

Paradigms and Plurality: Rddad's Dis-Orienting the *Maghreb* as a Critical Refinement of Said's Orientalism

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Abstract

This paper argues that Sadik Rddad's *Dis-orienting the Maghreb* (2025) provides a critical refinement of Edward Said's seminal work, *Orientalism* (1978) for somehow neglecting the Maghreb (Morocco) in his work, and excluding it from the world orient. Henceforth, with regard to Said's rudimentary thesis on the Western powerful discourse and its widespread seam. Rddad reshapes the classical model of homogenous Orientalism through highlighting two crucial hypothetical step forwards. First, the identification of certain paradigms. Such as, Nationalist, secular, imperial, geographical and transnational. In the sphere of travel writings and uncovering the inherent plurality and juxtapositions within colonial discourse via a close study of the Anglo-American travel accounts and writings on Morocco in the era of 1880s to 1920s. Second. Rddad's in his recent work 'Dis-orienting the Maghreb' offers a foregrounded insight on how Orientalism functioned not as monolith, but an arguable battle of ideologies, as it did not give a credit to the elements of geography and history to grasp a comprehensible and holistic view of the world orient.

Keywords: Edward Said, Orientalism, Anglo-American travel writing, Paradigms, Colonial Discourse, Contested Battleground

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Theoretical Context

This study seeks to elucidate the connection between two literary works authored by two researchers and academics. Despite, their common affiliations with academics and cultural studies, these two critics differ in historical settings, location and worldwide audience. The central thesis of this paper pertains to two books that are undoubtedly valuable to academia, this substantial corpus comprises Rddad, Sadik's . *Dis-Orienting the Maghreb: Morocco in British and American Travel Writing*. Peter Lang Publishing, 2025. the book aims to go beyond the monolithic perspective established by Edward Said in his canonical work "Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient". For Rddad, Said's framework tends to treat "the East" as a homogeneous entity in parallel to a unified West, thereby leading to the erasure of the historical and cultural particularities of the Greater Maghreb region (Amany Alsiefy p. 2) . The Moroccan scholar Sadik Rddad revisits colonial-era British and

American travel writing, challenging Edward Said's view of Orientalism and its flattening of Maghrebi identities Sadik Rddad p. 3).

On the other hand, Edward Said surveys the history and nature of Western attitudes towards the East, considering Orientalism as a powerful European ideological creation—a way for writers, philosophers and colonial administrators to deal with the ‘otherness’ of Eastern culture, customs and beliefs. He traces this view through the writings of Homer, Nerval and Flaubert, Disraeli and Kipling, whose imaginative depictions have greatly contributed to the West’s romantic and exotic picture of the Orient. In the preface, Said examines the continuing effects of Western imperialism and racism, manifest in the events leading up to and post 9/11, establishing *Orientalism* as a canonical text of cultural studies.

It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that Orientalism by the American- Palestinian pioneer Edward Said has changed the world (A. Alessandrini, p. 2). One thing that often surprises readers first encountering the book is the fact that it is, in large part, a work of literary criticism. Large sections of the book deal with writers and scholars whose work is hardly familiar to many modern readers: Flaubert, Hugo, Chateaubriand, Edward Lane, Louis Massignou, Ernest Renan, Silvestre de Sacy, Hamilton Gibb. One of the main criticisms the book has received from critics on the left is its reliance on a “culturalist,” as compared to a materialist, analysis. Said certainly understood that colonialism and imperialism are fundamentally political and economic phenomena (A. Alessandrini, p. 2).

It is The provocation of this dossier (O.C Harrison, p. 4) is a critical examination that E. Said what it might mean that Edward Said neglected, even ignored, the Maghreb in his 1978 masterpiece *Orientalism*. Or, more productively, given that Said teaches us to understand world “areas” as politically constructed categories.

1.2. Problem Statement

Edward Said’s groundbreaking work *Orientalism* (1978) has been a crucial text that nourishes postcolonial studies, offering a critical framework for understanding how the West constructed the knowledge about the ‘Orient’ through the lens of imperialism and cultural hegemony (Said, *Culture and imperialism*, 28). The theory of Gramsci’s cultural hegemony reveals a softer and more hidden relationship between the rulers and the dictated class within the advanced capitalist countries as mentioned in this paper, and the contemporary relations between the East and the West represent this sort of cultural hegemony.

