



## The Alchemist and the Critique of Orientalism

1) Roqiah Sharaf Aldeen Ahmed Sharaf Aldeen

2) Dr. Abbas Abdulmalik Mohammed Mutahar

1) An instructor: Department of English, Faculty of Languages, Sana'a University, Republic of Yemen

[rokasharfaldin@gmail.com](mailto:rokasharfaldin@gmail.com)

2) Associate Professor of English Literature: Department of English, Faculty of Languages, Sana'a University, Republic of Yemen.



### Abstract:

This paper scrutinizes the extreme orientalist aspects within *The Alchemist* (1988) of the Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho. It sheds light on the acute and hazardous relationships between the Western and Eastern worlds as reflected in the novel. Such West-East relations are built on distorted knowledge and weak bases and loaded with racial stereotypes that are dependent on ancient orientalist generalizations and simplifications. *The Alchemist* shows Muslims as mostly fanatics and irrational, and Arabs as primitive, barbaric, violent and aggressive. Differently, the West is pictured as having a tolerant culture, a peaceful religion and a civilized nation. The paper includes an introduction, two sections and a conclusion. The first section provides an adequate background about the novel while the following section consists of a detailed analysis of some of the orientalist images and scenes found in the novel. The paper concludes that *The Alchemist* is a genuine example of the orientalist piece of literature that does create a very wide gap between the mere representation and reality, texts and context. Like his previous orientalist ancestors, Coelho still shows the Islamic East as the Western dangerous 'enemy right door' that can never ever be trusted or left without control.

**Key Terms:** *The Alchemist*, Paulo Coelho, Orientalism, Orient, Orientalist, Muslims, Arabs.

## المخلص:

يقوم هذا البحث بدراسة الجوانب الاستشراقية المتطرفة في رواية الخيميائي (1988) للكاتب البرازيلي باولو كويلو. يوضح البحث العلاقات المعقدة والخطيرة بين العالمين الغربي والشرقي كما تم تصويرها في الرواية. هذه العلاقات بين الغرب والشرق مبنية على معرفة مشوهة وقواعد ركيكة لا معنى لها حيث انها مليئة بالقوالب النمطية الراديكالية التي تعتمد على التعميمات والتبسيطات الاستشراقية القديمة. تقوم رواية الخيميائي بتصوير المسلمين على أنهم متعصبون وغير عقلانيين، والعرب بدائيون وبربريون وعنيفون وعدوانيون. بالمقابل تصور الرواية الغرب بشكل مختلف تماما حيث تظهره على أن لديه ثقافة متسامحة وديانة مسالمة وأمة متحضرة. يتضمن البحث على مقدمة وفرعين وخاتمة. يطرح القسم الأول خلفية كافية عن الرواية؛ بينما يقدم القسم التالي تحليل مفصل لبعض الصور والمشاهد الاستشراقية الموجودة في الرواية. يستنتج الباحث أن رواية الخيميائي ماهي الا مثالا حقيقي للعمل الأدبي الاستشراقي الذي يخلق فجوة واسعة جدًا بين التمثيل والواقع والنصوص والسياق. لا يزال كويلو يتبع أسلافه المستشرقين السابقين حيث انه يُظهر الشرق الإسلامي على أنه العدو اللدود للغرب وبالتالي فانه لا يمكن الوثوق به أو تركه بدون سيطرة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الخيميائي، باولو كويلو، الاستشراق، الشرقي، المستشرق، المسلمين، العرب.



## Introduction:

"They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented," Karl Marx says. This is how Edward Said initiates his book *Orientalism* (1978). According to him, Orientalism is not a new term, since its roots can be traced back to the European scholars' visits to the Middle East during the medieval period.

Since then, the Orient has been seen as a model world of exoticism, myths and fancy. Later, it has been obvious that Orientalism has directly affected the way the Romantics looked at the Orient and, therefore, it has become the first powerful shaper of the Romantic movement. Consequently, the Romantics have kept the same orientalist perspective towards everything Eastern and reflected their fabricated images in their writings and recordings. The Orient, for those writers, has been a way of firing their long-blocked imagination with exoticism rather than a way of decorating their trivial culture and literature at that time.

Ever since, Orientalism has been a highly imaginary frame that does not allow the Orient to be a free subject of either thought or action. Said believes that it is the "European culture [which] was able to manage-and even produce-the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (*Orientalism* 3). Regardless of its temporal frame, Orientalism with all its kinds, either the British and French or the American, follows the same paradigm and agenda, the domination and colonization of the Orient.

