

Walter Scott and the Islamic East: *Ivanhoe and the Talisman*

Nisreen Tawfiq Yousef
Assistant Professor, Department of English
Middle East University, Jordan
ntyousef@meu.edu.jo

Abstract- *This paper examines representations of the Islamic East in two novels by Sir Walter Scott: Ivanhoe (1820) and The Talisman (1825). The paper's argument is that Scott's representations of the Islamic East seems influenced in very specific ways by dominant nineteenth-century portrayals of the East. Scott's two novels present ambivalent depictions of the East, some of which deviate from standard patterns of representation of earlier centuries. For instance, on the one hand his novels attribute positive spiritual qualities to Saracens such as generosity, bravery and kindness to animals, while on the other, and often in the same passage, they sometimes depict Saracens as violent and atavistic. I argue that, through his various narrators and characters, Scott depicts the relationship between the Islamic East and the Christian West as a significant form of cultural interaction whereby the East is presented as complementing the West. However, Scott's portrayal of East-West relation is complex, and it would be inaccurate to claim that this denotes total acceptance of Islamic manners, customs and perspectives.*

Keywords- *Sir Walter Scott; Historical novel; Orientalism; Representations of the Islamic East; The East and the West*

It is routinely argued that pre-twentieth-century Western perceptions of the Islamic East have been broadly hostile since the emergence of Islam in the seventh century. However, European views of the Orient underwent particular modifications in the early nineteenth century. The democratization of travel brought greater ease of movement for many nineteenth-century Western travelers, among them poets and writers, who journeyed to the East. Travelers came to view the Orient not merely as a threat but as a source of inspiration, and they believed that the region's people possessed spiritual qualities that were by then lost to Western modernity. As I will demonstrate, this wider shift in perception influenced contemporary literary representations of the Orient and produced ambivalent portrayals of it. As a result, many early nineteenth-century literary works mobilized well-established, hostile depictions of Islam; these depictions were in part tempered by admiration for the perceived spirituality of the East, founded on nostalgia for the perceived loss of spiritual propensities in the West. This fascination with Eastern life-way and outlooks coincided with Romantic reactions against ruthless economic interests, profits built on exploitation or enslavement, and corresponding yearning for greater community-mindedness and forms of rurality that had been lost.

In this regard, Emily Haddad's book *Orientalist Poetics* (2002) argues that the influence of the Orient can be found in works by Wordsworth, Shelley, Robert Southey, and other nineteenth-century literary figures (1, 3, 4). For Haddad, images borrowed from the Islamic East provided the fodder for many nineteenth-century literary productions. In particular, she argues that among the main

contribution of the Orient is replacing nature, commonly used as a setting in nineteenth-century literature, by the Oriental setting (10). Haddad mentions that Antoine Galland's translation of the *One Thousand and One Nights* into French in 1709 and into English (as the *Arabian Nights*) in 1713 was followed by three other major translations of the work published during the nineteenth century. She argues that these translations influenced the imagination of the French and English poets enormously (4). In particular she argues that the Orient provided "an alternative aesthetic space" for writers (2). However, Haddad also suggests that, though the Occident was inspired by Oriental material, the Orient was nonetheless still perceived and depicted as inferior in nineteenth-century literature:

Through readings of poems by a number of nineteenth-century poets, the Islamic East is portrayed as ontologically unnatural. The Orient is portrayed in the nineteenth century as a quintessential rural landscape, the desert is typically hostile rather than comforting or inspirational; its cities are disordered blends of man-made and natural elements; and its inhabitants are at worst morally deformed. (9)

Interestingly, some of Byron's works reflect the ambivalence in early nineteenth-century standpoints on East. Though for him the East was a source of inspiration, he still associated hostility with it. In a chapter entitled "British Fiction in the Nineteenth-century", Robert Irwin contends that Byron's literary works are indebted to the

Orient; Byron's use of an exotic setting in his *Oriental Tales* (1813-1816) and his invention of the "lonely, passionate, masterful, brooding, ill-fated" hero is fundamentally the outcome of his interaction with the Oriental realm.¹ Emily Bronte's Heathcliff similarly displays an Orientalist influence on nineteenth-century literature (133).

