rigidity and an unchanging order and disorder, degeneracy and useless repetition' (p. 100). Bhabha (1994) uses the idea of fixity to introduce his concept of a 'stereotype' which, for him, functions as a major discursive strategy of colonial discourse. He describes a stereotype as a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive (p. 100).

This ambivalence for Bhabha is a distinguishing feature of a stereotype for providing a different reading of colonial discourse, especially from that of Said. He, unlike Said, believes that in analysing colonial discourse "the point of intervention should shift from the ready recognition of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the process of subjectification made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse" (p. 95). Ambivalence, for Bhabha functions as one of the most significant discursive and physical strategies of discriminatory power.

Bhabha's (1994) emphasis upon the ambivalence of the colonial stereotype draws on the productivity of this feature. He contends that this 'ambivalence of the object of colonial discourse' (by which he means the 'Other') is caused by its vacillation between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated. The slippery nature of the ambivalent stereotypical discourse, according to Bhabha (1994), produces a wide range of the stereotypes "from the royal servant to Satan, from the loved to the hated; a shifting of subject positions in the circulation of colonial power" (p. 113). The contradictory representations of the colonial discourse are explained by drawing upon this characteristic of ambivalence in Bhabha's theory. Moreover, Bhabha (1994) argues that the currency of the colonial stereotype lies in the force of ambivalence as it ensures the repeatability of the stereotype in various historical and discursive conjunctures. As a consequence, stereotypical discourse permits a fluctuation in the interpretation of the images rendered by colonial writings.

The ambivalence of the colonial subject, i.e., the 'Otherness', Bhabha (1994) asserts, is an object of both desire and derision. It is from such a perspective that colonial discourse produces the colonised as a social reality which is at once an 'Other' and yet entirely knowable and visible. Bhabha (1994) explains that the outcome of such a two-dimensional entity is "to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (p. 102).



## **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the present study, therefore, are thematically and methodologically different from the achievements of the works done so far. Surveying the presentation of the themes concerning the religions of the Eastern and Persian nations in Morier's novels is a fresh ground as the cultural and national fields have always been the core of the critical studies of the novels. This study means to analyse Morier's representation of Islam, the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims by utilising the critical view of postcolonial and Orientalist assumptions to look at Morier's works from a new perspective. A parallel employment of Said's critical theory of colonial discourse and Bhabha's concept of ambivalence in stereotypical discourse marks the methodological distinction of this study. The objectives of this study, therefore, can be summarised as follows:

1. To analyse the images rendered of Islam, the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims in Morier's selected fictional works for accuracy and factuality.
2. To explore the Orientalist goals behind the artistic fabric of the novels which are achieved through deploying the textual strategies of colonial discourse.
3. To examine the goals behind Morier's ambivalent representation of Muslims in his novels.
4. To explore the nature of the strategies deployed in the novels to introduce Islam, the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims to the Islamic and Western world.

In view of the above, the main objective of this study may be summarised as indicating the nature of the image rendered of Islam, the Prophet (pbuh), and the Muslims in Morier's selected works. The examination of Morier's portrayals in the light of Bhabha's idea of ambivalence in stereotypical discourse of Orientalism and Edward Said's monolithic standpoint of colonial discourse, as well as unravelling the textual strategies which are exploited in the novels to inculcate the paradigms of colonial policy as to the superiority of the Christian West over the Islamic East, are pursued to achieve the targets of this inquiry.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Morier's novels have played a central role in introducing the Persians, their culture and religion to the Western world. Rachel Polonsky (2005), the contemporary Russian researcher, posits in this concern: "Morier's novels, set in Persia, the Ottoman Empire and London, became widely known to Russian readers in the early 1830s, in translations by the Orientalist popular fiction writer and journalist, Osip Senkovskii. They were read both as entertaining satire and as a source of knowledge about the East"(p. 255). The factuality with which Morier's works are credited reinforces the significance of his renderings of the religious, cultural and national concerns of the East. Osip Senkovskii

highlights Morier's direct contact and precise understanding of the Persian mind reflected in *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*:

in order to be able, with some basis and truth, to contrast the Persian and European understandings of things, it is not enough to know Persians from the descriptions of travellers or even one's own personal observations . . . one must be able to think, feel and understand in Persian . . . one must know with precision the opinions and prejudices of the Eastern peoples, their habits, the details of their domestic life (qtd, in Polonsky, p. 262).

