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Abdur Raheem Kidwai, *Orientalism in English Literature: Perception of Islam and Muslims* (New Delhi: Viva Books, 2016), ISBN: 978-81-309-2692-6, Pages: xxii+282

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‘Literary Orientalism’, a fast emerging subgenre of English literary studies, is defined either as ‘the depiction of the Orient/ Orientalism in western literary texts’, or simply as ‘the study of the (*mis*) representation of Islam and Muslims in the English (literary) works’. The field emerged, as is generally agreed, with Edward Said’s path-breaking work ‘*Orientalism*’ (1978). In the field of ‘Literary Orientalism’, one of the prominent South Asian writers is Abdur Raheem Kidwai (b. 1956)—presently Professor of English and Director of UGC Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC), at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh (India), and Honorary Visiting Fellow, University of Leicester (UoL), UK. Having obtained two Ph.D.’s in English Literature from AMU and UoL, Professor Kidwai has written/ published extensively, among others, in the field/ area of English and Urdu Literature and Literary Orientalism, and has been active in the academia since the past three decades.

Some of the previous significant works of Kidwai in the genre of ‘Literary Orientalism’ include: *Orientalism in Lord Byron’s Turkish Tales* (1995); *The Crescent and the Cross: Image of the Orient in English Literature* (1997); *Literary Orientalism: A Companion* (2009); *Believing and Belonging* (2016).

Orientalism in English Literature (2016)—the work under review—is Kidwai’s latest addition to this field. This work—basically a collection of Kidwai’s (already-published) essays and reviews (from 1990 to 2016) on various facets of literary Orientalism—inspects and discusses the image of Muslims and Islam in English Literature through history, and identifies and examines the imperialistic as well as the positive pluralistic perspectives of Islam by the Western world. The Volume, highlighting the theme “of image of Islam and Muslims in English literature” (p. xi), is a modest attempt of “identifying the unfortunate negative portray of Islam/ Muslims in most of the English literary texts and of highlighting and lauding their occasional positive depiction in a few texts” (p. xv).

Literary Orientalism is ‘a new, emerging subfield of English studies’, and thus Kidwai’s work “serves as a window to view the centuries-long, though mostly hostile, relationship between two major world religions and civilizations, the Christian/ Western and Muslim/ Oriental” (pp. xi-xii). It covers, and analyses, various facets of this field, which include Imagology, representation and cross-cultural encounter, stands for the depiction of Islam and Muslims in English literary texts down the ages. On studying the English literary texts which are representative of Literary Orientalism, one comes across “a range of

responses, from sheer hatred and revulsion to demonization, caricature, contempt, ridicule, light-hatred humour, and occasional acclaim, respect and appreciation” (p. xii).

The book consists of 45 chapters, and is divided into two main sections, viz. ‘Articles and Notes’ (chapters 1-19), and ‘Book Reviews’ (20-45), and is preceded by a five page ‘Preface’. All these articles and reviews have been published by Kidwai from 1990 to 2016, in various journals, magazines, and few of them as book chapters as well.

For instance, in essay 1, ‘Perception of Islam and Muslims in English Literature’, Kidwai attempts “to study the image of Islam and Muslims with pointed illustrations from English literature”, from its beginning in the fourteenth century to the early nineteenth century (p. 3). He presents a factual picture of varied approaches of Western writers and their (mis) representation of Islam and Muslims—of Islamic faith and beliefs, culture and customs, law and literature, depiction of women, etc.—through distortion, prejudices, polemical zeal, and other approaches, leading him to conclude that “misrepresentations arise, in the main, from lack of knowledge and communication which precludes any sound understanding” (p. 30).

In the next essays, he presents the Orientalism in: Wordsworth’s poetry, which is “almost nominal” and stands out “for its ambivalence and complexity” in comparison to Romantic writers like Coleridge, Shelley, Southey, Moore, etc. (p. 34); Lord Byron’s ‘Turkish Tales’, which represent “Samples of the Finest Orientalism” (p. 44); “Pulp Fiction or Hate Literature” in the novels of Jean Sasson’s *Princess* (1993) and *Princess Sultana’s Daughters* (1994), which are “representative of such Western literary Orientalism or Crusade propaganda” (p. 101); Muslim society and Modernity in Qaisra Shahraz’s ‘The Holy Woman’ (2001), and ‘Revolt’ (2013): the former vigorously and perceptively studies the “exposure of the traditional Muslim/ rural Pakistani society to a range of ideological, intellectual, socio-cultural, economic and familial challenges posed by late modernity” (p. 123); and the latter is a “laudable, [and] bold attempt at recontextualising the present Muslim society and modernity” (p. 146).

In the remaining essays, Kidwai presents “Perception of Muslims in Balwant Gargi’s *Purple Moonlight*” (1993), an autobiographical piece which “touches on the lives of Muslims in India” (p. 158); “(Un) Veiling (Dis) Honour: Image of Muslim Woman in Indian Writings in English”, as revealed/ depicted in various chapters of ‘Image and Representation: Stories of Muslim Lives in India’, 2000 (p. 165). This section also includes some pieces on bibliographies of Southey’s, Byron’s, and Moore’s “Oriental Reading”, respectively (pp. 182-87, 196-98, & 199-202), and some “Notes” on: “The Outline of Coleridge’s and Southey’s ‘Mohammed’” (pp. 180-81), and “Byron’s Allusion to Zuleika” (pp. 188-89), etc.

In Section 2, ‘Book Reviews’ (chapters 20-45), Kidwai presents a selection of reviews on some important and significant works on various aspects and dimensions of ‘Literary Orientalism’, published from 1993 to 2016. These works are an extension of Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), which “has been developed over the years by a host of scholars, Muslims

included”, and thus “culminating into Islamophobic, hate writings, mostly pulp fiction of our time” (p. 107-8).

Some of the significant works reviewed in this section are: Mohammad Sharafuddin’s *Islam and Romantic Orientalism* (1994); Nigel Leask’s *British Romantic Writers and the East* (1993); Mohja Kahf’s *Western Representation of the Muslim Woman* (1999); Mushirul Hasan and M. Asaduddin’s *Image and Representation: Stories of Muslim Lives in India* (2000); Ahmad Gunny’s *Perception of Islam in European Writings* (2004); Frederick Quinn’s *The Sum of All Heresies: The Image of Islam in Western Thought* (2007); Geoffrey Nash et. al.’s *Postcolonialism and Islam: Theory, Literature, Culture, Society and Film* (2014); and Sophia Rose Arjana’s *Muslims in the Western Imagination* (2015).

One more worth-reading and interesting review is on Masood Ul Hasan’s edited volume, *‘English Poems on Prophet Muhammad’ (2015)*: a valuable anthology containing poems from 14th to 20th century, which is “an insightful, exceptionally rich document of great historical, literary, theological and cultural value”; which “documents the glowing tributes paid to the exemplary character and conduct of the Prophet (pbuh)”, as well as “records the history of his (mis) representation and the gradual realisation of his genius in the West” (pp. 278-9).

All in all, these essays and reviews present an illuminating, interesting, and insightful assessment of literary Orientalism and its various facets, and thus make Kidwai’s *‘Orientalism in English Literature’* an interesting work and a helpful volume for scholars and students of English Literature, Cultural Studies, East-West Relations, as well as Islamic Studies.