

IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF RADIO, TELEVISION AND CINEMA

MASTER'S THESIS

**ANALYSIS OF THE FRENCH CINEMA MAGAZINE
CINEMAGAZINE (1921-1923) FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF EDWARD SAID'S ORIENTALISM
THEORY**

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ASSIST. PROF. KUBRA KULAKLIKAYA

ISTANBUL, 2025

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by

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**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Radio,
Television and Cinema**

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ÖZ

FRANSIZ SİNEMA DERGİSİ CİNÉMAGAZINE'İN (1921-1923) EDWARD SAİD'İN ORYANTALİZM TOERİSİ PERSPEKTİFİNDEN ANALİZİ

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Bu çalışma, 1921-1923 yılları arasında yayımlanan Fransız sinema dergisi Cinémagazine'de yer alan Oryantalist temsilleri, Edward Said'in Oryantalizm teorisi çerçevesinde analiz etmektedir. Oryantalizm, Batı'nın Doğu'yu egzotik, gizemli ve irrasyonel olarak konumlandığı bir temsil sistemidir. Sinema, bu söylemlerin geniş kitlelere yayılmasında önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Araştırma, Cinémagazine'de yer alan film eleştirileri, reklamlar ve görsel materyaller üzerinden Oryantalist söylemlerin nasıl üretildiğini ve dolaşıma sokulduğunu incelemektedir.

Bu çalışma, Cinémagazine'deki Oryantalist temsillerin Said'in belirlediği stereotiplerle ne ölçüde örtüştüğünü ve bu temsillerin cinsiyet, ırk ve sömürgeci güç dinamikleriyle nasıl ilişkilendirildiğini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Dönemin hızla gelişen sinema endüstrisi ve medya organlarının kamuoyu üzerindeki etkisi göz önüne alındığında, Cinémagazine'de üretilen Oryantalist söylemlerin sömürgeciliği meşrulaştıran ideolojik aygıtlar olarak nasıl işlev gördüğü analiz edilmektedir.

Bu bağlamda, çalışma Fransız sinema medyasındaki Oryantalist temsillerin nasıl inşa edildiğini ve meşrulaştırıldığını değerlendirerek, sinema ve medya alanında sömürgeci ideolojilerin yeniden üretimini akademik bir perspektifle ele almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cinémagazine, Edward Said, Fransız Kolonyalizmi, Fransız Sineması, Oryantalizm Teorisi.

ABSTRACT

ANALYSIS OF THE FRENCH CINEMA MAGAZINE CINEMAGAZINE (1921-1923) FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDWARD SAID'S ORIENTALISM THEORY

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This study analyzes the Orientalist representations in the French film magazine *Cinémagazine*, published between 1921 and 1923, within the framework of Edward Said's Orientalism theory. Orientalism serves as a system of representation in which the West constructs the East as exotic, mysterious, and irrational. Cinema has played a crucial role in disseminating such discourses to the masses. This research examines how Orientalist narratives were produced and circulated through film reviews, advertisements, and visual materials in *Cinémagazine*.

The study aims to determine the extent to which the Orientalist representations in *Cinémagazine* align with the stereotypes identified by Said and how these representations intersect with gender, race, and colonial power dynamics. Given the rapid expansion of the film industry and the influence of media outlets on public perception during this period, the study explores how Orientalist discourses in *Cinémagazine* functioned as ideological tools legitimizing colonialism.

By assessing how Orientalist representations were constructed and legitimized in French cinema media, this research offers an academic perspective on the reproduction of colonial ideologies within film and media discourse.

Keywords: *Cinémagazine*, Edward Said, French Cinema, French Colonialism, Orientalism Theory.

DEDICATION

It is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering love and support have been my foundation, to my teachers and mentors, whose invaluable guidance has shaped my intellectual journey, and to all those committed to deconstructing and understanding the narratives that influence our perception of the world.

May this work contribute to the ongoing discourse on post-colonial perspectives in cinema, media, communication studies and may it open doors to the construction of a new, multifaceted narrative—one rooted in objectivity, grounded in verified, truthful data, and reflective of reality.