This professedly scientific observation and, putatively, objective and innocent attitude towards the Persians reinforces the authenticity of the image presented in Morier's novels of the Persian Muslims and their way of practicing Islam. Postcolonial criticism, therefore, is reasonable in acknowledging the conspiracy of Imperialism in the origination and admittance of nineteenth century English literature. Spivak (1985) repeatedly emphasises that the production and reception of nineteenth-century English literature is bound up with the history of imperialism. In "Three Women's Text and a Critique of Imperialism" she asserts:

It should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England's social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English. The role of literature in the production of cultural presentation should not be ignored (p. 1).

Morier's critics have examined his works for different themes although they have commonly agreed on the writer's wide knowledge of Persian customs, beliefs and culture which became accessible to him through his direct communication with the Persians. In Terry H. Grabar's (2004) "Fact and Fiction: Morier's Hajji Baba", for instance, the centre of focus is elements from the romantic school of writing, i.e. the use of exotic material depicting the particulars of a foreign nation. Mohamad Taghi Nezam-Mafi's (2010) dissertation, *Persian Recreations: Theatricality in Anglo-Persian Diplomatic History, 1599-1828*, on the other hand, devotes a considerable part to Morier's *Haji Baba*, taking into account the political Anglo-Iranian relationship of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Henry McKenzie Johnston's (1998) *Ottoman and Persian Odysseys: James Morier, Creator of Hajji Baba of Ispahan, and His Brothers* concentrates on the judgments passed on and the representations rendered of Persia in Morier's narrative. *Literary Modernity before Novel and Nation: Transaction and circulation between nineteenth-century Arabic, Persian and English Literatures*, by Kamran D. Rastegar (2005), examines the probable influences of Arabic and Persian literature, including the works of Morier, on the emergence of and the process of production of modern English literary works. These are a few critical works among many others on Morier's fictional and factual works which have focused on different aspects of his works such as cultural and national peculiarities. Nevertheless, there have been few considerations of the issues concerning the Muslim world among the works

that mark the significance of the present study which by itself falls into two grounds: one in the national scope and the other in the universal. Examining the representations of Persian Muslims in Morier's works will mark the national scope and the survey of the representations of the Islamic ideological system in a framework of Muslim life, the images rendered from the Prophet (pbuh) and the precepts of Islam will signify the universal scope of this inquiry. So, the contribution of this study to the pertinent fields of investigation will thus be twofold.

Many critics assume Morier's *Hajji Baba* as the prototype of the modern Persian novel. Mohammad Golbon (1976) in his introduction to the Persian translation of *Hajji Baba* asserts that many writers and narrators of the past believed *Hajji Baba* to be the first novel published in Persia. For Britain, or better to say, for the English speaking world, it was the pioneering fictional work that introduced the Persian culture and the Shi'ite Muslims of Persia to the Occident. These are some of the reasons that have made Morier's narratives noteworthy of analysis for Persian and Islamic studies. The ideology of imperialism underlying the satirical and artistic structure of the novels, additionally, marks the contribution of this study to Eastern and Islamic investigations.

Notwithstanding the fact that colonial subjects have never had a palpable presence in Persia, the impact of their imperialistic activities there, is so deep and ineffaceable that even decades after the Islamic revolution, the manifestations of their ideological and cultural values can still be easily perceived in the daily life of the people, and to discern the desire towards Western values in the attitudes of the youth in modern-day Persia is not an arduous task.

What differentiates this study from similar inquiries into Morier's novels is that it concentrates on the attitude of the novelist, and by extension, the approach of the Western world towards Islam and the Muslim East. In a narrower classification, additionally, the study's look at the representation of Shi'ite Muslims and their belief and practice systems is an untried field which marks the originality of this investigation.

The representation of Muslims in Orientalist works and the critical studies of them have a considerable background in literary works and the critical studies of both the Eastern and Western men of literature. Mohammad Hassan Asfour (1973), for instance, has investigated the image of Muslims in "The Crescent and the Cross: Islam and the Muslims in English Literature from Johnson to Byron". Investigating the representation of the Shi'ite Muslims in the works of colonial writers, however, is one of the fresh grounds which wait to be charted.

Morier's works dedicate the same space to the religious aspect of the Persians as to their cultural and social traits. In introducing Islam to the Western world the picture presented of the Muslims in the nineteenth century is of significant function which accredits Morier's works for examination for the stand they have on Muslims. Clinton Bennett

(1992) asserts in this regard, “our attitudes towards Islam are more influenced by nineteenth century attitudes than by earlier Christian thinking, though consciously or unconsciously we are also influenced by centuries of Christian misinformation about Islam” (Preface) .

