Orientalism: have recent developments in the study of Islam gone beyond Said’s seminal critique of ‘Orientalism’?

Fatima Rajina
1 Kingston University London, f.rajina@kingston.ac.uk

Abstract:
This paper undertakes a critical analysis and evaluates the recent developments in the study of Islam and how it has gone beyond Orientalism; as Martin and Ernst remark in the preface and acknowledgements of Rethinking Islamic Studies: from Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism that the last three decades – after the publication of Orientalism in 1978 – “has been a liberating experience for us as scholars initially trained in narrowly textual ‘Orientalist’ approaches, as we have been forced by circumstance to address many issues of contemporary political and social relevance.” However, I will also acknowledge the alternate perspective that these developments may not have gone beyond Said’s Orientalism, but have rather reinforced and maintained - and have “decidedly worsened” - the very ideas Said introduced in Orientalism because of issues such as: Islamic fundamentalism and the aftermath of 9/11, and how the study of Islam has been influenced by these issues in modern times thus returning to the Orientalist approach. I will look at the history of Orientalism in the study of Islam, then the emergence of space for self-representation, and then I will look at the current study of Islam. Esposito argues that Orientalism has taken a new form, and no longer romanticizes the Middle East as having sandy deserts where genies, thieves and evil sorcerers vied after scantily clad princesses amid a backdrop of white palaces and peasant-ridden streets, as presented in the film “Aladdin.”

Keywords: Orientalism, postcolonialism, Islamic Studies, Islam, representation, Muslims, history

1. Introduction
Edward Said introduces ‘Orientalism’ as a discourse, which, through a broadly sociological, economic and historical perspective, is ‘a style of thought based upon an

2 Ibid., viii.
5 Said, E. (1978) Orientalism (New York: Pantheon). In order to make a distinction, I will refer to Said’s Orientalism in italics whereas Orientalism will be referring to the field.
ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident." Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between Orient and Occident as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on. According to Said, the discipline of Orientalism can be defined as a hostile ideology in Western scholarship, which promotes the 'West-and-Islam' dualism, Western superiority, and the idea that others are less human, by nature in order to justify some structured patterns of domination and exploitation. In his book, Said summarises four prevalent dogmas that Western studies of Islam suffer from:

‘First, Orientalism stresses the absolute and systematic difference between the West—which is rational, developed, humane, superior—and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior. Second, abstractions about the Orient, particularly those based on texts representing a classical Oriental civilization, are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities. Third, the Orient is eternal, uniform and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing it from a Western standpoint is inevitable and even scientifically ‘objective’. Fourth, the Orient is something either to be feared, or to be controlled by pacification, research and development, or occupation.’

However, as Esposito has pointed out above, Orientalism has taken a new form, and no longer romanticises the Middle East as having sandy deserts where genies, thieves and evil sorcerers vied after scantily clad princesses amid a backdrop of white palaces and peasant-ridden streets, as presented in the film ‘Aladdin’. Said himself writes in The Nation how a ‘remarkable burgeoning of academic and expert interest in Islam, and, second, an extraordinary revolution in the techniques available to the largely private-sector press and electronic journalism industries,’ and that ‘together these two phenomena, by which a huge apparatus of university, government and business experts study Islam and the Middle East and by which Islam has become a subject familiar to every consumer of news in the West, have almost entirely domesticated the Islamic world.’ In this paper, I hope to evaluate the recent developments in the study of Islam and how it has gone beyond Orientalism; as Martin and Ernst remark in the preface and acknowledgements of Rethinking Islamic Studies: from

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that the last three decades – after the publication of
Orientalism in 1978 – ‘has been a liberating experience for us as scholars initially trained in
narrowly textual ‘Orientalist’ approaches, as we have been forced by circumstance to address
many issues of contemporary political and social relevance.’ However, I will argue that
these recent developments themselves are still prisoners of the pre-Orientalism essentialist
mentality and have thus rather reinforced and maintained - and have ‘decidedly worsened’- the very ideas Said introduced in Orientalism because of issues such as: Islamic
fundamentalism and the aftermath of 9/11, and how the study of Islam has been influenced
by these issues in modern times therefore returning to the Orientalist approach.