However, despite its comprehensive critique of Western representations of the middle East and Asia, Said’s work notably overlooks the Maghreb region (“*Dis-Orienting the Maghreb*” by Sadik Rddad) particularly Morocco leaving a significant geographical gap in Orientalist discourse. This omission is not merely a matter of regional coverage but represents a broader theoretical limitation: the failure to account for distinct colonial histories, cultural complexities, and geo-political positioning of North African societies that cannot be adequately explained through Said’s primarily Franco-British imperial framework centered on the Mashreq.

Sadik Rddad’s *Dis-orienting the Maghreb* addresses this critical lacuna by arguing that the Maghreb requires its own analytical paradigm, one that acknowledges its unique colonial encounters (Travel writings), and its Berber-Arab cultural plurality, and its liminal position between Europe, Africa and the Middle East. While Said’s *Orientalism* provides essential tools for deconstructing Western discourse, Rddad suggests applying Said’s framework uncritically to the Maghreb risks reproducing the very homogenization that Orientalism critiques. The research examines how Rddad’s work functions not as a rejection but as a critical refinement of Said’s theory, proposing a more nuanced, regionally-specific approach that honours the heterogeneity of Orientalist practices and the plurality of postcolonial responses. This study thus investigates how does the Rddad’s dis-orienting methodology expand, challenge, and refine Said’s Orientalist paradigm. and what implications does this regional specificity have for the broader field of postcolonial literary studies?

1.3. Research Objectives and Hypothesis

This research aims to critically analyse how Sadik Rddad’s *Dis-orienting the Maghreb* refines and expands Edward Said’s theoretical framework in *Orientalism* by foregrounding the Maghreb’s distinct colonial histories, cultural plurality and epistemological specificities. To achieve this overarching goal, the study pursues several interconnected objectives that collectively build toward a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between these two pivotal postcolonial texts.

The first objective is to identify and examine the geographical and theoretical gaps in Said’s *Orientalism* regarding the representation and analysis of the Maghreb region, particularly Morocco, within the colonial and broader Orientalist discourse. This involves tracing how Said’s focus on the *Maghreb*¹ and his reliance on Anglo-French colonial archives inadvertently marginalizes North African experiences and voices. The second objective examines Rddad’s methodological interventions, exploring how his concept “Dis-orientation” provides alternative analytical tools for understanding North African postcolonial subjectivities that resist monolithic categorization. This requires a careful analysis of how Rddad’s framework acknowledges the internal complexity and heterogeneity of Maghrebi societies, particularly the interplay between Arab, Berber, and European influences.

Building on this foundation, the third objective compares and contrasts the applicability and the feasibility of Said’s Orientalist paradigm rooted mainly in Anglo-French representations of the Mashreq. With Rddad’s region-specific approach that accounts for Maghrebi cultural hybridity, Berber- Arab duality and Franco- Spanish colonial legacies. This comparative

analysis illuminates not only what Said's framework overlooks but also how Rddad's refinement addresses these lacunae and gaps in scholarship while preserving critical insights of the original theory. Fourthly, Sadik supposes that postcolonial theory based on the regional specificity, stating whether there is a need for multiple, localized paradigms rather than a singular, universal framework. This objective engages with fundamental questions about the nature of the theoretical knowledge produced in postcolonial studies and the juxtapositions between universalizing notions and particular experiences.

Hypothetically, this research puts forward that Rddad's *Dis-orienting the Maghreb* doesn't reject Said's Orientalism but rather provide a critical refinement that addresses its regional blind spots, arguing that the Maghreb's unique geo-cultural positioning, linguistic plurality (Arabic-Berber -French), and distinct colonial encounters necessitate more nuanced theoretical framework that acknowledges multiplicity within Orientalist discourse itself "geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made (Said p. 5)".