## 1.7 Methodology

This study intends to inquire into the image of Islam, the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims in the selected novels of James J. Morier. To explore the orientalist goals behind the artistic construction of the selected novels, as well as, the aims of ambivalent representation of the Muslim characters, are the other aims of this inquiry. This investigation, moreover, means to look into the strategies deployed in the novels to achieve the orientalist ends of the writer, and by extension, the objectives of the global imperialism in its encounter with the Muslim East. Morier’s works, especially the *Hajji Baba* sequel, are generally probed for the national, historical and cultural issues of the Eastern countries, particularly Persia. The pertinent analytical works have been virtually inattentive to the religious, spiritual and ideological matters to which Morier’s novels have devoted a remarkable space. Five of Morier’s novels, namely, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*, *Ayeshah; the Maid of Kars*, *Zohrab the Hostage*, and *The Mirza* are selected to function as the reading matter of this study.

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, providing an account of the view of the Western world in the different eras of its literary life will be necessary before commencing the analysis of the investigation’s data. A short delineation of the status of Islam in the Western canon, therefore, is the first stage of this study. In the next step, a synopsis of the novels under question will be supplied. An analytic study of the novels in order to probe the nature of the representations of the afore-mentioned subjects will follow, which will draw upon the theoretical presumptions of the postcolonial theory, specifically the critical concepts of Edward W. Said (1978) and Homi K. Bhabha (1994). Said’s critical theory of Colonial discourse analysis, and its related concepts such as contrapuntal reading, colonial gaze, the vision vs. narrative, essentialism, etc. serve as a critical aid to the analysis. Bhabha’s theory of ambivalence in stereotypical representations and the pertinent concepts such as the slippery nature of stereotype, its productivity, its capacities for generating the possibilities of reformation and instruction and the like concepts will be of equal contribution as the theoretical framework for the present study. As for the outline of the analysis, it is necessary to mention that the books will be analysed and quoted on demand and no order is specified in this regard as the thematic nature of the analysis will not allow for such an arrangement. This stage tries to probe the accuracy of the images of Islam, the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims and the strategies deployed to render the representations as factual in both the Western and non-Western world.

The main body of this discussion will employ what Said (1999) tries to present in his concept of Orientalism, that is, a study of how the Western colonial powers of Britain and France represented Middle Eastern lands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The assumptions of 'colonial discourse' will help the study explore the ways of representations and modes of perception profited, as fundamental tools of colonial power, to keep colonised peoples subservient to the colonial rule.

Investigating the images concerning the personality of the Prophet of Islam (pbuh), the thematic considerations aimed at the structural premises of Islam, and the representations trying to picture the Muslims through the consciousness of the 'Orientalists', occupy the main analytical space of the study. To a large extent, as the novels are set in a Shi'ite Muslim environment, examining the validity of the depictions using the milestones of the precepts of this sect of Islam will be of central significance, as well.

The strategies of colonialism in achieving the ends of its ideology constitute a significant part of the novels under study and probing these tactics is a major part in the methodology of investigation.

A significant point concerning the methodology of this study is that the analysis of the study materials is done in one chapter as the representations complying with Bhabha's theory are limited, and that is the reason for the analysis based upon Said's theory to precede the subsequent analysis undertaken according to Bhabha's theoretical concepts.

It is to be mentioned that the elaboration of the technical words concerning the critical theories is included in this chapter under the theoretical framework for the purpose of conciseness.

### **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

**Ambivalence:** Bhabha (1994) defines ambivalence as a distinguishing feature of a stereotype for providing a different reading of colonial discourse, especially from that of Said. He believes that in analysing colonial discourse "the point of intervention should shift from the ready recognition of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the process of subjectification made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse" (p. 95). Ambivalence, for Bhabha, functions as one of the most significant discursive and physical strategies of discriminatory power.

**Colonial Discourse/ Colonial Discourse Analysis:** Colonial discourse signifies a point of view and linguistic system which assumes the superiority and normality of the West or the colonizer, versus the inferiority and abnormality of the East or Third World

countries. According to Ashcroft et al. (2000), “it is the system of statements that can be made about colonies and colonial people, about colonizing powers and about the relationship between these two”(p. 37). Said (1978) defines colonial discourse as the “enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage... the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-enlightenment period”, and Orientalism, he maintains, is the “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (p. 3). Colonial discourse analysis as Said (1979) explains it, is the analysis of colonial discourse in order to decipher the works of colonial writers.