Brief History

I will provide a brief history of the study of Islam in the Occident and the main concerns of
the pre-Orientalism era. The study of Islam – historically known as Oriental Studies – in
Western Christendom in the pre-nineteenth century ‘represented the doctrinal unity of
Christendom in its political opposition to Islamic society, a clear social function that
related military and intellectual aggression.’ He argues that this ‘powerful polemic
framework’ took shape when the Christians seized power in Muslim areas, especially in
Spain. The one area where Christians found common ground with the Muslims was on the
topic of Christ:

‘It might most reasonably edify a Christian to understand the great praise of Christ
that is to be found in the Qur’an, and it tended to make them feel better about
Muslims. This praise was often quoted in words very close to the words of the
Qur’an, or in its very words (translated), and sometimes the spirit of it was
successfully conveyed, because the subject was congenial.’

However, it was the absence of miracles, which Prophet Muhammad himself denied the need
for, because of his emphasis on being a mere mortal being as other believers and that he had
not the gift, was used to ridicule Muslims, and, according to Christians, ‘his embarrassed
followers invented miracles in spite of his denial.’ It was the feeling of contempt towards
Prophet Muhammad that left little room for an understanding with Muslims. Here, Norman
Daniel argues that:

12 Ibid, pp. viii.
16 Ibid, pp. 304.
17 Ibid, pp. 305.
‘…in order to preserve a scandalous picture of him unblurred it was often necessary
to prefer a false account to a true one; certainly it was normal to accept as many
false but desirable elements as were believable. If those who should have known
better were perversely malignant, the uninformed were more credulous than
vicious.’

This contempt during the medieval period was further extended to the concept of heaven. In
Islam, heaven, or paradise, could be achieved by determinist ethics as well as through death
in a holy war, which typified the irrationality of the Qur’an to Christians, as the description
is entirely sensual. For the Christians there was a lack of chastity and reason in such
teachings, which are ironic, as history demonstrates that reason came ‘to be used against the
church that made so much of it in the service of cultural unity. Another is that ‘lust’ is a
pejorative no longer much in use in the West, where there is little sympathy for Islamic sexual
restrictions.’

According to Hourani, ‘the first systematic study of Islam and its history in western Europe
goes back to the late sixteenth century.’ He provides the examples of the regular teaching
of Arabic at the Collège de France in Paris in 1587 where ‘the first two professors were
medical doctors, and that is significant of one of the ways in which knowledge of Arabic was
important at the time; the third was a Maronite priest from Lebanon, and that too is significant
in another way, as this was showing the first collaboration between European and indigenous
scholars.’ Daniel, however, argues that it was in the seventeenth century when ‘much more
authentic information became available than had been made so since the thirteenth century.’
It was in 1734 when George Sale published a translation of the Qur’an that, as stated by
Daniel, was ‘the first considerable attempt at an entirely academic judgment.’ Sale
compared and contrasted Islam to Christianity, and asserted the latter is divinity whereas the
former ‘is certainly one of the most convincing proofs that Mohammedanism was no other
than a human invention, that it owed its progress and establishment almost entirely to the
sword.’ One of Sale’s contemporaries, Lodovico Marracci, produced a Latin version of the
Qur’an in 1698 – which was a source for Sale’s translation – consciously harked back to ‘the
medieval tradition’ to which he wanted to give new life to, as he believed that Christian
apologists neglected to attack Islam. Though Sale attempted to provide an accurate

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18 Ibid, pp. 305.
19 Ibid, pp. 306.
pp. 231-232.
23 Ibid, pp. 322.
translation and a reduced level of prejudice in his work, he nevertheless was a product of his society, and produced that which he inherited from his predecessors. It is evident that the scientific study of Islam post-Middle Ages struggled to relieve itself from medieval modes of thought, and continued to reiterate a polemic framework.

The nineteenth and early twentieth century bore witness to a growing number of scholars in the study of Islam, as colonialism enabled an extensive interaction between Islam and the West. This new interest in Islam was ‘closely tied to the political, economic and, most importantly, colonial circumstances of the nineteenth century, during which time a handful of European countries had proceeded to occupy a good part of the Islamic world.’