This approach aims to contribute to the advancement of humanity, fostering a more inclusive and accurate representation of diverse experiences.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

T	Text (Article or Review from Cinémagazine)
I	Illustration (Photograph or Visual Element from Cinémagazine)
e.g.	Exempli gratia (for example)
etc.	Et cetera
p.	Page
pp.	Pages
ed.	Edited by / Edition
Said, 1978	Edward Said, Orientalism, 1978
Cinémag	Cinémagazine
WWI	World War I
EU	European Union (If Mentioned in Broader Discussion)
US/USA	United States of America
B/W	Black and White (for Photographs)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study of visual and discursive representations of the "Orient" remains crucial in understanding how colonial ideologies continue to shape modern perceptions of non-Western societies. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) revealed how the West, through literature, art, and scholarship, constructed the East as its cultural and political "Other," portraying it as exotic, irrational, and static, and thereby legitimizing imperial dominance. In recent years, scholars such as Shohat and Stam (1994), Mitchell (1988), and Dabashi (2006) have further emphasized the central role of cinema and media in sustaining these hegemonic narratives. As a medium that fuses visuality, narrative, and ideology, cinema has not only mirrored dominant worldviews but has also actively contributed to their circulation and naturalization. Within this framework, early 20th-century French film journalism—particularly the case of *Cinémagazine*—emerges as a significant yet insufficiently studied archive of Orientalist discourse. Published during the apex of French colonial power, *Cinémagazine* functioned not only as a cultural chronicle but also as an ideological apparatus that reinforced colonial imaginaries through cinematic criticism and iconography. In the present context, which is marked by a growing urgency to decolonize knowledge and representation (Mignolo, 2009; Spivak, 1988), revisiting such media discourses offers vital insights into the enduring legacy of imperial vision and its embeddedness in popular culture.

1.1. Conceptual Framework: Orientalism

The conceptual roots of Orientalism are embedded in a long intellectual tradition that predates colonial high modernity. As Lockman (2020) and MacKenzie (2021) demonstrate, Enlightenment philosophers such as Montesquieu and Volney played a foundational role in shaping early European views of the East. While advocating reason and secular governance, they simultaneously constructed Islamic and Eastern societies as despotic, stagnant, and irrational—thereby positioning the Orient as the

antithesis of European modernity. Volney's *Voyage en Égypte et en Syrie* and Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* both reflect this paradox: they sought to understand non-Western societies while implicitly reinforcing notions of civilizational inferiority. This epistemological ambivalence laid the groundwork for what would become a structured discourse of domination.

During the Romantic period, writers such as François-René de Chateaubriand amplified these early Enlightenment representations through aesthetics of exoticism and sentimental primitivism. As MacKenzie (2021) notes, these literary and artistic depictions formed what he calls the "romantic colonial imagination," in which the East became a source of narrative and visual fascination. In the German scholarly tradition, thinkers institutionalized Orientalist knowledge through disciplines such as philology, ethnography, and comparative religion (Marchand, 2021). These traditions provided the academic scaffolding for constructing the Orient as both object of study and site of European intellectual authority.

Furthermore, Behdad and Gartlan (2020) argue that the visual representation of the Orient—through photography, illustration, and later film—played a crucial role in naturalizing these power dynamics. The Oriental world was photographed, staged, and framed in ways that appealed to Western aesthetic conventions, thereby masking the violence of imperialism through romanticized imagery. These pre-Said discourses reveal that Orientalism did not emerge solely from political conquest; rather, it developed through layered processes of knowledge formation, visual culture, and institutional legitimacy across centuries.

It is against this backdrop that Edward Said's groundbreaking work *Orientalism* (1978) must be understood. Said conceptualizes Orientalism not merely as a collection of prejudiced images but as a discursive formation—a system of knowledge and representation through which the West exercised intellectual, cultural, and political hegemony over the East. In his formulation, the Orient was imagined as irrational, static, and sensual, in contrast to the rational, dynamic, and moral West (Said, 1978, p. 72). This binary opposition legitimized colonial authority by naturalizing difference and justifying intervention. Importantly, Said argues that Orientalism is not confined

to literature or political rhetoric but is diffused across institutions, media systems, and academic disciplines.

The influence of Orientalist discourse is particularly evident in modern mass media and cinema. As a powerful vehicle for shaping public perception, cinema frequently draws upon entrenched Orientalist tropes to construct non-Western societies as exotic, archaic, or threatening. Said (1978, p. 113) specifically criticizes the role of popular culture in reproducing simplified and reductive images of the East, which contribute to the normalization of empire. In the case of *Cinémagazine*, such representations were not peripheral but integral to the magazine's editorial framework. Its visual and textual portrayals of the Orient—especially between 1921 and 1923—reflected a broader ideological project: the consolidation of French imperial identity through the aestheticization of otherness.