However, each kind looks at the Orient according to the way it serves its specific goals and interests. Being culturally-directed, Early Orientalism, British and French Orientalism, has seen the Orient as passive, inferior and backward. American Orientalism adds the



unreasonable violence phenomenon as a new characteristic to the Orient in order to satisfy its inhuman political and economic interests in the Islamic East. The more the picture of the Islamic East is shown as weak, miserable, lost and violent, the more the West, its assumed opposite image, is proven strong, organized, civilized and peaceful. As a matter of fact, the Orient has never been truly read or genuinely represented, yet it has always been a way of defining the West as its contrasting image and identity. In short, "the Orient was almost a European invention" (1).

For Western Orientalists, Orientalism is a way used to describe "a cross-cultural setting within a realm of exoticism; it is a perspective in which the culturally, historically and ethnically different other is seen through the eyes of the Western Self. It is the nature of this construction that is contentious, because of its political overtones and implications" (Singh and Gautam 219). Recently, Orientalism has been widely discussed and studied by many intellectuals in the humanities and social sciences. Their observations and recordings have only paved the way for the Western imperialists to assume their super power over the Orient in all terms, namely religion, race, education, science, culture, literature and recently technology. Therefore, the Occident finds it morally urgent to travel to the exotic Orient's lands, motivated by some misleading pretexts such as civilizing and educating the Orient, in order to control its barbarism and irrationality. More importantly, the Occident aims at securing the hypothetical superpower of the West from the made-up super-violent Middle East.

The same prejudiced attitude towards the Orient has lasted even after the Second World War. However, the American officials and academics started to deal with the Islamic East differently. They have reconstructed their view towards the Arab-Muslim world as a region



of great importance for their economic interests and security of the USA and Israel in specific and of all Europe in general (Lockman 122). This Orient's new picture does not make it far enough from Said's academic definition of Orientalism. In fact, no matter whether the person who deals with the Orient is "an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist, he is really an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism" (Said, *Orientalism* 2).

### ***The Alchemist***

Nowadays and throughout this hematic conflict, many Orientalists have attempted to perform their national duty as intellectuals by reflecting this conflict in their orientalist literary works. Instead of bridging the gap between the Orient and the Occident, they have been deliberately making it deeper and worse. Edward Said redefines the term Orientalism to be the study of Eastern culture from the Western perspectives, or how the West represents the East in orientalist works. It provides the ideological basis for the Western domination and colonization over the Eastern societies. Generally speaking, Orientalism is the huge body of literary, historical or sociological texts that deals with anything related to the East.

One of the most well-known novels during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is the novel of Paulo Coelho *The Alchemist* (1988). Written only in two weeks, it is strange that Coelho's has received all this cosmopolitan attention since the publication of its English version in 1993 onward. It has been translated into eighty languages and about 200 million copies sold worldwide making Coelho the all-time bestselling Brazilian author. *The Alchemist* was written after Coelho's pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, which made his turning point towards writing this assumed masterpiece. It is the reason behind naming



his protagonist in the novel 'Santiago' and placing the main settings within the same borders. The protagonist's name is more than enough to reflect Coelho's dangerous intention and poisonous content within his orientalist work. Santiago is named after Saint Santiago who was a proselytizer and warrior honored for fighting in decisive battles against the Muslim Moors and he, then, has been called the Moor- Slayer since the ninth century.

*The Alchemist* follows the journey of an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago. He always dreams of traveling around the world. Once, he has a frequent dream of finding a hidden treasure in the Pyramids of Egypt. After interpreting his dream by a Gypsy old woman, he ends up being a shepherd who starts his journey to Egypt. During his journey, he meets the king of Salem, Melchizedek, who teaches him ideas about the omens and gives him the 'Urim and Thummim'. Santiago, then, meets the crystal merchant who gives him a job in Tangier after he has been robbed. Later, the boy travels and meets an Englishman who has come in search of an alchemist, and they both travel to Al-Fayoum oasis where Santiago meets a beautiful Muslim girl named Fatima and immediately falls in love with her. After many incidents, Santiago and the alchemist head towards the pyramids to find the treasure. Santiago does not find it in Egypt. He, then, realizes that this treasure is in Spain the entire time. Right then, he goes to the base of the tree where he has his first dream. He digs a hole and finds his treasure there. Finally, he decides to get back to Fatima and live happily with her.