In his much-cited discussion of prevalent European ideas about the Orient, Edward Said argues in *Orientalism* (1978) that "the Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (1). According to Said, the "West perceives itself as rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspension" while viewing Arab Orientals as the total opposite (49). Said argues that nineteenth-century science played a significant role in establishing and promoting racial inequality according to which rationale, Orientals were believed to be biologically and intellectually inferior to Westerners (206). Thus, for both Said and Haddad, early nineteenth century writing merely continued the representational habits of previous centuries.

Paralleling Said's and Haddad's arguments, Tahir Abbas writes in "Multicultural Politics in post-Islamist Muslim Britain" (2014) that, throughout history, the West depicted Muslims as "barbaric, ignorant, narrow-minded or intolerant religious zealots". Like Said, Abbas argues that these deformed representations are accompanied by Western desires of dominance. He notes that though at some point in history there were European efforts to learn about Islam, there was still ignorance about it as well as efforts to depict it in the gloomiest way possible (24). However, as Irwin indicates, there was another side to these representations. For instance, Byron, who engaged with East and was quite acquainted with its manners, was anti-imperialist, and an admirer of the Turks. Irwin adds that Byron states that he himself was about to embrace Islam (134). Similarly, Mohammed Sharafuddin mentions in *Islam and Romantic Orientalism* (1994) that Lady Byron observed that Byron not only admired the Islamic Turkish culture, but also preferred it to Western culture (224).

The arguments of these critics are primarily directed at nineteenth-century literary productions more broadly. The aim of this chapter is to revisit these arguments by a precise examination of the interplay between contrasting and contradictory representational responses to the East in the work of a particular author. Concentrating on Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1820), and *The Talisman* (1825), part of this chapter's argument is that Scott's representations of the Islamic East seems influenced in very specific ways by dominant nineteenth-

century portrayals of the East. Scott's two novels present ambivalent depictions of the East, some of which deviate from standard patterns of representation of earlier centuries. For instance, on the one hand his novels attribute positive spiritual qualities to Saracens such as generosity, bravery and kindness to animals, while on the other, and often in the same passage, they sometimes depict Saracens as violent and atavistic. I argue that, through his various narrators and characters, Scott depicts the relationship between the Islamic East and the Christian West as a significant form of cultural interaction whereby the East is presented as complementing the West. However, Scott's portrayal of East-West relation is complex, and it would be inaccurate to claim that this denotes total acceptance of Islamic manners, customs and perspectives.

In the introduction to *The Talisman* Scott writes: *On the other hand, I felt the difficulty of giving a vivid picture of a part of the world with which I was almost totally unacquainted, unless by early recollections of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments; and not only did I labour under the incapacity of ignorance under which, as far as regards Eastern manners, I was as thickly wrapped as an Egyptian in his fog-but my contemporaries were, many of them, as much enlightened upon the subject if they had been inhabitants of the favoured land of Goshen.* (1)

Interestingly, Scott here lists his sources for writing about the East. This indicates Scott's awareness of East-West divisions. Though Scott's introduction establishes a binary opposition between East and West, he presents neither hemisphere as being superior to its counterpart. Rather, he depicts them as two harmonizing cultures. Scott acknowledges that his knowledge about the East is drawn from the *Arabian Nights*, nineteenth century travelers to the East, and contemporaries such as Moore, Southey, and Byron (1). It is noteworthy that Scott states his admiration for Moore's "Lalla Rookh" (1817) on the grounds that the poem reflects that author's profound knowledge about the East. Sharafuddin notes that Moore was criticized for "glamorizing" Eastern cultures in "Lalla Rookh" (136). Southey's *Thalaba* (1801), as Scott states, is also among those contemporary works which enhanced his knowledge of East. Nigel Leask argues, in *British Romantic Writers* (1992), that *Thalaba* represents Islam as a "rational Unitarian religion" (26). Similarly, Haddad indicates that the representation of the Orient in *Thalaba* is given a prominent status as it brings to light the morality of its people (28). As mentioned earlier, Byron's works reflect an uncertain standpoint on East. Thus, it may be true to argue that Scott's reliance on his contemporaries contributed towards renewed depictions of the East that were not normally present in the literature of earlier periods. However, portrayals of the East in Scott's *Ivanhoe*

