

Abstract

European representations of Eastern cultures have always been somewhat coloured by bias. The impact of colonialism and its struggles was articulated by Edward Said in his study of colonial discourse; his book *Orientalism* consists of a close description of the prejudiced and exaggerated way of perceiving the Arab-Islamic world by the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Said's critique of 'Orientalism' will serve as a base for this thesis and thus an overview of the eponymous book will be a necessary starting point for any further discussion. Assumptions about the East held by the West before, during and after colonialism will be described together with major contrasts between the Orient and the Occident centred on notions of 'us' versus 'the other'. The main object of analysis will be images and representations of the Orient in the book *She* by H. Rider Haggard as well as the perception of women in the colonized world, when the Orient is gendered as feminine. Moreover, the focus of this thesis will be on the British Empire and those colonial discourses by which the West stereotyped the East in order to make it on one hand less fearful and domesticated, on the other threatening and a source of anxiety. In addition, the analysis of the novel will be contextualised by examples of orientalist practices in culture and art, where the world of the Orient is shown as exotic, mysterious, alluring and/or 'backward'. This thesis will also consider how persistent Orientalist tendencies still are, for example the scepticism and resentment arising from current Islamophobia and fear of the unknown.

Key words:

Orientalism, colonialism, colonial discourse, E. Said, the Orient, the Occident, H. Rider Haggard