Coelho's *The Alchemist* is an example of the literary work that contains many remarkable perspectives related to Orientalism. It is considered to be timeless by many critics and set to inspire future generations of future readers. The orientalist concepts, attitudes and events of the novel have spread all over the world accompanied by their



radical orientalist implications and extremist effects. Since it was published in 1989, it has become a subject matter focused on by many writers and critics who, of course, do not have the same ways of understanding, yet they all have praised Coelho's masterpiece. Consequently, they have written about many notions related to the novel such as love, spirituality, personality, religion, mysticism, philosophy, culture and humanity. However, they deliberately neglect exposing the false concepts and fabricated facts he purposely includes about the Orient and Muslims in his novel. This paper is, therefore, concerned with shedding light on such drastic orientalist views that distort the images and mystify the identities of the Orientals in the Islamic East.

### **Orientalism in *The Alchemist***

Said sees Orientalism as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (*Orientalism* 3). The West has never had a true intention to know the real identity of the Islamic East or accurately reflect its real history, religion and culture to the world. Nevertheless, it has been working hard for so long to create Eastern people and establish Islamic regions which are perfectly suitable for achieving its own wide range of ideological interests. Therefore, dominating the Easterners' minds and colonizing their lands would forever be easier than killing an ant for any Western power.

Ironically, Coelho applies the same method in his novel whenever he mentions Muslims or Arabs. Writing a novel whose origin goes back to the Islamic literature, Coelho attracts the superficial Arabic readers and makes them respect him for his mere mention of their religion and culture. Most readers get shifted by the Arabic title of the novel and they are swept away from its poisonous ideas carefully hidden between its covers. They forget all the previous examples of the orientalist books which have Arabic titles but written



according to the Western close-ended discourse, such as William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786). In fact, all of them, writers and books, including Coelho's *The Alchemist*, are considered as shallow justifications and preposterous pretexts for the Western occupations, horrors, chaos, corruption, civil wars, and bloodshed which pervade many Muslim countries.

How grateful and blessed Arabs are when listening or reading to someone who speaks about them or coming across an issue related to their religion or culture. Regardless of the distant dimension of the orientalists' speech and the accurate meanings of their views, Muslims stand for them with gratitude and happily raise their hands with heavy applause. Said exposes the orientalists' real intentions to these shallow-minded readers using reasonable examples and logical evidence. He states that, "the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (5). So, whatever the excuse is, the Western intention is still the same, conquering the Islamic East.

Knowledge "gives power, more power requires more knowledge" (36). Under the umbrella of having and propagating a thorough knowledge about the Orient, the West has created a complex Orient suitable for the academic study and the process of colonization. According to Said, there is a strong relationship between Orientalism and colonization. A relationship that is completely similar to that of knowledge and power. Out of his orientalist instincts, Coelho provides Santiago with the required knowledge he needs to achieve his imperial interests. Though he is a mere shepherd, Santiago knows more than what the alchemist does and he is able to achieve in a few days what the alchemist himself cannot reach throughout his life, turning himself into wind. In addition, he clearly uses his



knowledge and close relationship with the crystal merchant as a way to achieve his desire of conquering Tangier.

Being orientalist, Coelho makes Santiago follow the same orientalist path of his ancestors. Though he, first, aims at traveling and being a shepherd, Santiago tends to know more about the Arab lands, culture and traditions. He eagerly listens to Muslims talking about their laws and traditions. On the one hand, he does believe that the more knowledge he has, the easier, closer and more insistent he becomes to conquer the Arabic world. On the other hand, he seeks to confirm the orientalist biased knowledge the West has made so far about the Islamic East. Similarly, he deduces what other previous orientalists have found before; the Islamic East deserves nothing more than conquering its lands and dominating its people.

Said believes that Orientalism is only an expansion of the Western identity through the made-up Easterner status. The West knows that if it defines itself through itself, it would definitely appear in a very disgusting picture. Doing so, the West sounds so humiliating that no one would feel proud of or become attached to. Hence, the only suitable way is defining itself through opposition though such a method is certainly based on only implausible lies and damnable fabrications. Creating an opposed Orient appropriate enough to the Western image which they have always longed for, the West is now known as the cradle of the greatest civilization and the best guardian of the whole world, not only the Islamic East.