This hypothesis challenges both uncritical applications of Said's framework to all Oriental contexts and dismissals of Said's work insufficiently attentive to regional variation, instead proposing a dialectical relationship between the two texts.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The study's significance can be arranged into three components. Firstly, theoretical significance, reconsidering the applicability of Said's Orientalism. Secondly, regional significance through foregrounding the Maghreb (Morocco). Finally, disciplinary significance, as it implicates the teaching and studying of postcolonial literature.

This research enhances greatly in postcolonial studies by assessing the fundamental frameworks and their production. Said's 'Orientalism' is canonical, but its canonicity can lead to its applicability in variant contexts or to the total condemnation of its limits. It shows how Rddad interacts with Said's project through critical refinement, maintaining its analytical efficacy while correcting its geographical and epistemological flaws. It shows a nuanced approach to theoretical advancement. Rddad opines that, 'Dis-orienting the Maghreb', fills the vacuum in comparative postcolonial studies by shedding light in the Maghreb regarding its pivotal role in the history of colonialism and imperialism, and the strongest support for this claim is that the Maghreb was stripped apart back in the Algier Conference of 1906. The General Act of the Algier Conference proclaimed a number of Moroccan ports as open ports. These were manned by police forces under European supervision.

To sum up, the paper's significance lies not only in the specific contribution to comprehending the relationship between Said's 'Orientalism' and Rddad's 'Dis-orienting the Maghreb' but in its broader implications for how we conceptualize theoretical development, regional specificity, and the ongoing project of decolonizing knowledge in postcolonial literary studies. It presents both a criticism of current theoretical paradigms and a constructive perspective for how the discipline may establish more sufficient frameworks for understanding the different angles of colonialism and postcolonialism.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This piece of research employs a qualitative literary analysis primarily as its rudimentary research design, grounded in the hermeneutic tradition of textual interpretation and critical theory. The research adopts a dialectical approach that examines the relations between two figures, who belong to different contexts and backgrounds: Edward Said's 'Orientalism (1978)' and Rddad Sadiq's *Dis-orienting the Maghreb* (2025), not as oppositional but as dialogical texts engaged in a productive theoretical conversation. Additionally, the study is structured as a two-phase analytical process. On the one hand, it involves close reading and critical analysis of Said's Orientalism to identify its theoretical premises, methodological approaches, geographical scope, and crucially its existing gaps and the silences regarding the Maghreb region. On the other hand, the paper delves in a parallel close reading of Rddad's *Dis-orienting the Maghreb*, analyzing how it engages with critiques, and refines Said's framework while proposing alternative conceptual exclusively for North African contexts, the research undertakes systematic comparative analysis to trace points of convergence and divergence, refinement, and expansion between the two theoretical frameworks.

2.2. Textual Corpus

The textual ground of the following paper consists mainly of two major literary works, each can be traced back to variant epoch and separate literary horizon. The primary textual corpus for this study consists of two foundational texts: Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978) – this seminal work establishes the theoretical framework of Orientalism as a Western discourse of power and knowledge that constructs the 'Orient' as Europe's cultural and ideological 'Other'. The analysis focuses particularly on Said's geographical emphases, his treatment of North Africa drawing on Foucauldian discourse analysis and Gramscian hegemony theory, and his use of literary and cultural texts as evidence of Orientalist discourse. Besides, Rddad Sadik, *Dis-orienting the Maghreb*, this book serves the fundamental point of comparison, offering a critical reassessment of Orientalist discourse specifically as it applies to the Maghreb (Morocco). He examines how Morocco is being portrayed by the British and American travel writings specifically focusing on texts produced between 1880 and 1920 by two British travel writers: Philip Durham Trotter and Frances Macnab and two American ones: George Edmund Holt and Edith Wharton. Although the selection of this specific timeframe and these particular writers may appear random, it enables Rddad to delve into a diverse array of viewpoints during an essential era in Moroccan history, distinct from the more frequently examined periods of 1830–