**Contrapuntal Reading:** For Said (1993) this method of reading offers the opportunity for the colonised to articulate his ideas, history, culture and identity against the imperial assumptions which are naturalised, and, consequently, taken for facts in cultural productions such as novels. To delineate the idea in a practical context, Said (1993) says that:

contrapuntal reading as I have called it means reading a text with an understanding of what is involved when an author shows, for instance, that a colonial sugar plantation is seen as important to the process of maintaining a particular style of life in England . . . the point is that contrapuntal reading must take account of both processes, that of imperialism and that of resistance to it, which can be done by extending our reading of the texts to include what was once forcibly excluded. (pp. 66-7)

Ashcroft et al. (1999) maintain that Contrapuntal reading suggests a method of reading the texts of English Literature so as to reveal their deep implication in Imperialism and the colonial process. They define it as a “responsive reading that provides a counterpoint to the text, thus enabling the emergence of colonial implications that might otherwise remain hidden” (p. 56).

**Representation:** Representation, as Said (1979) reiterates, is a rendering of facts which are “embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer” (p. 272). “Representations”, Said (1979) believes, “are implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the “truth,” which is itself a representation” (p. 272). Representation for Said (1978), moreover, implicates the definition of the object “with the identity of the person identifying” (p. 247) through which Orientalism justifies the “white man’s difficult civilizing mission” (p. 245).

**Stereotype:** Bhabha (1994) describes a stereotype as a “complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive” (p. 100). Stereotype, for Bhabha, functions as a major discursive strategy of colonial discourse.

## 1.9 Conclusion

As one of its main concerns, this study intends to examine the image presented of Islam and the Muslims in the selected novels of James J. Morier in order to evaluate the authenticity and factuality of the portrayal through touching them against the historical facts, traditions of the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) and the verses of Qur'ān. Although the polemics of the medieval ages have been crucial in introducing Islam to the West since the early 14th century, a plethora of critics believe that the European literary works of the 19th century have played a considerable part in introducing Islam and the Muslims to the Western world. Therefore, decoding the representations of the Muslim world in the literature of this era will open new horizons into the Western perception of the Muslim East. Investigating the orientalist goals behind the aesthetic construction of the works, as well as, the ambivalent portrayal of the Muslim, as the other focal point of the study, needs the assumptions of postcolonial literary theory to probe the Eurocentric approach of the selected texts towards the Islamic world. Such a scrutiny prepares the ground for the examination of the strategies the novels utilize in order to obtain the ends of Imperialistic ruling system. The ideology of Orientalism renders the Muslim as fluctuating between good and evil while the precepts of Islam and the character of the Prophet (pbuh) are portrayed from a repressively negative perspective. This approach of Orientalism implies its identity with the egocentric standpoint of imperialism which is to be traced in Morier's selected works.

The history of the critique of literary works concerning the presence of Islamic elements in occidental works is becoming increasingly popular. Indeed this analytical field has not yet reached its centennial. The 1960s seems to be the beginning of critical examination of the works written on Islamic subjects. Some of the critics investigating these works are Al-Adhm Sadiq Jalal (1966); Alexander Boya (1962); Asin Y Palacio, Miguel (1926); Conant, Martha Pike (1966); and a number of people have fairly recently devoted their dissertations to the field including Maktabi Anas (2001); Rishmawi George Khalil (1983); Sharafuddin Mohammed Ahmed (1988); Zughoul Mohammed Said (1992), etc.

The engagement of Morier's novels along with the basic precepts of Islam is, if not more, as significant as the cultural and national concerns expressed in the novels. Hence the considerable role these novels played in introducing Islam to the Western world. In spite of the fact that the setting of Morier's novels are not those of the colonised territories, as Persia was never under the apparent rule of any imperial power, the outlook through which these novels have emerged is that of colonialism which basically expressed the superiority of the Westerner and the inferiority of the Oriental. This is the feature which makes the novels apt to analysis in the light of postcolonial literary criticism.

A major characteristic of this study, therefore, is to indicate that the representation of Islam and the Prophet (pbuh) in Morier's novels are neither just nor factual although his

representation of the Muslims may be valid in many respects. In addition, this enquiry tries to show that the image presented of the above mentioned subjects is variably compatible with both Bhabha's theory of ambivalence in the stereotypical discourse and Said's theory of colonial discourse which puts emphasis upon a fixed and straightforward image of the Orient. To expose the objectives of the ideology of orientalism underlying the artistic structure of the novels, is of equal significance for this inquiry which leads to the final target of the present study; unearthing the nature of the textual strategies which have assisted the novelist in his representation of the Muslim world.





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