The Christian Santiago follows the same approach as well. The whole novel, from its first line to its last word, is mainly written to prove the West's imaginary rationality and civilization through the biased projection of Eastern barbarism and backwardness. Santiago



does not describe his homeland, history or cultural traditions. However, he amplifies everything Eastern, Arabic or Islamic. For example, the moment he describes Muslims as infidels, he directly shows his people as yesterday's victims and today's victors. The crystal merchant, the merchant's daughter, Fatima and all the Arabic characters never read, use their reason or pursue their personal legends as the Western Santiago. In fact, the protagonist compares Fatima to his sheep. She is the omen that he "had sought to find with his sheep" since they both do nothing but wait for food and drink (Coelho 51). Another example is the Englishman who crosses the oceans and faces death to achieve Santiago's Western dream. All in all, those Muslim characters are not represented as real individuals with ambitions and dreams, yet they are mere steps that pave Santiago's Western way towards success and prosperity.

Academic critics confirm the fact that the Western knowledge of the Islamic world and its inhabitants has been greatly motivated by the deeply held fear of Islam as an anti-modern religion and Muslims as everlasting terrorists. Arabs are completely barbaric and Muslims are the imaginary bloody terrorists. In opposition, there is the civilized and innocent West in both culture and nation. Orientalists always follow the malicious strategy of opposition not to propagate what is the East, but to reflect how powerful, developed, human and rational is the West.

Similarly, Santiago does not have the desire to know the Islamic East for its own beauty or antiquity. However, he follows his imperial agendas in acquiring knowledge about the Other for dominating and conquering its mind and land. Of course, he admits his will to conquer the Islamic East, yet he has first to succeed in proving its inability to manage its own issues, develop its land and elevate its people's minds. Hence, he can achieve his



dream and get the real treasure he covertly aims at and passionately longs for. For him, knowing the Islamic East is only a wicked means of an ideological end, conquering the world.

What makes it worse is the semantic context within which Coelho represents Islam and Arabs. He chooses his terms carefully whenever he mentions Arabs or describes anything Islamic. For example, Muslims who are praying to Allah are mere infidels and their movements remind Coelho's protagonist of their Muslim ancestors who knelt before Saint Santiago while fiercely being slaughtered. "As a child in church, he had always looked at the image of Saint Santiago Matamoros on his white horse, his sword unsheathed, and figures such as these kneeling at his feet" (19). Moreover, whenever he visits a new Islamic land or meets an Arab person, he finds it strange and unusual. Also, Fatima's aroma and the merchant's daughter's eyes remind him of those found with the Islamic conquerors who have once lived in Andalusia. As a matter of fact, it is not Coelho alone who keeps a devilish hatred to Muslims but also the language he uses, the religion he follows and the nation he belongs to.

The Palestinian historian A. L. Tibawi, who published the article "English-speaking orientalist" (1964), believes that Orientalism, as a discourse, is first conducted out of the hostility between Islam and Christianity (qtd. in Hübinette). Its roots go back to many centuries ago. That fact has affected all works done by all Western Christian Orientalists, including Coelho. In *The Alchemist*, Christianity seems to be the engine that controls all the characters and events. Santiago's childhood is an exact replica of Coelho's himself since both of them are forced to attend the church and seminary and they become priests. Nevertheless, both of them face this religious direction with refusal and disobedience at



the beginning. Later, they devote all that they have for the sake of elevating their religion, Christianity.

Bizarrely, blood starts longing to its veins and Coelho becomes a distinguished Christian figure. He Christianizes everything he can reach; Santiago is his first attempt. Crossing the 500-mile pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, Coelho feels that he is meant to be the Christian man whom his parents have, for so long, dreamt of. To make it up, Santiago is Coelho's walking self which crosses the same journey, but this time to a new destination and different inclination. Santiago's journey is to the Islamic East and it is not to perform pilgrimage on its Islamic way. However, it is to Christianize those Muslim inhabitants and persuade them to perform the pilgrimage but according to Coelho's Christian way.

The problem is not in being completely ideological and bigoted towards one's religion. It is, however, when blaming others for being biased to their religion denying such prejudice committed previously by the self! According to Hübinette, Said's most critical issue related to Orientalism is that the Orient stands only for religiousness and tradition while the West is the only place where one can find rationality and modernity. "Following the logic of developmental thinking, the West possessed [and still possesses] therewith the right to conquer, suppress and rule over the [Orient]" (Hübinette).