1912 or 1830–1944, which align with the French conquest of Algiers in 1830 and the emergence of Moroccan nationalism in the mid-1930s. As for the secondary corpus To contextualize and enrich the comparative analysis, the study draws on a secondary corpus of theoretical and critical texts, including Said's subsequent works (Culture and Imperialism, essays and interviews) that clarify his theoretical positions. A Critical response to Said's Orientalism from postcolonial scholars, including Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Aijaz Ahmad, James Clifford and others) and the theoretical works on the Maghreb and North African postcolonial studies, including Khatibi, A. (2015). Double criticism: The decolonization of Arab sociology. In Contemporary North Africa (pp. 9–19). Routledge. Additionally, Kilito, A. (2001). The author and his doubles: Essays on classical Arabic culture. Syracuse University Press. Finally, Mernissi, F. (1987). Beyond the veil: Male-female dynamics in modern Muslim society (Rev. ed.). Indiana University Press. The corpus is deliberately limited to ensure depth of the analysis based on the principle that comparative literature thrives on intensive reading rather than extensive reading practices.

2.3. Analytical Framework

The analytical framework for this study integrates multiple critical methodologies appropriate to comparative postcolonial theory. Initially, the study employs a systematic comparative methodology that scrutinize both texts across several dimension; geographical scope and regional focus, theoretical frameworks, implications for literary and cultural analysis. This comparative scheme will allow to draw a sufficient image on both the two scholars. Said and Rddad juxtapose across several dimensions, including geographical focus, theoretical grounding, and the methodological practice. The study also incorporates Foucauldian discourse analysis, which is central to Said's intellectual project. The incorporation lies in examining both authors and their theoretical claims along with their intellect and academic weight in academia, probing questions such as, what they privilege or marginalize?

The historical and the intellectual contextualization locate both the texts within their emergence. For Said as it is the ancient one, the political tensions and uprisings of the late 1970s, and the rise of postcolonial studies in Western academia. On the other hand, for Rddad recent and contemporary debates in the field and the increasing anchored critiques of postcolonial frameworks. Linking both approaches of these literary works is a dialectical mode of readings and interpretations that Rddad doesn't oppose Edward Said but rather uses as critical refinement, generating a productive reformulation of the main assumptions of Orientalism's projects via covering all the constituents of the former colonies, especially the Maghreb as the gate to both Africa and the Middle East.

2.4. Evaluation Criteria

To ensure validity and intellectual integrity this research implements a set of evaluation criteria to carry a comparative analysis of the targeted corpus, Said's Orientalism and Rddad's Dis-orienting The Maghreb. These criteria are meant to guide the audience and readers through navigating the strengths, weaknesses, context of applicability and the literary – theoretical contribution of each approach. The comparative literary, postcolonial theory, and critical scholarship determine the criteria which represent the complexity of humanities theoretical framework evaluation. Each framework its own argumentation and logic, entailing assessing if these arguments are backed by concrete evidence, whether ideas that are properly defined and consistently used, and the drawn conclusions that follow logical premises. Internal coherence requires attention to how each author handles the juxtaposing frameworks of the authors. Said examines his consistency applying Orientalism, discourse and power across historical periods and cultures. Rddad otherwise remains analytically precise across Maghrebi colonial and postcolonial experience. Moreover, geographical and cultural adequacy tests the theoretical background of this paper. Through examining the concepts, and the author's reflexivity of each one's position their frameworks towards the so-called 'Orient'. Overall, the ultimate goal is to conduct a balanced, multi-dimensional comparison that acknowledges how strengths in one area can compensate for weaknesses in another.

2.5. Limitations

This study functions within certain constraints shaping the scope, findings, and conclusions. Acknowledging these limitations is rudimentary not only for intellectual integrity but also for comprehending the boundaries within the research's claim can be validly made for identifying productive directions for future scholarship that might address gaps or extend the analysis in new ways. These limitations arise from methodological, disciplinary, and epistemological factors inherent in comparative literary research, and they reflect the complex realities of working across languages, cultures, historical periods, and theoretical traditions. In spite of these acknowledged limitations, this study offers a valuable contribution to understanding the relationship between canonical and regional postcolonial theory, the importance of geographical specificity in theoretical frameworks, and the ongoing development of postcolonial theory studies as a field.