During the colonial period, colonial officers were sent to the Orient to study the subjects they were ruling over. It was during this period that ‘the completion of the groundwork for the full-fledged establishment of what came to be known as Orientalism—a new set of categories, typologies, classifications, terminologies, and methods of coming to terms with things Oriental and Islamic.’ Orientalists were presenting Islam as a faith that borrowed from others – as was the perception in the Middle Ages, especially stories about prophets’ lives also mentioned in the Bible. For example, Renan attacks Islam in matters of science and philosophy and states ‘we are entirely Greek’; even the so-called Arabic sciences were a continuation of Greek sciences, carried on not by Arabs but by Persians and converted Greeks, that is to say, by Aryans.

This framework ensured Islam and Islamic thought to fail in the Western world, as it lacked ‘originality’.

Furthermore, the pioneers of this field tended to lack objectivity, and the field, according to Norman Daniel, had ‘been infiltrated by subjective ideas of cultural, political and social prejudice’ only to ‘demonstrate the superiority of the Christian faith,’ as I have shown above. It is precisely this assumed religious and cultural superiority of the orientalist tradition in the Occident that Said condemns in Orientalism. Thus one can note how, historically, the study of Islam has been hindered by the problems of prejudice.

Charles Adams, in the foreword of Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies, referred to why there were problems, historically, when studying Islam: ‘historians of religions have failed to advance our knowledge and understand of Islam as religion and that Islamicists have failed

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31 Ibid, pp. 92.

to explain adequately Islamic religious phenomena. However, the Muslim scholar, Fazlur Rahman, for example, believed that it was not the gap between historians and the Islamists, which was the problem in the study of Islam; but the lack of scientific objectivity by the Western scholars is what caused the suffering of the discipline. Citing the problems, Rahman explained that: ‘pre-nineteenth-century Western treatments of Islam suffered from… (religious prejudice), while nineteenth and early twentieth-century scholarship suffered particularly from… (cultural and intellectual prejudice).’ Said discusses the same point – the cultural and intellectual prejudice – and makes a reference to Carl Becker, who argued that Islam is not ‘an ‘original’ religion, but as a sort of failed Oriental attempt to employ Greek philosophy without the creative inspiration that we find in Renaissance Europe.’

Having looked at the brief history of Orientalism, what we can draw from Rahman and Said’s point is that, even in the post-Enlightenment Western scholarship there was a lack of objectivity and, as Vakily states, the scholarship ‘carried an inherent western bias.’ In the Middle Ages, it seems that ‘there were political, even sociological, reasons why Islam should be suspect, and why untrue things should seem more probable than true ones, and be believed. It is quite often apparent that in the Middle Ages there was no interest in Islam itself, but only in inducing some particular state of mind about it in Christians.’ Such prejudices, whether intellectual or cultural, led to the further essentialisation of the Orient and were presented in the Occident as people who lacked ‘the sense of law’ and that ‘anything is possible to the Oriental. The supernatural is so near that it may touch him at any moment.’ Such essentialism, one could argue, has returned to the current study of Islam, especially reinforced by scholars like Bernard Lewis. I will look at this issue in greater detail below; however, in the meantime I will observe how the issue of objectivity was tackled post-Orientalism.

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34 Vakily, A. (2001), pp. 93
One of the key developments: self-representation

The study of Islam pre-Orientalism, especially in the early 70s, carried trajectories such as politics, identity, and inclusion, which played a ‘large role in situating Islam.’

It was during the 70s that the focus was on the migration of the study of Islam out of Middle Eastern studies and into departments of religious studies. When Orientalism appeared, there was a reaction against Orientalism and the ills of colonialism and imperialism, which paved the way for minorities who ‘were seeking equitable, if not preferential, access to academe.’

The minorities wanted to represent themselves, their cultures, and religious traditions, and using Said’s critique of the discipline’s genealogy, one could see that previously the ‘academic study of the Islamic world and the Middle East had always fallen within the purview of white European males.’

It was during this decade that the minorities wanted to minimise the prejudices and achieve a greater extent of scientific objectivity, and they received the support of Wilfred Cantwell Smith. He proposed that ‘scholarly research which concerns a religious community should be verified by member of that community itself.’

Therefore, a statement about religion, in order to be valid, ‘must be intelligible and acceptable to those within,’ not just according to the evidence drawn by the scholars who are non-Muslims. Even Al-Azhar writers believed that ‘the study of Islam can only be done fairly at the hands of Muslims.’