¹ Byron made of the Middle East an arena of "adventure, high passion, violence and tragedy". This is reflected in his works such as *Child Harold's Pilgrimage* (1811-17), and his invention of the Byronic hero (Irwin 133).

and *The Talisman* remain ambivalent as they are not entirely appreciative of the Orient.

Travel writing flourished in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries. Travellers were in part fuelled by the intellectual mission of collecting useful knowledge about the places they visited (Thompson 45). Travelers at this period endeavoured to gain the trust of their readers by providing accurate accounts of these places, since travel writing was traditionally a low-status genre and writers could rarely verify what they saw. Ironically, this made some travelers consciously avoid detailing extraordinary occurrences, which sometimes led to inaccurate reports (Thompson 72-80). Thompson mentions that the African explorer Mungo Park supposedly told Scott that he excluded some of his more astonishing stories about the places he visited in order to gain credibility as an explorer (81). The selective and subjective nature of the travel writing genre therefore meant that travelers and travel writings of the period were unlikely to be accurate sources of knowledge. Correspondingly, Scott's perceptions of the East, as I will discuss, were inevitably influenced by imprecise records, which undoubtedly impacted on the portrayal of East in his fiction.

Scott also states in his introduction that the "early recollections" of the *Arabian Nights* are among the works he relied on to write about the East. In his article "The Growth of Scholarly Interest in the *Arabian Nights*" (1980), Ali Muhsin indicates that, unlike early nineteenth-century versions of the *Arabian Nights* in Europe, later translations in the same century went through more rigorous scholarly examining and sorting (197).² He notes that critical efforts resulted in the discovery that some of those tales were either fabricated or borrowed from the literature of surrounding cultures, and that the *Arabian Nights* therefore combines both realistic and fictional elements (199). Coupled with his lack of personal experience of the East, Scott's reliance on the *Arabian Nights* was correspondingly likely to hinder any accurate portrayals of it in his works.

While European perceptions of the East were undergoing modifications at the time of Scott's writing of his novels, Europe was experiencing an intense new phase of modernity that influenced its self-perception as well. For historians such as Richard Bessel, Nicholas Guyatt, and Jane Rendall in *War, Empire, and Slavery* (2010), the period between 1740 until the beginning of the nineteenth century marked the industrial modernization and urbanization of Europe. This process entailed new ways of thinking and renewed approaches to politics, the economy, and social attitudes (1). As Andrew Lincoln suggests in *Walter Scott and Modernity* (2007), Scott, like many of his contemporaries, was gravely concerned by the moral

implications of modernization (7).³ He seems to be concerned about the widening gap between the rich and the poor, which seems divisive to him. Commenting on the effect of modernity on community in *Tales of a Grandfather II* (1828), Scott writes:

The whole order of society is changed and instead of presenting the uniform appearance of one large family, each member of which has nearly the same rights, it seems a confederacy of association of different ranks, classes and conditions of men, each rank filing up a certain department in society and discharging a class of duties totally distinct from those of others. (qtd. in McMaster 61)

Lincoln argues that "Scott's works repeatedly emphasize that the progress to modernity "entails conflict, disruption, dichotomy, violent disposition" (31). His works also indicate that living in modernized societies such as Scotland or Britain means living in a state of "alienation and irony". Lincoln's analysis of Scott's *Redgauntlet* (1824) is an example of this. He argues that the novel reflects Scott's experience of modern Edinburgh and clearly touches upon the sense of "social disconnection" that accompanies modernity (42). He argues further that, for Scott, the movement of society towards modernity may be positive as it leads to the improvement of social manners and guarantees individuals their liberty. However, with the escalation of extravagance and commerce, the outcomes of modernity might distort morality (31).