3. Analysis

3.1. Systematic Presentation of Findings on Said's Framework

Edward Said's publication of Orientalism (1978) made such an impact on thinking about colonial discourse that for two decades it has continued to be the site of controversy and criticism. Said's intervention is designed to illustrate the manner in which the representation of Europe's 'Others' has been institutionalized since at least the eighteenth century as a feature of its

cultural dominance (Mambrol). In Said's assumption Orientalism is principally a political work. Its aim is not to investigate the array of disciplines or elaborate exhaustively the historical or cultural provenance of Orientalism, but rather to reverse the 'gaze' of the discourse, to analyze it from the point of view of an 'Oriental subject'. Said in his book deploys the tools and techniques of his adopted professional location to discern the manner in which cultural hegemony is maintained.

His intention, he claims, was to provoke and thus stimulate 'a new kind of dealing with the Orient' (Said p. 28). Indeed, if this binary between the 'Orient' and 'Occident' were to disappear altogether, 'we shall have advanced a little in the process of what Welsh Marxist cultural critic Raymond Williams has called the 'unlearning' of 'the inherent dominative mode' (Said 28). Edward Said adapts Foucault's archaeological methods to demonstrate that Orientalism functions as a discursive formation, a coherent body of assumptions, and representational practices that create 'the Orient' as an object of Western knowledge. This discourse operates across multiple domains including academia, literature, narratives, and political policies. The Foucauldian foundation allows Said to move beyond understanding Orientalism as merely a collection of stereotypes or prejudices to reveal it as a systematic epistemological structure that determines what can be said, thought and known about Eastern societies. 3.2. *Systematic Presentation of Findings on Rddad's Four Paradigms*

Situating Morocco within scholarly discourse necessitates a deliberate move beyond reductive Middle Eastern frameworks, recognizing instead its liminal position between African and Arab worlds—a critically underexamined intersection. This analysis focuses on the transformative period from 1880 to 1920, a temporal bracket marked by profound discursive shifts in European imperial politics, notably crystallizing in the 1904 entente that designated Morocco as a French sphere of influence. This era, characterized by a distinct sense of an ending and a beginning, witnessed competitive nationalist and imperialist ideologies powerfully inflecting textual productions like British travel writings. In these accounts, authors strategically advocated for their own nation's colonial legitimacy, constructing a hierarchical discourse that positioned British "sophistication" and a "civilizing mission" as superior not only to Moroccans but also to rival European powers like France and Spain, whom they depicted as insufficiently advanced. Examining this specific timeframe, therefore, underscores the effect of historical contingency on the textual representation of geography, highlighting how Morocco's distinctive cultural, ethnic, and linguistic features were narrated through competing imperial lenses that sought to map its political future.

3.3. *Travel Writing as a Colonial Battleground*

The analysis of *Dis-Orienting the Maghreb* centers on the representations of Morocco within American and British travel accounts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, specifically focusing on texts produced between 1880 and 1920 by two British travel writers: Philip Durham Trotter and Frances Macnab and two American ones: George Edmund Holt and Edith Wharton.

The first paradigm shift, that is, the national(ist) one, is conspicuously substantiated in Philip Durham Trotter's travel account, *Our Mission to the Court of Morocco* (1880). Unlike the ordinary traveler, Trotter is trapped in ideological and political closures of his nation's agenda due to the official nature of his trip and the overshadowing presence of John Drummond Hay, the British Representative Plenipotentiary to Morocco and the head of mission to the Royal Court of Moulay Hassan. Being part of a mission, Trotter is not allowed to interact with the natives the way he wishes or to visit the places he chooses. Interwoven within Trotter's colonial narrative, the indigenous discourse challenges the British narrative of precedence. The representation of Morocco is shaped by the concept of nationhood, establishing distinct narrative boundaries among various European nations.

Although this travel narrative is strongly dominated by the British nationalistic discourse and manipulated by the authorial I/ eye, Trotter sometimes loses control of the narrative as the native's counter discursive voice slips into the narrative and enters in an interactive interrogative dialogue with the colonizer. In this vein, we can borrow Michel Foucault's trope of "heterotopia" as places of Otherness from which this Other/narratee/travellee can criticize, resist, enunciate, and even revolt. This leads to moments of shift of agency from the colonizer to the native. In other words, the natives resist all types of imperial infringement, regardless of the originating nation. Their standpoint towards Europe is fuelled by the stark dichotomy of *bilad al-islam* and *bilad al-kufr*.