However, does this provide an overall scheme to the overall objectivity or is it further essentialising Islam? Rahman, on the other hand, has argued that the principle of the ‘insiders approach’ does not necessarily entail a universal coherence among all Muslims, as he states: ‘There are many statements made all the time by some insiders that are repudiated by other insiders.’

After the publication of Orientalism, one can see how the study of Islam, though it was gravitated out of Middle Eastern Studies, it nevertheless became increasingly associated with the politics of identity and representation. This can be seen as a development in the study of Islam and moved beyond Orientalism, as Said argued that Orientalism denied Orientals the possibility of representing themselves.

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41 Ibid, pp. 50.
Though, on the one hand, the invitation of proponents of various religions into the scholarly field, and in this case Islam, is commendable and laudable, Richard C. Martin argues that ‘it also indicates the apparent willingness of some religious studies faculties to be more impressed by confessional than academic credentials.’ 49 Charles Kurzman, on the other hand, argues that ‘the critique of Orientalism means a critique of Western treatment of Muslims, both politically (colonialism, imperialism, neo-imperialism) and cognitively (derogatory, essentialising, stereotyping).’ 50 This is further exacerbated because those who do so, including Muslims, ‘do it from a Western standpoint’ and ‘they only ‘count’ as ‘studies of Islamic movements’ if they have the trappings of Western academic discourse, which includes a commitment to the Western project of understanding social movements.’ 51 This argument presented by Kurzman indicates the intrinsic and embedded Orientalism within academia that despite having ‘insiders’ explaining their religion they are having to do so within a specific trajectory that is set by Western scholars.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, in the meantime, provides a different and an alternative approach to the study of Islam, which he refers to as ‘personalist’ or ‘dialogic’ 52 approach. He reminds us that one ought to pay more sensitive and informed attention to the study of Islam, and not provoke objections from the propagators of a normative Islam – as this is another opinion coming from ‘within’ – for ‘any reading of these materials will fail to grasp the faith of Muslims if it yields explanations and interpretations that are not in accord with what Muslims themselves say they mean.’ 53 He asserts that: ‘…where the encounter is between the academic tradition of the West and a particular religion, the statement that is evolved much satisfy each of two traditions independently and transcend them both by satisfying both simultaneously.’ 54 This approach allows one to analyse the received truths, which hold authority and are already established within Islamic studies, but also to incorporate a relation to the reality of the object, which is studied.

Despite the attempts to produce a ‘scientific’ methodology by including the voice of the ‘insiders’ during the 70s, there were, however, aspects of Orientalism within the field. For example, Patricia Crone and Michael Cook’s book, Hagarism, the Making of the Islamic

51 Ibid, pp. 296.
53 Ibid, pp. 9.
World,\textsuperscript{55} reflects the adoption of the medieval methodology, and ‘rejects the evidence of any Muslim about the beginnings of Islam.’\textsuperscript{56} Not using the traditional methods and sources to speak about Islamic traditions not only contradicts the Muslim perceptions and beliefs but it demonstrates the authors’ frivolous attitude towards the subject/s they are studying. However, Rippin argues that Crone and Cook successfully ‘draw attention to the problems involved in the study of Islam’ and that ‘they have not been able to get beyond the limitations inherent in the sources, for they are all of questionable historical authenticity and, more importantly, all are treaties based in polemic.’\textsuperscript{57} Muhammad Abdul Rauf holds the belief that an outsider will inevitably distort the origins of the faith because ‘in the name of being scientific, the origins of Islam are explained as arising out of economic or other cultural phenomena.’\textsuperscript{58} Why is there such distrust towards the Muslim sources? Is it because scholars regard Muslims as objects of curiosity, and not a people in their own right? If one wishes to pursue the study of Islam and wants it to remain a scholarly endeavour with intellectual integrity, then it is necessary and of paramount importance to incorporate the Muslim sources, as the study of Islam would be incomplete without the Muslims’ contribution and will merely reproduce the medieval thoughts and treat Muslims as mere ‘subjects’ without a voice.