This very point is discussed by Graham McMaster in *Scott and Society* (1981), in which he claims that for Scott, moving towards modern society would lead to two outcomes: achieving more freedom and enhancing the gap between social classes (117). McMaster argues that in his letter of 1820-2, Scott criticizes the immorality of wealthy and upper classes, and ascribes to them the moral decadency of the Kingdom (147). He adds that in his unpublished article, "Malachi Malagrowth", Scott writes:

Such a crisis as has fallen to these countries ... [it has] unfortunately become at present the fate of Britain; while to a casual observer the country seems to contain all the means not of maintenance only but of luxury and superfluity, there is a secret malady prevailing among all classes of men which makes the rich man fear for his hoards and the poor man for his necessities which are essential for his sustenance. (qtd. in McMaster 93)

My discussion expands on both Lincoln's and Macmasters' interest in Scott's perception of modernization. I argue that Scott's views on progress and

² The stories were dealt with individually and were classified in accordance with their "topographical details and generic characterisations" before approaching the implications of the work as whole (Mushin 197)

³ Europe was moving from the feudal system to a commercial, capitalistic economic system (Thomson, 45).

modernity are illustrated and explored in *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman* whereby Scott views modern Europe as socially corrupt. Nonetheless, his two novels manifest a belief in the necessity of cultural exchange between East and West. Some of Scott's characters in these two novels not only embrace the idea of cultural exchange, but also embody it. Nevertheless, the discussion will touch on the inconsistency and complexity of Scott's representations of Saracens as well as of various characters' standpoints on cultural interaction.

As Thomson mentions, during the Enlightenment, Europe was witnessing improvements in transportations and printing (45). Hence, Scott's ambitions about European interaction with the Islamic East were feasible: traveling to the Eastern part of the world, producing accounts of it, and reading about it was no longer novel nor rare. By revisiting medieval Europe in his novels, Scott pinpoints and explores the contemporary problems of his time. In one of his letters to his son Charles, Scott highlights the significance of history as a means of comprehending the present, "our eye is enabled to look back on the past to improve on our ancestors' improvements and avoid their errors. This can only be done by studying history and comparing it with passing events" (qtd. in McMaster 130-31). In *The Historical Novel* (1962), George Lukacs argues that, in his historical novels, Scott "discloses the actual conditions and crises of contemporary life by means of the historical crises he represents" (38). As indicated by these critics, historical novels may be deployed to reflect on the present. In this sense Lukacs writes,

Scott's necessary anachronism' consists, therefore, simply in allowing his characters to express feelings and thoughts about real, historical relations in a much clearer way than the actual men and women of the time could have done. But the content of these feelings and thoughts, their relation to their real object is always historically and socially correct. (63)

As stated by Lukacs, the purpose of revisiting of the past is to enable fictional characters to cast a new light on the complexities of modern life at a fictional and temporal remove from the present. Avrom Fleishman argues, in *The English Historical Novel* (1971), that the perceived universality of the historical novel is of a great significance: "In the course of reading, we find that the protagonist of such novels confront not only the forces of history in their own time, but its impact on life in any time" (15). Fleishman's view confirms the idea that historical novels are uniquely able to approach life's challenges by revisiting an earlier historical epoch.