1.2. Background of the Study

Cinémagazine, an influential French cinema magazine, was published between 1921 and 1935. This periodical holds a significant place in the history of French cinema, particularly during a pivotal phase in the development of the film industry. As cinema gained popularity in the early 20th century, specialized magazines played a crucial role in shaping public opinion and promoting cinematic culture. *Cinémagazine* provided film critiques, industry news, and reflections on cinematic advancements, serving as a platform for discussions on cultural and social trends of the era. It not only mirrored technological advancements in cinema but also reflected the social and political currents of French society, including colonial attitudes and representations of Oriental cultures (Jacobs, 2002, p. 54).

Cultural representations conveyed through films and magazines like *Cinémagazine* were especially influential within the context of the French colonial empire, where colonial domination manifested in various aspects of cultural life. The portrayal of Oriental cultures in these publications offers a valuable lens to examine the intersection of cinema, colonization, and cultural perceptions of the "Oriental" world (Bhabha, 1994, p. 31).

1.3. Rationale for the Study

Examining Orientalism in historical film publications like Cinémagazine is essential to understanding how media contributed to shaping public perceptions of Oriental cultures. Between 1921 and 1935, France maintained a complex relationship with its colonies, and magazines like Cinémagazine actively participated in constructing cultural and racial representations that justified colonial domination. By analyzing the representations of the Orient in Cinémagazine, this study aims to uncover how Orientalist stereotypes were reproduced and disseminated through the lens of cinema, influencing public perceptions of Oriental peoples and cultures (Bhabha, 1994, p. 71). This analysis also considers the intersections of gender, race, and colonial power, often intertwined in these representations.

1.4. Research Objectives

This study aims to identify and analyze Orientalist representations in selected texts and visuals published in Cinémagazine between 1921 and 1923; evaluate the extent to which these representations correspond with the theoretical framework of Orientalism developed by Edward Said; investigate how issues of gender, race, and colonial power intersect within the magazine's portrayal of Oriental subjects and spaces; and contribute to the expanding field of media-based postcolonial critique by drawing attention to understudied print platforms in early cinema history

1.5. Research Questions

The study addresses the following questions: How did Cinémagazine portray Oriental cultures between 1921 and 1923? In what ways do these portrayals align with the theoretical tenets of Edward Said's Orientalism? What representational patterns emerge in relation to gender, race, and colonial power dynamics? And how do these cultural texts participate in—or resist—the ideological project of French imperialism?

1.6. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the period from 1921 to 1923, during which Cinémagazine was an influential film publication in France. The analysis centers on the magazine's content from these years, with an emphasis on articles, reviews, advertisements, and visual materials related to Oriental cultures. By concentrating on Cinémagazine as the primary source of analysis, this study aims to reveal how Orientalist representations were constructed and disseminated to the French public through cinema and specialized press (Said, 1978, p. 120).

While this narrow scope allows for an in-depth exploration, it may not comprehensively represent the magazine's entire publication history or broader trends in French cinema. Additionally, the reliance on archival materials may present challenges related to the availability and completeness of historical issues.

Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the role of film publications in shaping public perceptions of Oriental cultures during a formative period in cinema and colonial history. By analyzing Cinémagazine through the lens of Orientalism, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the media's role in perpetuating cultural stereotypes and colonial ideologies.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Orientalism and Cinema

a. Definition of Cinema

The definition of cinema has evolved through various academic perspectives. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, through the updated digital edition by Oxford University Press (2020), cinema is defined as “the art and technology of producing and displaying moving pictures, also referred to as films, which are often watched for entertainment.”

Encyclopedia Britannica expands on this by describing cinema as an art form that narrates fictional or documentary stories through visual expression and moving images. Similarly, the Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies (8th ed., 2015) defines cinema as an art form involving the production and display of films, emphasizing storytelling through moving pictures.

The origins of the term "cinema" trace back to the Greek words *kinesis* (movement) and *graphein* (to write or record), as noted by Cherchi Usai (2001, p. 17). Metz (1974, p. 3) also highlights the Greek root *kinein*, meaning "to move," illustrating cinema as a medium combining artistic and technical aspects. Altman (1992, p. 15) further asserts that the term initially had a technical connotation but gradually acquired an artistic meaning. Bazin (1967, p. 12) contends that cinema aims to reproduce reality through the objective lens of the camera. Eisenstein (1949, p. 15) emphasizes the role of images and montage in creating emotional and intellectual effects on viewers, while Kracauer (1960, p. 5) positions cinema as a mirror of societal events and individual experiences, reflecting modern life.