Apparently, Orientalists display Islam as old and backward forgetting that Christianity is an ancient religion as well. They show Christianity as an everlasting fashion and a modern style for any nation to follow. No longer is Islam the right religion for its adherents since it is not up-to-date. However, Christianity is the only suitable religion being changeable, flexible and unlimited to any temporal frames, they claim. Therefore,



Orientalists start Christianizing everything, even the Muslim and Arab characters in their works, driven by the intention of creating an original, civilized and fashionable world. Thus, they should not be blamed since they only aim at educating and elevating the Islamic East.

Crossing the same path, Coelho never tries to overtly Christianize his characters in *The Alchemist*. He is not only the most known writer in the twentieth century, but he is also the trickiest one among all the current Orientalists. He does not want to overtly mystify the Islamic East, yet he attempts to prove it irrational and exotic through various cunning lies and covered fabrications. Coelho knows how to maintain a lifelong connection and admiration with the Islamic East while fiercely defending his nation's imperial and ideological interests. On the one hand, he focuses on Muslims' problems and writes about their life in a way that reflects his fictitious respect and attraction towards them.

On the other hand, Coelho attracts them towards his elevated culture and praises his religion and culture by the indirect humiliation and distortion of Muslims'. He shows that Islam throws its adherents on a deep sea of ignorance, barbarism, violence and passivity. Nevertheless, Christianity provides its people with guidance and blessings along whatever way they might choose, Coelho claims. For example, there is always Melchizedek who appears at any time or place when a Christian needs help. Differently, Muslims, such as the crystal merchant, never ever find help from any other Muslim.

If the early relationship and strong hostility between the West and East have been genuinely based on religious grounds, the current relationship is built on a mixture of religious, political and economic grounds. Previously, Islam as a religion and a nation has always been a threat to the European people and lands since its previous adherents were



completely devoted to its laws and ready to die for its glory. With the changeable situations faced nowadays, the Western attention has focused on the Arab's lands and people. In fact, the Arab lands hold much more important things than what the Islamic hearts and minds do. Oil is the recent dangerous weapon Arabs may one day use against the West. It has become the current threat of the West. In short, almost all the East-West relationships built nowadays have been mainly motivated by the fear of the petroleum resources of the Islamic East, even though they are still pictured within the ancient ideological frames.

Just as the West-East relationship is based on the economic petroleum resources, Santiago's close relationship with Muslims and Arabs is based on an economic reason as well. Though he decides to be a shepherd, his travel to the Islamic East starts only to achieve his dream and ambition to find the treasure and conquer the world later. He crosses the oceans, walks through the deserts, faces the murderers and meets the thieves for the sake of finding the treasure. He spends nine months and eleven days with the crystal merchant building a strong bond with him in order to find a shelter and collect money to buy new sheep. Furthermore, it is not his love to Fatima that makes him consider the idea of staying at Tarifa, yet his ambition of being one of its leaders, or maybe its only leader. Later, he becomes much closer to the alchemist only to guide him ahead towards his treasure. In a nutshell, even if Coelho denies the existence of any biased orientalist perspectives in his novel, his way of narrating the story and presenting the characters proves that his style strongly mirrors that of Early Orientalism.

In *The Text, the World and the Critic* (1975), Edward Said discusses the discourse that places deliberate emphasis on European concerns, culture, and values at the expense of those of the Orient. This discourse is called Eurocentrism. It "assumes that Europe is



civilized and . . . that European civilization has a unique historical advantage that leads to its permanent superiority over all other cultures" (Xypolia 1). Though such an approach belongs to the sixteenth century, it is still heavily practiced by many politicians and Orientalists today.

One of those Orientalists is Coelho. He directly applies the Eurocentric woven strings in his so-called masterpiece *The Alchemist*. He admits that the novel is purely Arabic and that almost all the Muslim characters are really genuine representations of anything Islamic. However, he creates a protagonist with a European origin and Christian blood to mainly represent everyone else. Santiago comes from his Western homeland to lead the Islamic land and guide the disoriented Arabic mind. His creator, Coelho, makes him possess a great mind that can understand and solve any problem, even those complicated ones of the crystal merchant. Though all Arab characters, Fatima and the crystal merchant, abandon their traditions and culture, Santiago seems to be firm, conservative and rigid since wherever he goes and whoever he meets, he follows his everlasting European traditions and Christian laws. He is the European master and the rest are mere narrow-minded Others. So, he is the only one who must be followed, sought and obeyed.