As can be noted from above, the politics of identity and self-representation on the part of those who belonged to Islam created another set of imaginings and perceived essences, as these new representatives brought a distinct epistemology based on an ontology of what it means to be colonised and represented by others. What is dangerous about such ‘authentic’ experiences, contrary to Rahman’s position, is that these experiences are not universal, is that they are, unfortunately, ‘labelled ‘universal’ and then neatly applied to other spatial and temporal periods in something that is problematically labelled as ‘Islamic civilisation’.’\textsuperscript{59} On the contrary, Rahman contends that as long as ‘the Qur’an and sunna’ are used and recognised by those studying Islam ‘as normative criterion-referents for all expressions and understandings of Islam,’\textsuperscript{60} then an intellectual understanding and appreciation of Islam is possible, irrespective of whether one is an ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’. Though the academic study of Islam has offered the ‘insiders’ the opportunity to represent themselves; however, it has constructed a set of ideas of how Muslims perceive themselves and construct their identity thus accepting such constructions as essential, which leads to essentialising Islam from ‘within’.

\textsuperscript{55} Crone, P. and Cook, M. (1977) Hagarism, the making of the Islamic World (Cambridge)

\textsuperscript{56} Daniel, N. (1993), pp. 325.


\textsuperscript{59} Hughes, A. (2008), pp. 55.

\textsuperscript{60} Rahman, F. (1985), pp. 198.
The modern academic study of Islam, as I have argued above, emerged out of a distinct academic trajectory – from Oriental Studies to the Middle Eastern Studies – and now, owing to Said’s critique, has become a part of the religious studies departments. However, the apologetic foundation ‘upon which the edifice of Islamic Studies rests’ continues to prevail in the 21st century.

It was an event, not academic in the slightest, that created a change ‘in the ways that Islamicists perceived themselves and were perceived by others, not only inside the academy but also outside of it.’62 The events of September 11th, 2001, increased the public interest in Islam, and the ‘evidence for this includes a new abundance of faculty openings and curriculums in colleges and universities that deal with the Islamic religious tradition’, and as a consequence, ‘Islamic studies as a field in departments of religion in North America has recently become more apparent than in the past.’63 It is interesting to note that ‘Islam did not even have a primary presence in the major professional society for faculty of religion, the American Academy Religion (AAR).’64 The event also led to many specialists in medieval Islamic jurisprudence or philosophy to defend Islam, and suddenly, became experts in ‘Islamic mentalities’.65

Many of the Islamicists and their statements made in the aftermath of 9/11 are not new, and in fact, have emerged from the previous trajectories I examined above. The return to essentialism – that stressed the rhetoric of faith and the ‘insiders approach’ – by modern scholars became a discourse ‘all too easy to rely upon and to invoke with pre-packaged slogans in the aftermath of 9/11.’66 Experts do not invent essentialist ideas and thus start essentialising a discourse from nowhere; it has to be there to begin with. Some examples of such essentialisms include: the need to equate Islam with peace (salām) since both have the same root, s-l-m or many employed binaries, which may be considered outmoded theories of religion, such as that between heterodox/orthodox – this was used to claim that the perpetrators of 9/11 ‘could not have been ‘Muslims’ because something monolithically known as Islam does not condone terrorism.’68 One could argue here that the aftermath of 9/11 led to the return to Orientalist ways of approaching and ‘explaining’ Islam, as the medieval descriptions of Islam as the religion of the sword, Islam is monolithic, violent, and

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62 Ibid, pp. 93.
63 Ernst and Martin (2010), pp. 1.
64 Ibid, pp. 1.
66 Ibid, pp. 96.
68 Hughes, A. (2008), pp. 95.
so on, became prevalent thus reinforcing the very ideas Said argued against in *Orientalism*. This is also stated by Rodinson that the ‘success of political movements under the guise of religion can only encourage a resurgence of essentialism.’

Furthermore, contemporary focus on the field relies on the study of ‘Arabic legal and exegetical texts from the eighth to the twelfth centuries is sufficient to define Islamic civilization in a normative sense.’ The mere study of seminal texts without explaining and linking it to the living context and reality of Muslims, and the Muslim world, is a step backwards and brings the study of Islam to a standstill.