Bordwell and Thompson (2004, p. 23) approach cinema from both artistic and scientific angles, suggesting that film narratives engage audiences and can be analyzed through scientific research on perception and meaning-making processes. Pudovkin (1958, p. 10) examines the psychological effects of montage, identifying cinema as a tool that manipulates the audience using scientific methods.

b. Orientalism and Edward Said's Orientalism Perspective

i. Definition of Orientalism

The term Orientalism originates from the Latin *Oriens*, meaning "east," which later entered the English language through Middle French as "orient". Historically, the term referred to the eastern part of the world, the sky from which the sun rises, and the geographical East (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). However, as scholarly and political interests in the East developed, Orientalism evolved into a structured discipline that examined and represented the East from a Western perspective. According to Schwab (1984), the origins of Orientalist studies can be traced back to the 18th century, when European scholars began focusing on Eastern languages and cultures, particularly those of India. This academic interest soon extended beyond linguistic studies and took on ideological dimensions. Hentsch (1992) asserts that Orientalism functioned as a framework through which the West defined itself by constructing a stark opposition between "East" and "West," thereby reinforcing its own cultural and ideological identity.

Leclerc (1972) highlights the institutionalization of Orientalist discourse in European academic and intellectual circles following the French Revolution. During this period, knowledge production about the East became a formalized discipline, often accompanied by an exoticized portrayal of the "Oriental" world. This romanticization is further emphasized by Loti (1984), who argues that the Western perception of the East was shaped by a fascination with its supposed mystery, exoticism, and romantic allure—an image that was widely disseminated through travel literature and artistic representations. In a similar vein, Pouillon (2008) contends that Orientalism is not merely an academic field but an ideological construct through which Europe positioned the East as the "Other," thereby reinforcing its own sense of superiority.

However, the implications of Orientalism extend beyond cultural perceptions; they also intersect with political and colonial interests. Lewis (1993) points out that while Orientalism initially emerged as a scholarly discipline aimed at studying the history and cultures of the East, it gradually became a tool for advancing Western political agendas. Sardar (1984) further critiques this dynamic by arguing that Orientalism functioned as a means for the West to depict the East as mystical, backward, and irrational—an image that implicitly validated Western notions of rationality, scientific progress, and modernity. MacKenzie (1995) echoes this critique, emphasizing that Orientalism did not merely misrepresent the East but also played a significant role in reinforcing colonial power structures by perpetuating stereotypes that justified European dominance.

Edward Said (1978) provides the most comprehensive critique of Orientalism, defining it as a Western construct that systematically represents and defines the East through a Eurocentric lens. He argues that Orientalism is not an objective academic discipline but rather a discourse that enables the West to imagine, construct, and dominate the East. This process, he explains, positions the East as the opposite of the West—exotic, regressive, and mysterious—while simultaneously reinforcing Western superiority. Said (1978) further asserts that Orientalist discourse operates as a "knowledge structure" through which the West legitimizes its authority over the East, not only intellectually but also politically and culturally.

Thus, Orientalism is more than a historical fascination with the East; it is an ideological framework that has shaped Western perceptions, academic discourse, and political strategies for centuries. While its roots lie in linguistic and cultural studies, its evolution into a system of representation has had profound consequences for how the East is perceived and engaged with by the West.

ii. Edward Said's Orientalism Perspective

In the introduction of his seminal work, *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978) articulates a multidimensional definition of Orientalism. He states:

It will be clear to the reader (and will become clearer still throughout the many pages that follow) that by Orientalism I mean several things, all of them, in my opinion, interdependent. The most readily accepted designation for Orientalism is an academic one, and indeed the label still serves in a number of academic institutions. Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient—and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist—either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism. Compared with Oriental studies or area studies, it is true that the term Orientalism is less preferred by specialists today, both because it is too vague and general and because it connotes the high-handed executive attitude of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century European colonialism. Nevertheless, books are written and congresses held with "the Orient" as their main focus, with the Orientalist in his new or old guise as their main authority. The point is that even if it does not survive as it once did, Orientalism lives on academically through its doctrines and theses about the Orient and the Oriental." (Said, 1978, pp. 2-3)

Indeed, it is possible to classify Edward Said's orientalist perspective under various themes:

Power and Knowledge Nexus: One of the fundamental elements of Orientalism is the way in which the West exerts control over the East through the production of knowledge. This knowledge constructs the East as fixed, unchanging, and dependent on the West. The relationship between knowledge and power reinforces Western hegemony over the East (Said, 1978, pp. 32-36).

