

EASTERN THEMES IN WESTERN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

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Annotation

This thesis explores the representation of Eastern motifs in the works of Western writers through the theoretical framework of Orientalism by Edward Said. The study examines how Western authors portrayed Eastern culture, traditions, religion, and identity in different literary periods. It analyzes the relationship between the East and the West in literature and investigates how Orientalist discourse influenced Western perceptions of Eastern societies. The research focuses on selected literary works in which Eastern themes, symbols, and cultural images are reflected. Particular attention is given to stereotypes, exoticism, and the construction of the “Orient” as represented in Western literature. The thesis also discusses the ideological and cultural implications of these portrayals and evaluates whether they contribute to cultural understanding or reinforce biased perspectives. Using comparative and qualitative research methods, the study reveals that Eastern motifs often served as artistic and ideological tools in Western literary traditions. The findings demonstrate that while some writers presented the East with admiration and curiosity, others reproduced colonial and stereotypical narratives. The research contributes to literary and cultural studies by providing a deeper understanding of Orientalism and intercultural representation in literature.

Key words

Orientalism, Eastern motifs, Western literature, cultural representation, Edward Said, East and West, Oriental discourse, stereotypes, intercultural communication, literary analysis, identity, exoticism, colonialism.

The interaction between Eastern and Western cultures has long been an important subject in world literature. Western writers have frequently used Eastern motifs, themes, and cultural symbols in their literary works to express philosophical ideas, create exotic settings, or explore cultural differences. These representations played a significant role in shaping Western readers' understanding of the East.

One of the most influential theoretical approaches to this issue is presented in Orientalism, where Edward Said explains how the West historically constructed an image of the East based on political, cultural, and colonial interests. According to Said, Orientalism is not only a literary style but also a system of thought that often presents Eastern societies as mysterious, undeveloped, or exotic in comparison with the West. This thesis investigates how Eastern motifs are reflected in the works of Western writers and how these representations relate to Orientalist discourse. The study aims to analyze literary texts that include Eastern cultural elements and to identify the ways in which authors interpreted Eastern identity, traditions, and spirituality. The research also seeks to determine whether these portrayals promote intercultural understanding or reinforce stereotypes about the East.

The relevance of this topic lies in the growing importance of intercultural dialogue and cultural awareness in modern literary studies. By examining Eastern motifs in Western literature, the thesis contributes to a better understanding of cultural interaction, representation, and ideological influence in literary works.

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