Imperialism is one of the features discussed by Edward Said in his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). It is the policy of extending the control or authority over foreign entities as a means of acquisition and/or maintenance of empires. According to Said, imperialism is "a word and an idea so controversial, so fraught with all sorts of questions, doubts, polemics and ideological premises, as nearly to resist use altogether" (*Culture and Imperialism* 5).



Generally speaking, Europe is now the only guardian of everything related to any Arab or Islamic country. It has the absolute right to decide what is suitable, not for the Islamic country itself and its nation, but for the Western super powerful nation. In *The Alchemist*, Santiago seems to be responsible for the crystal merchant and Fatima's life and destiny. The crystal merchant owns the crystal shop; however, he gives Santiago the right to do and change whatever he wants. Santiago is the European boy who can change in eleven months and nine days what the Muslim crystal merchant himself could not change during thirty years. He successfully changes the crystal merchant's life, business and fate. The merchant himself admits that the “business has really improved” since Santiago's visit and he literally tells Santiago that, “you have been a real blessing to me” (28,31). In short, though the concept of imperialism is purely political, it spreads with its roots and reaches the literary field being one of the imperial easiest and most important means to dominate and control the make-believe barbaric Orient.

Some scholars wonder if there is any difference between Orientalists and politicians. Said claims that both of them are two faces of the same coin, colonization. If politicians help to colonize lands, Orientalists help this colonization by controlling the colonized people's minds. In her book *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire* (2012), Prof. Deepa opines that “whether consciously or not, Orientalists produced a body of work that aided the project of imperialism.” (qtd. in Isa et al. 93). They find it their national duty to serve their imperial nations and facilitate its inhuman agendas through their bigoted literary works. Likewise, Coelho makes Santiago completely understand what he is doing and perfectly plans for what he is going to do.



Before announcing his protagonist's will of conquering the Arab land, Coelho aims at providing specious justifications that make his domination and colonization acceptable and reasonable. Through *The Alchemist*, he shows that the East is a bloody land full of wars and hatred, its people are barbaric, irrational, ignorant, thieves, murderers and uncivilized. These are the assumed reasons that make Santiago think of conquering it and leading its primitive people since he is the only civilized, rational and educated Christian character. The writer wants his readers to believe that Santiago never thinks of his own interests or his nation's. His goal is, however, to civilize the barbaric Arabs and educate the extremist Muslims. Said is right when he indicates in almost all his books that genres of literature, especially novels, are no more than tools of making the process of colonizing the Orient's lands and minds much easier, faster, more acceptable and justifiable.

'Divide and rule' is the strategy of the politicians in the battlefield, the Orientalists in their literary works and Coelho in his *The Alchemist*. No matter how powerful the colonizer is, it has to, first, divide the colonized people emotionally, so it can divide them physically. To help his protagonist in conquering the Islamic East, Coelho creates a divided Arabic geography and disputed Islamic identity. For example, Fatima elevates her emotions to the Christian lover over her Islamic laws and tribal traditions and the weak Islamic identity of the crystal merchant could not abet him to fulfilling his religious obligation of the Islamic pilgrimage. Also, the tribes that are depicted as people despising each other and ready to kill one another for the sake of a drop of water or a shelter. Coelho makes Islam sound weak and old-fashion and Arabs appear divided with no bonds connecting them together. Consequently, they become more overwhelmed by Santiago's Christian ideas and Western plans of not only civilizing and educating their minds, but dominating and conquering their



lands as well. As Fatima states, the Western Santiago is the "wonderful present" and "only treasure" that she and her people have been ever granted (Coelho 53,55).

### **Conclusion:**

Never has Coelho thought of genuinely presenting the Islamic East to his readers while writing *The Alchemist*. Instead, his main concern has always been serving the West as a nation, a religion and a culture. Through *The Alchemist*, he emphasizes and proves true all the radical early orientalist views regarding the Orient. These drastic views are bombarded with false representations, fabricated images and extreme stereotypes of everything related to Muslims and Arabs. For him, not only are Muslims and Arabs barbaric and irrational but they are also thieves and criminals since their eyes only speak of death and their words and deeds are symbols of violence, ignorance, pessimism and hostility. On the contrary, the West deserves to be the superior power that can spread hegemony over the inferior East. It is the nation whose modernity, religion and economy give its people the right to be the masters over the Others and its nation the priority to rule all other primitive cultures and inferior nations. Being a replica of early radical orientalist works, *The Alchemist* can never ever be considered a real representation of anything Arabic or Islamic.



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