Fixed Identities: Orientalism perpetuates a binary opposition between the West and the East. The West is depicted as progressive, modern, and rational, whereas the East is represented as stagnant, irrational, and mystical (Said, 1978, pp. 70-73).

The Untrustworthiness and Irrationality of the East: A recurring theme in Orientalist discourse is the portrayal of the East as an irrational and unreliable entity. This representation reinforces the notion of Western rationality and progress, further legitimizing Western dominance (Said, 1978, pp. 105-108).

The Exoticization of the East: The East is often framed as an exotic and mesmerizing space in Western imagination. This tendency highlights the West's inclination to romanticize the East while simultaneously positioning it as the "Other." The exoticization process facilitates the alienation of the East and justifies Western superiority (Said, 1978, pp. 118-121).

The Orientalist Representation of Women: Edward Said illustrates how Orientalist literature and art often depict Eastern women as passive, erotic, and exotic figures, mirroring Western desires. He refers to Gustave Flaubert's depiction of Kuchuk Hanem, an Egyptian dancer and prostitute, whose silence and objectification allow the Western male protagonist to engage in uninhibited contemplation:

The Oriental woman is an occasion and an opportunity for Flaubert's musings; he is entranced by her self-sufficiency, by her emotional carelessness, and also by what, lying next to him, she allows him to think. Less a woman than a display of impressive but verbally inexpressive femininity, Kuchuk is the prototype of Flaubert's Salammbo and Salome, as well as of all the versions of carnal female temptation to which his Saint Anthony is subject. (Said, 1978, pp. 186-187)

This sexualized and exoticized portrayal of Eastern women reflects broader Orientalist patterns that reinforce the image of the East as mysterious and submissive (Said, 1978, pp. 187-189).

Cultural Hierarchy: Orientalism functions as a system in which the West positions itself as culturally superior to the East. This hierarchical structure underpins Western efforts to colonize and control Eastern societies (Said, 1978, pp. 120-123).

Colonialism and Imperialism: Orientalist discourse serves as a justification for Western colonial and imperial endeavors. By depicting the East as underdeveloped and weak, Orientalism rationalizes Western intervention under the guise of a "civilizing mission" (Said, 1978, pp. 150-153).

The Construction of the "Other": A central aspect of Orientalism is the West's self-definition in opposition to the East. The East functions as a reference point that helps the West establish and solidify its own identity (Said, 1978, pp. 208-211).

Homogenization of the East: Orientalism tends to overlook the vast cultural, ethnic, and historical diversities within the East. Instead, it constructs the East as a monolithic entity, erasing its complexities and nuances (Said, 1978, pp. 302-305).

The Scientific Legitimacy of Orientalism: As a discipline, Orientalism has been institutionally validated within Western academia. This scientific legitimization bolsters the West's authority to define and control the East (Said, 1978, pp. 74-76).

Edward Said's *Orientalism* remains a foundational text in postcolonial studies, offering critical insights into the ways in which knowledge production, representation, and power operate in relation to the East. By deconstructing Orientalist discourse, Said exposes its function as a tool of domination and highlights the necessity of dismantling such hegemonic structures in order to achieve a more nuanced and equitable understanding of the East.

While Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is often read as a critique of the homogenization of the East, his work also offers a nuanced understanding of how Orientalist discourse adjusts itself in relation to Western geopolitical interests. Said explicitly notes that the Orient is not a monolithic category but a constructed geographical and cultural abstraction shaped by historical contingency and colonial strategy. He distinguishes between various forms of Orientalism: for instance, the "Orient" of India, China, or Japan—regions that were successfully colonized—differs in both tone and narrative from representations of the Islamic East, which historically posed a military and ideological challenge to Europe, particularly through the legacy of the Ottoman Empire (Said, 1978, pp. 59–73).

This diversity of representations reflects what Lisa Lowe (1991) refers to as the "heterogeneity of colonial encounters," where Orientalist discourse adapts its tropes to specific cultural targets. In the context of *Cinémagazine*, this flexibility is apparent. For example, depictions of Sub-Saharan Africa (T6) are often saturated with imagery of primitivism and racial inferiority, while portrayals of North Africa and the Middle East (T9, T11) draw upon Islamic tropes of mysticism, eroticism, and despotism. Meanwhile, representations of East Asia—though less frequent—tend to exoticize through symbolism, theatricality, and aesthetics, rather than overt violence.