Discussing Orient-Occident relations, Lincoln indicates that Scott was writing in a context where the "progress of empire" enabled contact between its people and other "primitive" peoples. He indicates that the context that Scott was writing in parallels the medieval context in

which *The Talisman* is set. For him, in both contexts, the European culture was in contact with Eastern culture and endeavoured to stress its superiority. Lincoln argues that Scott's novel illustrates a medieval Western fear of identification with East. He points out that during the Crusades; Europe feared the diminishing of the difference between it and the Orient as a result of the cultural exposure (111). Nevertheless, Scott's depiction of the Islamic East, I argue, is partly admiring. As discussed earlier, Scott was critical of the outcomes of modernity in Europe. His fiction thus reflects his dissatisfaction with some aspects of modern European communities of the nineteenth century as well as his appreciation of some perceived Oriental qualities, as vicariously perceived by those with no personal knowledge or experience of the East. Furthermore, a number of Scott's characters, as I will show later, are shown to have borrowed aspects of Orient culture.

Scott states, in his introduction to *The Betrothed* (1925), his awareness that history is amenable to being fictionalized (10). Fleishman notes that historical novels combine real and fictional elements (20). Historians are confident, for example, that the two leaders, Saladin and Richard did not meet, but rather communicated through messengers (Nicholson 327). However, Scott chooses for his two characters to meet. In this encounter, Saladin cures Richard using an Eastern talisman. In this regard, Alshetawi argues that the talisman is used in the novel to symbolize the East's "healing power" for materialistic European societies, which need this healing power to cure its maladies. Further to Alshetawi's argument, it may be true to argue that the Arabian Hakim's endeavours to cure the wounds of Sir Kenneth's dog can be also symbolically read as East healing the ills of West. Significantly, the dog is injured by Conrad, but healed by the Arabian Hakim. Significantly, in this incident, the complicities that European characters encounter are resolved by Oriental characters and Orientals are presented as more kind to animals than Occidentals:

*Kenneth receded in silence, and the physician inspected and handled Roswal's wound with as much care and attention as if he had been a human being. He then took forth a case of instruments and, by the judicious and skillful application of pincers, withdrew from the wounded shoulder the fragment of the weapon, and stopped with styptics and bandages the effusion of blood which followed; the animal all the while suffering him patiently to perform these kind offices, as if he had been aware of his kind intentions. (Scott, *The Talisman* 134)*

Both the narrator and the dog sense the good intentions of Hakim's effort to cure the dog. Evidently, Scott finds in cultural interaction a way of achieving balance between modernity and spirituality in nineteenth-century Europe,

which reflects a belief in the necessity of Eastern influence over the West. Apart from reading these two incidents symbolically, in the Middle Ages, Islamic civilization was at its peak in terms of scientific advancement and the period was referred to as the Golden Age. Europe was thus indebted to the Islamic advances in medicine. Medieval Islamic books on medicine such as Avicenna's *Cannon of Medicine* (1025) were translated into Latin and were drawn upon in the medical field in Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries ("Islamic Medical Manuscript at the National Library of Medicine"). Scott's allusion to the medical influence of the Islamic culture reflects his appreciation of its advances. It also implies that Western interaction with the Islamic East at some point in history had a positive impact on Europe.

In *Ivanhoe*, Rebecca and Ivanhoe exemplify and embody the cultural exchange between East and West. Both characters appear to have borrowed from Oriental culture. When she returns to England after spending a span of time in the Holy Land, Rebecca continues to wear an Oriental outfit. Ivanhoe initiates a conversation with her using Arabic. Though she seems able to recognize the language, she is unable to communicate in it (235). Moreover, Rebecca seems to have acquired Oriental manners of greeting (160). And Isaac of York, her father, presents another instance of cultural exchange as he expresses his sorrow in an exaggerated manner, which the narrator labels as Oriental (336). Furthermore, after coming back from the Holy Land, the Black Knight, who is King Richard in disguise, seems to have adopted an Oriental tradition regarding food. He suggests that his host, Sir Clerk, participates in the meal in order to reassure him that the food is uncontaminated (145). Significantly, none of those characters who borrowed Eastern manners, norms, or languages show any sense of superiority towards them.