Following Philip Durham Trotter's footsteps, Frances Macnab, the pseudonym for the globe-trotting and undaunted journalist Agnes Fraser, emphasizes in her work, *A Ride in Morocco among Believers and Traders* (1902), the "Priority Discourse," which is premised on the exclusive right of Britain to transmit modernity to Morocco through the imperial machine. Yet, Macnab, who journeyed in Morocco at the beginning of the twentieth century, recognizes the multiple facets of Western travel accounts in such a way that gender matters in the production of knowledge about Morocco. Her account echoes the promotion of a secular perspective/shift in the knowledge production regarding the East, particularly in late nineteenth-century British travel literature about Morocco. Macnab highlights the conflict between religious and secular narratives, and how this enduring discord extends beyond Europe, probing into the ideological and discursive underpinnings of the European secular initiative, which is in direct opposition to the political and cultural framework of Morocco. It is true that Macnab's travel text is inscribed within the British voices of empire. She can be regarded as an emissary of commerce, education, and civilization, not of the so-called rigid 'three Cs': civilisation, Christianity and commerce. She is against evangelists and proselytizers in

Morocco, demonstrating that if the British want to successfully disseminate modernism and colonialism in Morocco it is through secularism – as a colonial hegemonic tool – not through military or religious means.

As American travel writers, George Edmund Holt and Edith Wharton examine the discursive shift in travel writing to a broader transnational and international colonial discourse of the beginning of the twentieth century based on their accounts *Morocco the Piquant* (1914) and *In Morocco* (1920), respectively. In these two accounts, the prevalent nationalist/colonial discourse recedes in favour of an apology for imperialism and cosmopolitanism.

George Edmund Holt's work, *Morocco the Piquant: Or, Life in Sunset Land* offers an in-depth analysis of the discursive shifts brought about by the negotiations between the United States and Morocco during a significant international period. The account also explores the contradictory nature of isolationist and internationalist narratives within American cultural politics, investigating, therefore, how the representation of Morocco and Tangier in *Morocco the Piquant* is positioned within the intricate dynamics of nationalism, colonialism, anti-colonialism, modernism, traditionalism, and enforced transnationalism. The interplay of transnational experiences, translational responses, and a static, atemporal reality within Holt's narrative exposes the discursive tensions stemming from the author's struggle between the immediacy of the reality he depicts as a travel writer and the intertextual influences, institutional obligations of diplomatic duty, and his own personal aspirations.

This transnationalist rhetoric is more conspicuous in Edith Wharton's account *In Morocco*, being imbued with an imperial shift. Her travel text, which was the result of a three-week journey in French Morocco in 1917, serves as a call for the United States to abandon its long-standing isolationist stance in global affairs. Wharton did not advocate for the United States to establish an immediate protectorate over Morocco; instead, it supported a French protectorate that could serve as a paradigm for America's potential role in global history, eulogizing the engineer of the French protectorate in Morocco, Louis Hubert, G Lyautey. Still, Wharton's discourse is split in that she feels that the exotic and the erotic she aspires is constantly threatened by the overwhelming "European drift" caused by the encroachment of European powers on the East, leading to the erosion of the "authentic East" which is the primary object of her desire. Wharton's fluctuation between two contrasting narratives regarding Morocco reflects the intricacies and tensions within her storytelling.

3.4. Gender and Imperialism

Rddad devotes significant attention to the writings of women travelers, focusing on the relationship between gender and colonial discourse. He argues that some women, such as Edith Wharton and Frances Macnab, expressed opposition to the colonial project, though their writings were certainly not free from Orientalist and racist biases. Although Macnab opposed Christian missionary journeys, describing themes violent, she nonetheless described Moroccans as inferior, considering them unworthy even of conversion. Through this contradiction and others, Rddad reveals the complex entanglement of gender and empire in travel writing.

Rddad observes that Wharton's narrative is also filled with contradictions. At times, she expresses admiration for Moroccan traditions and resilience, expressing her fears of the loss of what she sees as cultural "authenticity", and even eccentricity, under Western modernization. At the same time, she criticizes America's isolationist policy during that period.