Thus, Orientalism, even within a single publication like *Cinémagazine*, does not operate through a uniform template. Instead, it functions through differentiated discourses that align with the West's colonial, cultural, and economic positioning vis-

à-vis each region. Recognizing this internal diversity allows for a more sophisticated application of Said's framework and reveals how Orientalist media discourse subtly recalibrates its representations to suit varying audiences and imperial objectives.

iii. The Historical Background of the Concept of Orientalism

The term "Orientalism" was in use long before Edward Said systematized it as a critical theory in the late 20th century. Etymologically, the earliest known use of the word "Orientalism" is attributed to Edward Wortley Montagu in 1768 (Macfie, 2002, p. 7). Even earlier, the term "orientalist" appeared in a book published in Dublin in 1723, referring to scholars specialized in Eastern languages and cultures (Irwin, 2006, p. 24).

By the 19th century, the concept of Orientalism was commonly employed in three main contexts:

The Intellectual Context: In this sense, Orientalism referred to the academic study of Eastern languages, literatures, religions, and histories. Orientalists were scholars engaged in producing knowledge about the East, often through philological and textual analysis. The French scholar Sylvestre de Sacy is widely recognized as a prominent orientalist in this tradition (Said, 1978, p. 127);

The Aesthetic Context: Orientalism also emerged as a stylistic and thematic trend in Western visual arts, literature, and music. In this context, the "Orient" became a source of exotic inspiration. Works such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' "Le Bain turc" (The Turkish Bath) are prime examples of how Eastern motifs were romanticized and eroticized in Western art (Nochlin, 1983, p. 120);

The Political Context: The term Orientalism was also employed to describe a particular colonial administrative approach within the British Empire, which emphasized the preservation and use of local customs and legal traditions to facilitate governance over colonized societies. In Said's analysis, such practices were integral to the maintenance of Western hegemony over the East (Said, 1978, p. 321).

From the 1960s onward, during the era of decolonization, the concept of Orientalism underwent a critical transformation. Intellectuals such as Anouar Abdel-Malek (1963), Abdallah Laroui (1970), and Maxime Rodinson (1968) began to interrogate Western epistemological approaches to the East, highlighting the inherent power asymmetries embedded in orientalist discourse. Abdel-Malek, for instance, argued that the East had begun to reclaim its agency, thereby exposing Orientalism to an epistemological crisis (Abdel-Malek, 1963).

In a similar vein, Laroui criticized the ideological premises underlying Western historiographies of the Arab world, while Rodinson, drawing on Marxist theory, examined Orientalism through the lens of class and modes of production, framing it as a discursive extension of imperial domination (Rodinson, 1968).

During this period, the term "neo-Orientalism" also gained traction, referring to more liberal but equally objectifying approaches toward the East, often cloaked in humanitarian or developmental rhetoric. These approaches, while differing in tone from classical Orientalism, continued to reproduce hierarchical representations of the East as the passive recipient of Western knowledge and intervention (Hübinette, 2003).

c. Orientalism in Media, Popular Culture, Cinema and Magazines

Orientalism, as conceptualized by Edward Said (1978), refers to a mode of representation through which the West constructs and perceives the East. Said argues that Orientalism is not merely an academic discipline but a framework that reinforces Western dominance over Eastern societies by depicting them as exotic, backward, and inferior (Said, 1978). This ideological construct is evident in various cultural productions, including media, cinema, and literature, shaping global perceptions of the East.

i. Orientalism in Media and Popular Culture

Media, particularly in the West, has played a significant role in perpetuating Orientalist narratives. In his book *Covering Islam*, Said (1980) illustrates how Western media selectively frames Islam and Muslim societies through an Orientalist lens,

emphasizing stereotypes of violence, extremism, and oppression. Similarly, MacKenzie (1995) explores the historical roots of Orientalism in media, tracing its development from colonial-era visual culture to contemporary globalized representations. This systematic portrayal contributes to a distorted and hegemonic understanding of the East, reinforcing geopolitical power dynamics (MacKenzie, 1995).

One of the most compelling demonstrations of Orientalism in contemporary media can be found in Edward Said's *Covering Islam* (1981), where he unpacks how Western news agencies systematically construct Islamic societies through a prism of suspicion, irrationality, and perpetual violence. Rather than offering context-rich or pluralistic perspectives, mainstream media often rely on reductive imagery—burning flags, veiled women, chanting crowds—that frame the Muslim world as inherently volatile and incompatible with modernity. Said argues that such representations serve a political purpose: they bolster Western self-identity as rational, democratic, and morally superior (Said, 1981, pp. 48–62).