Despite the approval that some of the European characters display towards borrowing Oriental manners, other characters demonstrate dissatisfaction with the idea. The intercultural marriage that Saladin seeks through proposing to The Lady Edith reflects interest on the part of the Islamic East to fulfill a sort of cultural interaction with the Christian West. However, Lady Edith marries Earl of Huntingdon, which indicates a failure to achieve an intercultural bond between the two sides. Moreover, Sir Kenneth shows a strong dissatisfaction with the Islamic cultures. In this regard, Lincoln argues that Scott's representation of "otherness" always assumes the superiority of Western cultures over Eastern cultures. For him, in *The Talisman*, Scott makes of East and West parallel cultures and stresses the European need to preserve distinctions and differences as essential for alleging superiority, which in turn justifies the "other's" need to convert (90,91). Lincoln provides as evidence Sir Kenneth's disapproval at wearing the Islamic outfit while residing in Saracens' camp as evidence to support this view (13). Further to Lincoln's discussion, Sir Kenneth shows dissatisfaction with the Saracens' food: "Sir Kenneth could not overcome the disgust which he felt

against swallowing any nourishment, and could be prevailed upon to taste nothing, saving draught of cold water" (201). However, Sir Kenneth's position on the Islamic culture is rather complex. For instance, though Sir Kenneth views the Saracens' prayers as a sort of idolatry, he unwillingly feels a sense of courtesy towards how the act is communally and sincerely performed (204). Despite the fact that he is taken as a captive to the Saracens' camps, Sir Kenneth is treated humanely and referred to by Saladin as "my friend". He is also offered the same kind of food as Saladin (201). As Scott was critical of the social gap between the rich and the poor in his community, it may be sensible to suggest that Saladin's treatment of Sir Kenneth implies Scott's admiration for the social equality that Saladin establishes in the camps, which represent how the true Islamic community is supposed to be.

Furthermore, Queen Berengaria demonstrates discontent with how Oriental masculinity is displayed:

Fifty guards of Saladin's seraglio escorted them, with naked sabers, whose orders were, to cut to pieces whomsoever, were he prince or peasant, should venture to gaze on the ladies as they passed, or even presume to raise his head until the cessation of the music should make all men aware they were lodged in their gallery, not to be gazed on by the willing eye. This superstitious observance of Oriental reverence to the fair sex called forth from the Queen Berengaria some criticism very unfavourable to Saladin and his country.
(Scott, *The Talisman* 262)

Clearly, the scene is exaggerated. The narrator's description caricatures Oriental masculinity, while the hyperbolic number of men holding their swords in this scene draws on established notions of violent Muslim men. Scott's reliance on *The Arabian Nights* means that these exaggerated images of hostility are likely to have seeped into his novel, which inherits the tales' admixture of fiction and realism. The very concept of the *Arabian Night* is founded on violence. To protect herself against the tyranny of Shahryar, Shahrazad narrates the one thousand and one tales. Yet this was by no means Scott's sole source. These images of violent Muslim men are the legacy of previous centuries.⁴

Some characters have adopted the Oriental norm of keeping slaves in both *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman*. However, the narrator's attitude in *The Talisman* is rather condemnatory: "It was a circumstance which attracted no notice, for many of the princes of the crusade had introduced black slaves into their household, in imitation

⁴ Medieval accounts of East which were produced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and early fourteenth century included hostile images of Muslims. These images were reemphasized in the minds of West and continued to influence Western views about the Islamic East until modern times (Daniel 24).

of the barbarous splendor of the Saracens” (220). Haddad indicates that a number of critics noted that, in nineteenth-century literature, there was a clear association between Islamic Middle-East and tyranny and slavery (17). According to Lincoln, moreover, the economy of modern Europe was associated, directly or indirectly, with slavery (114). Although Sir Clerks corresponds to the Black Knight’s suggestion of assuring his guest that the food in uncontaminated after Eastern manners, he does not show any admiration for this norm. Rather he refers to describe the Knight’s doubts as “unnecessary scruples” (145). Accordingly, as I mentioned earlier, Scott’s two novels do not reflect a pure appreciation of Oriental culture.