Rddad's book also provides a detailed analysis of the geopolitical context, showing that colonial discourse was neither monolithic nor static but evolved according to historical and political conditions. Before the imposition of the French Protectorate, British travel narratives tended to emphasize British superiority. However, after 1912, texts such as Edith Wharton's began to align more with the French "civilizing mission."

According to Rddad, these shifts were not only driven by changes in colonial power but were also influenced by the writer's gender, national identity and position within the imperial system.

For this reason, Rddad calls for a renewed reading of travel literature—notes a mere reflection of domination, but as a site of struggle and cultural dialogue. "Disorienting the Maghreb" seeks to dismantle the structures of colonial discourse and recover voices previously pushed to the margins—whether those of Western travellers themselves or of local cultures in all their diversity and difference.

4. Discussion

The present analysis demonstrates that Rddad's *Dis-Orienting the Maghreb* constitutes a critical and necessary refinement of Edward Said's foundational thesis in Orientalism. This refinement functions not as repudiation but as a dialectical engagement, addressing the geographical, historical and methodological lacunae within Said's magisterial work to propose a more nuanced model for analyzing colonial discourse. By centering the Maghreb, specifically Morocco. Employing, a close study of Anglo-American travel writing from 1880-1920, Rddad successfully complicates the monolithic conception of Orientalism, revealing it as a contested, plural and historically contingent battleground of ideologies.

The most immediate contribution of Rddad's work is its rectification of a significant geographical and epistemological omission in Said's study. As this paper's statement establishes, Said's focus on the Franco-British construction of the Mashreq (the Arab East) inadvertently marginalized the Maghreb, a region with distinct colonial experience involving multiple European powers (France, Spain, and indirectly Britain) a unique Berber-Arab cultural plurality, and a liminal position at the intersection

of Africa, the Arab world, and Europe. Rddad's insistence that 'The Maghreb is a continuity of the Orient... but it doesn't represent this geographical spot' underscores the necessity of a region-specific paradigms. His work validates the claim that applying Said's framework uncritically to Morocco risks perpetuating the very homogenization Orientalism sought to critique. By "Dis-orienting" the Maghreb, Rddad liberates it from being a mere subsidiary of a generalized "Orient" or an appendage of Middle Eastern studies, establishing it as a critical locus for understanding the variegated mechanics of imperial representation.

Rddad's primary methodological advancement lies in his identification of competing paradigms within colonial discourse, moving beyond Said's more unified conception of Western power/knowledge. Said's Foucauldian-Gramscian model brilliantly exposes Orientalism as a coherent discursive formation serving hegemony. However, Rddad's granular analysis of travel narratives reveals this discourse to be internally riven by competing ideological projects. The four paradigms he elucidates nationalist, secular, transnational and imperial. All, demonstrating that representations about Morocco were not consistent but were strategically deployed in service of specific, often conflicting agendas.

First of all, the nationalist paradigm, exemplified in Philip Durham Trotter's official mission narrative, shows how travel writing served immediate diplomatic and commercial interests, constructing a narrative of British precedence and superiority against both Moroccans and European rivals like France. Crucially, Rddad notes the moments where the native "counter-discursive voice slips into the narrative," introducing a heterotopic space of resistance that further fractures the monologue of power. Furthermore, the secular paradigm, analyzed through Frances Macnab's writings, highlights a critical divergence within Western thought. Macnab's advocacy for secular modernity as a colonial tool, as opposed to religious missionary work, reveals ideological fissures within the "civilizing mission" itself, complicating the idea of a singular Western ideological front.

All in all, the transnational and imperial paradigms, evident in the works of George Edmund Holt and Edith Wharton, reflect the shifting geopolitics of the early 20th century. Here, narrowly nationalist rhetoric recedes in favor of a cosmopolitan apology for imperialism, particularly following the 1912 French Protectorate. Wharton's support for the French mission civilisatrice as a model for American global engagement illustrates how colonial discourse adapted to new imperial realities and transnational alliances.