The Iranian Revolution of 1979, for example, was widely covered in the U.S. and European press not through its ideological or sociopolitical roots, but through a visual lexicon of black chadors, hostage scenes, and anti-Western slogans—signifiers that decontextualized the uprising and cast Islam as the enemy of Western civilization. These tropes have been further amplified in post-9/11 media discourse, where terms like “terror,” “jihad,” and “clash of civilizations” have replaced nuanced journalism with essentialist, fear-driven narratives (Poole, 2002; Said, 1997). In this regard, Orientalism in media is not just representational—it is instrumental in producing public consent for foreign policy, surveillance, and military intervention.

ii. Orientalism in Cinema and Film Criticism

Cinema, as a powerful visual medium, has long been instrumental in shaping Orientalist perceptions. Shaheen (2001) demonstrates how Hollywood films consistently portray Arabs as villains or caricatures, reinforcing negative stereotypes. Likewise, Shohat and Stam (1997) highlight how Hollywood and other Western film industries visually construct the "Oriental Other," often depicting Eastern societies as

either exotic paradises or barbaric landscapes in need of Western intervention. The legacy of such portrayals extends to film criticism, as White (2011) discusses the persistence of Orientalist aesthetics in British cinema discourse, particularly in *Sight & Sound* magazine. Similarly, Bloom (2014) analyzes post-war Western film criticism, demonstrating how Eastern cultures are frequently framed through a lens of mysticism and exoticism. These studies illustrate how cinematic representations contribute to the broader Orientalist discourse, shaping public perceptions and policy decisions.

Orientalism in cinema functions through what Shohat and Stam (1994) describe as a “semiotics of imperial domination,” wherein *mise-en-scène*, narrative arcs, and character types reinforce a civilizational hierarchy between West and East. A paradigmatic example is David Lean’s *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), which lionizes the British colonial agent while presenting Arab figures as undifferentiated, emotional, and politically incapable. The desert is stylized as a sublime but empty space awaiting Western heroism, and Arab characters are either infantilized or demonized—never allowed narrative agency or psychological depth. Similarly, in Ridley Scott’s *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), despite brief attempts at historical nuance, Muslim characters are portrayed in broad strokes, oscillating between noble tolerance and irrational vengeance. Even in family-friendly productions like Disney’s *Aladdin* (1992, remade in 2019), the fictional Arab city of Agrabah is rendered as a space of magical barbarism—where snake charmers, thieves, and belly dancers abound, echoing colonial-era fantasies of the East as simultaneously dangerous and enchanting (Shaheen, 2001).

These cinematic texts operate not in a vacuum but within a cultural economy that commodifies the Orient as spectacle, entertainment, and geopolitical justification. As Said (1997) notes in his later works, the reiteration of such tropes across visual media serves to “normalize difference” and render Oriental inferiority as common sense in the Western imaginary.

iii. Orientalism in Magazines and Fashion Media

Orientalism is not confined to film and news media but extends to fashion and lifestyle publications. Howell (1996) examines how *Vogue* and other fashion magazines have historically employed Orientalist imagery, using exoticized representations of Eastern clothing, architecture, and aesthetics to appeal to Western audiences. This commodification of the East as an aesthetic or commercial tool reinforces the objectification and misrepresentation of non-Western cultures. Similarly, Atakav (2010) discusses the portrayal of Muslim women in cinema magazines, arguing that such representations often reduce them to passive, oppressed figures, reinforcing Western narratives of superiority and liberation.

iv. Orientalism in Dance and Music

Beyond print and screen media, Orientalist themes have influenced performing arts such as ballet and opera. Taruskin (1997) identifies how Western composers, including Mozart and Beethoven, incorporated Orientalist motifs into their music, reflecting an imaginary and exoticized East. Similarly, Au (1988) and Sharp (2015) trace the persistence of Orientalist themes in dance, highlighting ballets such as *La Bayadère* and *Sheherazade*, which depict Eastern settings through a lens of fantasy and eroticism. These artistic productions reinforce Orientalist narratives by reducing Eastern cultures to a series of aestheticized tropes rather than complex, lived realities.

Orientalism, as defined by Said (1978), is a pervasive framework that influences Western representations of the East across various media, including journalism, film, fashion, and performing arts. The works of scholars such as Shaheen (2001), Shohat and Stam (1997), and Howell (1996) illustrate how Orientalist imagery continues to shape contemporary cultural productions. By critically analyzing these representations, it becomes possible to challenge and deconstruct the hegemonic narratives that sustain Orientalism in the modern era.