Bruce Lawrence, as cited by Ernst and Martin, has attempted to tackle the association of Islam with evil and violence, and Lawrence states that in Western scholarship of Islam ‘reference to the experience of colonialism and postcolonial struggles’ is missing. Kalin believes that prior to September 11, ‘many academics, policy-makers, and the so-called terrorism experts have repeatedly portrayed Islam as a religion that condones and produces violence on a consistent basis.’ Such essentialist, long-held, and constructed perceptions of Islam were already embedded in the medieval era and have been transported into the 21st century. Kalin further succinctly stipulates: ‘The images of suicide bombers, hijackings, assassinations, street riots and uprisings, which have a profound impact on the European and American perceptions of the Islamic world, inform the coded language of “militant Islam,” and their *raison d’être* is attributed in an astonishingly simplistic way to the religion of Islam or Muslim culture rather than to the particular political circumstances that have given rise to them. In some cases, religious elements have been openly brought into the debate to explain the anti-Western and anti-American sentiments in the Islamic world.’

This manifestation of essentialism where scholars are involved in a political fight to defend their objects they have been studying for decades (e.g. Esposito) could have negative repercussions on the future of the academic discipline. The discipline would then produce essentialisms and generalisations to defend Islam and merely convince others of a hermeneutical Islam thus not providing a critical discourse, which accepts that Muslims do kill in the name of religion, just as other religions have done in the past, e.g. Bharatiya Janata Party in India. The opposite academic reaction to the events came from various scholars, including Bernard Lewis. In his article, *What Went Wrong*, he states that: ‘If the peoples of the Middle East continue on their present path, the suicide bomber may become a metaphor for the whole region, and there will be no escape from a downward spiral of hate and spite.

71 Ibid, pp. 11-12. What is interesting about Lawrence defending such a position is that he published his book in 1998 – this demonstrates how a lot of issues have transferred from the last decade into the post-9/11 world to verify that ‘these people’ have been like this all along.
73 Ibid, pp. 166-167.
rage and self-pity, poverty and oppression.’ For Lewis to reiterate Huntington’s hypothesis of the ‘clash of civilisations’ and that if the people do not change themselves there will be, inevitably, rage towards them demonstrates the resurfacing of medieval prejudices held about Islam, Islam is a monolithic religion, backward, static, and violent. Such comments by a prominent historian and someone who was one of the ‘major influences on George W. Bush’s Pentagon and National Security Council,’ will lead to further essentialisation, as there will be no room for a critical approach to Islam. Also, the politicisation of Islam has led to many scholars ‘expressing concerns about possible governmental interference in their teaching and research, whilst others noted fears of funding being streamed towards specific political agendas.’

**Conclusion**

Having considered the recent developments in the study of Islam and if they have gone beyond Said’s *Orientalism* in detail, one can note that far from representing an eternal and unchanging essence, Islam is an entity that has shifted in meaning as ‘different actors have appropriated it.’ As mentioned above, the lack of objectivity, prejudice – whether religious or intellectual – were the core issues related to the study of Islam; however, are these issues still relevant? The study of Islam may have migrated from different academic departments, but that does not necessarily mean that essentialism was no longer applied in the discipline. As I have argued above, whether it was the notion of self-representation or the events of 9/11, the many essentialist prejudices held pre-*Orientalism*, are still being reinforced causing the critical scholarship of the study of Islam to remain static. In order for the study of Islam to advance, instead of retreating, the discipline needs an unprejudiced approach, and a great need for dialogue and understanding. Moreover, as Carl Ernst remarks, the ‘key to recovering Islamic studies for religious studies is summarised by two words: comparative and critical.’ The comparative dimension will provide the complexity of Islam, which is frequently lost in the persistent belief that Islam, though vast, is generally the same everywhere. In addition, a

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major concern of contemporary scholarship is the association of violence with religion. The reality is far more layered when one confronts the multitude of ethnicities, languages, environments, continents and social patterns of organisation, which manifest throughout any single Muslim-majority country, let alone the entire Muslim world. The politics created by these realities make the study of Islam uniquely challenging and rewarding. The critical approach, according to Ernst ‘takes account of the most stringent recent theoretical tests and methodologies, to elevate this study out of the unselfconscious attitudes of 19th-century positivism that too often characterized Orientalism.’ Only by engaging in the comparative and critical approach will we become more ‘self-reflexive of how and why we have situated Islam as we have done, and as we will no doubt continue to do in the future.’

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References


Ibid.