Based on Sir Kenneth’s standpoint on the Islamic theology and Saracens,⁵ Said views Scott’s depiction of Muslims in *The Talisman* as offensive (101). However, Alshetawi argues that, despite the many anti-Islamic views that are voiced in *The Talisman*, Scott brings to light the spiritual superiority of the Islamic East over its Western counterpart. Similarly, in his chapter, “Walter Scott’s Orient” (1998), Paul Pelckmans argues that the association Said establishes between Scott’s depiction of East and imperial intentions in *The Talisman* is incorrect. He holds that the Oriental culture is pictured as an equivalent to the Occidental culture, and at some points as superior to it. Saladin’s depiction, I suggest, reflects Scott’s admiration of Eastern qualities much less ambiguously. Commenting on his portrayal of Saladin in *The Talisman*, Scott writes:

The period relating more immediately to the Crusades which I at last fixed upon was that at which the warlike character of Richard I., wild and generous, a pattern of chivalry, with all its extravagant virtues, and it is no less absurd error, was opposed to that of Saladin, in which the Christian and the English monarch showed all the cruelty and violence of an Eastern sultan, and Saladin, on the other hand, displayed the deep policy and prudence of European sovereign, whilst each contended which should excel the other in the knightly qualities of bravery and generosity. (1)

Perhaps, it is true to debate that Scott’s statement implies that his selection of the crusade as a setting to his novel is intentional. Scott’s admiration of Saladin’s character, as I will show, is probably meant to bring to light a realistic example that deviates from the stereotypical image of an Oriental leader. In so doing, Scott defies the Western association between hostility and the Islamic East in the medieval period, and contributes towards renewing images of the Islamic East in nineteenth-century English literature. Nevertheless, Scott’s statement both denies and affirms the association between the Islamic East and violence. He

indicates that the characterization of Saladin is meant to deviate from the typical image of tyrant Eastern Sultan, which reemphasizes the association between Eastern leaders and hostility. Saifuz Zaman suggests that Scott’s effusive portrayal of the character of Saladin, in which he appears as just, tolerant and wise does not differ much from the real, historical character. It is true that Scott attributes to Saladin some qualities that were not typically attributed to Muslims in earlier periods of representation. Praising Saladin Richard says: “for why should one not seek for brotherhood and alliance with a Saracen, brave, just, generous, who loves and honors a worthy foe as if he were a friend...” (174). Furthermore, Richard admires Saladin because he shows chivalric qualities and can set a standard for the Christian Princes, who ironically lack these codes (109).

To conclude, the European perceptions of East were undergoing shifts throughout the early nineteenth century. As a result, literary accounts of Muslims were influenced a great deal by these transitions in attitude. Travel writing and the translations on the *Arabian Nights* into European languages played a significant role in reinstating, and yet also renewing and challenging dominant images of the East in European literary expression. Influenced by these circumstances and reliant on other writers’ first-hand observations and opinions, Scott produced ambivalent portrayals of the Orient in *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman* combined established images of violence and despotism with a more modern attraction towards perceived Eastern spirituality and its capacity to act as a salve for the materialistic West. Though Scott was aware of the East-West dichotomy,⁶ a notion which is clearly reinforced by his fiction, he presents these cultures as complementary rather than purely oppositional. Scott was a critic of modern, commercial Europe, and he shows admiration for particular qualities he associates with the Orient, such as justice, bravery, kindness to animals, and skill in the medical field. Though Scott’s two novels reflect admiration for some Eastern qualities, they still present the Islamic East as associative of tyranny and violence. Furthermore, though East functioned as sources of literary inspiration for nineteenth-century writers, it was still perceived as the foundation of the notion of slavery, a notion that Scott’s narrator defines as barbaric. Thus, Scott’s *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman* do not present an absolute break with the representational habits of earlier centuries. Rather, they present an ambivalent standpoint on the Islamic East; fluctuating between admiration for some spiritual qualities and dissatisfaction with some of its traditions and norms.