This paradigm-based analysis directly addresses a key critique of Said's work, that it underestimates the heterogeneity and agency within Western discourse. Rddad convincingly argues that Orientalism functioned as an "arguable battle of ideologies" where British, American and French interests, and secular versus religious worldviews, clashed and overlapped in their attempt to define Morocco.

Furthermore, Rddad's focuses on the profound importance of historical and temporal specificity, a dimension sometimes subsumed under Said's broader genealogical approach. By isolating the 1880 – 1920 period spanning the pre-protectorate diplomatic scrambles to the consolidation of French rule, Rddad masterfully uncovers how discourse evolves with political circumstance. The shift from British advocacy for influence (Trotter, Macnab) to American acquiescence to or admiration for French control (Holt, Wharton) is not a minor detail but central to understanding discourse as a dynamic, responsive field. This aligns with and refines Said's project by insisting that the "archive" of Orientalism must be read with acute sensitivity to historical contingency.

The gendered dimension of travel writing, another area where Rddad expands Said's framework, adds critical depth. His analysis of female travellers like Macnab and Wharton reveals the complex entanglements of gender and empire. Their narratives, while often still embedded in racist and orientalist tropes, introduce contradictions- opposition to missionary violence, fear of cultural erosion, criticism of isolationist policies, that destabilize a purely patriarchal a monolithic imperial voice. This attention to the subject position of the traveller enriches the discourse analysis by incorporating axes of difference beyond the binary colonized/colonized.

In conclusion, Dis-orienting the Maghreb achieves its refinement of Orientalism by operationalizing Said's theory at a regional scale of heightened specificity. It answers the call for a more "Nuanced, regionally-specific approach" outlined in this paper's objectives. Rddad proves that the Maghreb is not an exception to Said's rule but rather a terrain where its complexities are thrown into sharp relief. His work demonstrates that the path forward in postcolonial studies lies not in abandoning canonical theories but subjecting them rigorous, context-driven testing and elaboration. By revealing the plurality within discourse, the agency of the colonized in interrupting it, and the historical battles that shaped it, Rddad provides a model for how postcolonial critique can continue to evolve, becoming more precise, more accountable to geographical nuance, and ultimately more powerful in decolonizing our understanding of both the past and the present. His work ensures that the Maghreb, long overlooked in the shadow of Orientalism's canonical focus, now claims its rightful place as a central arena for theoretical innovation in the field.

5. Conclusion

This study has argued that Sadik Rddad's Dis-orienting the Maghreb serves as a vital and sophisticated critical refinement of Edward Said's paradigmatic work, Orientalism. Through a focused examination of Anglo-American travel writing on Morocco from 1880 to 1920, Rddad successfully addresses the significant geographical and theoretical lacunae present in

Said's otherwise transformative thesis. This investigation confirms the central hypothesis: Rddad does not reject Said's foundational critique of Western discourse and power but rather complexifies and expands it, advocating for a model that acknowledges regional specificity, internal plurality, and historical contingency.

The analysis underscores that Said's framework, while indispensable for deconstructing the Eurocentric construction of the "Orient", inadvertently perpetuated a form of epistemological homogenization by marginalizing the distinct realities of the Maghreb. Rddad's work rectifies this by recentring Morocco, a locus defined by its Amazigh-Arab cultural synthesis and its unique colonial encounter with multiple European imperial powers. His methodological innovation, the identification of competing paradigms (nationalist, secular, transitional, imperial) within colonial travel literature, this demonstrated that Orientalism was not a monolithic discourse but a "contested battleground" of ideologies. This revelation moves scholarly understating from a model of consistent domination to one of dynamic negotiation, conflict, and adaptation.

Moreover, Rddad emphasis on historical specificity and gendered subjectivity provides essential correctives. By anchoring his analysis in the precise geopolitical shifts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he shows how discursive strategies evolved in direct response to event like the Algeiras conference and the establishment of the French protectorate. Simultaneously, his reading of female travellers like Frances Macnab and Edith Wharton illuminates the fraught intersections of gender and empire, introducing contradictions and anxieties that further destabilize a unitary colonial voice.

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Endnotes

¹ Mashreb is an Arabic word meaning the Orient, a geographical term.