Works Cited

⁶ Through contrasting between East and West in terms of theology, love theology, food, physical appearance and climate, Scott establishes a binary opposition between the two cultures in *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman*. Insert this observation into the main body of your text. Not a footnote.

⁵ According to Said, Scott, through Sir Kenneth’s character, uses the medieval setting to attack Muslims theologically. Give quotation?

- [1] Abbas, Tahir. "Multicultural Politics in Post-Islamist Muslim Britain." Ed. Nash, Geoffrey, Kathleen Kerr-Koch, and Sarah E. Hackett. Eds. *Postcolonialism and Islam: Theory, Literature, Culture, Society and Film*. Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2014. Print.
- [2] Alshetawi, Mahmoud. "The English Novel Set in the Arab World." *Abhath Al-Yarmouk* 20.2 (2002): 117-33. Print.
- [3] Bessel Richard, Nicholas Guyatt, and Jane Rendall. *War, Empire and Slavery 1770-1830*. England and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.
- [4] Daniel, Norman. *Islam and the West: The Making on an Image*. Oxford, England: Oneworld Publications, 2000. Print.
- [5] Fleishman, Avrom. *The English Historical Novel*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971. Print.
- [6] Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilisations and Remaking of World Order*. 2002 ed. Great Britain: Simon @Schuster UK Ltd, 1997. Print.
- [7] Irwin, Robert. "The Muslim World in British Fiction of the Nineteenth Century." *Britain and Muslim World: Historical Perspectives*. Ed. Gerald MacLean. New Castle: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2011. 131-142. Print.
- [8] "Islamic Medical Manuscript at the National Library of Medicine." (Online). Retrieved 2014 <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/>
- [9] Leask, Nigel. *British Romantic Writers*. 2004 ed. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Print.
- [10] Lincoln, Andrew. *Walter Scott and Modernity*. Edinburgh, Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press, 2007. Print.
- [11] Lukacs, George. *The Historical Novel*. Trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell. London: Merlin Press, 1962. Print.
- [12] McMaster, Graham. *Scott and Society*. London and New York: University of Cambridge Press, 1981. Print.
- [13] Muhsin. Ali J. "The Growth of Scholarly Interest in the *Arabian Nights*" 70. (1980): 196-212. Wiley Online Library.
- [14] Nash, Geoffrey P. *From Empire to Orient: Travellers to the Middle East 1830-1956*. London and New York: I.B.Tauris and Co Ltd, 2005. Print.
- [15] Nicholson. Helen J. *Chronicles of the Third Crusade*. England and USA: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1997. Print.
- [16] Pelckmans, Paul. "Walter Scott's Orient: *The Talisman*." *Oriental Prospects: Western Literature and the Lure of East*. Ed. C.C. Barfoot and Theo D'Haren. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998. Print.
- [17] Riley-Smith. *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam*. New York, United States of America: Columbia University Press, 2008. Print.
- [18] Said, Edward *Orientalism*. 1995 ed. London, England: Penguin, 1978. Print.
- [19] Scott, Walter. *Ivanhoe*. Ed. Hewitt, David. The Edinburgh ed. Vol. 8. 30 vols. Edinburgh, Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press, 1998. Print.
- [20] Sharafuddin, Mohammed. *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounter with the Orient*. London and New York: I.B Tauris Publishers, 1994. Print.
- [21] *Talisman*. USA: Feather Trail Press, 2009. Print
- [22] *The Betrothed*. Ed. Hewitt, David. The Edinburgh ed. Vol. 8. 30 vols. Edinburgh, Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press, 1998. Print.
- [23] *The Talisman*. Ed. Hewitt, David. The Edinburgh Edition of Waverly Novels ed. Vol. 18 B. 30 vols. Edinburgh, Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press, 2009. Print.
- [24] Thompson, Carl. *Travel Writing*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.
- [25] Zaman, Saifuz. "The Edification of Sir Walter Scott's Saladin in *The Talisman*." *Studies in English Literature and Language* 1.8 (2010): 39-46. Web.17. Jan. 2014.