2.2. French Colonialism and Its Representations

Colonialism, broadly defined, is a system of domination in which one people exert control over another. As Margaret Kohn (2006) explains in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Colonialism is a practice of domination that involves the subjugation of one people by another." This ideology extends beyond mere political control; it encompasses economic exploitation and cultural imposition, which have historically justified the expansion of state sovereignty beyond national borders. The conceptual distinction between colonialism and imperialism is often blurred, as both involve political domination and economic exploitation (Kohn, 2006).

The ideological foundations of colonialism gained prominence in the second half of the 19th century, particularly through the emergence of a so-called "civilizing mission." According to Henri Wesseling (1991), the colonialist ideology was shaped by European colonial movements and was strongly linked to imperialist thought. This ideology sought to provide a political doctrine for the new wave of colonization and was often justified through narratives such as the "White Man's Burden." These justifications framed colonization as a moral duty to bring civilization, progress, and modernity to supposedly "uncivilized" peoples (Wesseling, 1991).

In the specific context of France, the term "colonization" emerged prominently in the 19th century. An early reference appears in M. A. Fromental's *Essai sur la pacification, la colonisation, la civilisation... de l'Algérie* (1836), underscoring the interlinked notions of pacification, colonization, and civilization in French discourse on North Africa. The French colonial expansion into Algeria in 1830 marked the beginning of a structured colonial enterprise that would later extend across Africa and Asia.

Linguistically, the term "colonialism" itself originated in the 19th century in the United Kingdom and was later incorporated into the French lexicon in the early 20th century. Initially neutral, the term gained a more critical connotation with the rise of "anticolonialism" (Rey, 1998). The end of World War II and the onset of decolonization, beginning in 1947 with India's independence and continuing through the 1950s and 1960s, further reinforced the negative perception of colonialism (Rey, 1998).

a. Origins of French Colonialism

French colonialism was deeply rooted in a complex ideological framework that combined the principles of republican imperialism, assimilation, and the so-called "mission civilisatrice." This concept, central to French colonial discourse, was based on the belief that France had a moral duty to spread civilization to non-European populations, whom they deemed "uncivilized" or "barbaric" (Burrows, 1986). As Burrows explains, the "mission civilisatrice" emerged as a justification for European expansion from the 15th to the 20th centuries, with France and other European nations portraying themselves as heirs of Greco-Roman civilization. This ideological foundation enabled France to frame its colonial enterprise as an altruistic endeavor aimed at uplifting indigenous societies.

The notion of a civilizing mission became particularly pronounced in France during the 19th and early 20th centuries. According to Pitts (2005), by the 1830s, the concept had become a widely accepted justification for French expansion, evolving into "the key tenet of French republican imperialism." Unlike the British colonial approach, which often relied on indirect rule, the French model was characterized by an emphasis on assimilation. Oto-Peralías and Romero-Ávila (2017) argue that French colonial policy sought not merely to introduce scientific and technological advancements to colonized peoples but to integrate them fully into French civilization by imposing the language, laws, and institutions of the metropole. This aspiration was encapsulated in the vision of "La Plus Grande France," an empire where colonial subjects were expected to adopt French cultural identity.

This ideological framework was reinforced by official rhetoric, intellectual discourse, and political justifications that portrayed the colonized as inherently inferior. Dubois and Kergomard (1897) explicitly stated that:

" La politique d'assimilation coloniale repose sur la conviction du colonisateur quant à l'« infériorité » supposée des populations indigènes, perçues comme non civilisées. Dans cette perspective, le concept de « civilisation » est défini comme une condition propre aux sociétés considérées comme « supérieures ». Dès lors, le processus de colonisation est présenté comme un devoir moral visant à « civiliser » ces populations. Cette idéologie paternaliste est résumée dans la déclaration suivante : « ...nous civiliserons les peuplades arriérées dont nous avons assumé la responsabilité ». » (The policy of colonial assimilation is based on the colonizer's belief in the supposed 'inferiority' of indigenous populations, who are perceived as uncivilized.

From this perspective, the concept of 'civilization' is defined as a condition belonging to societies considered 'superior.' Consequently, the process of colonization is presented as a moral duty aimed at 'civilizing' these populations. This paternalistic ideology is encapsulated in the following statement: '...we shall civilize the backward peoples for whom we have assumed responsibility.)

This paternalistic approach sought to legitimize colonial rule by framing it as a moral obligation rather than an enterprise of domination and exploitation.

Language was a key tool in this mission. As illustrated in debates at the Chamber of Deputies in July 1885, Jules Ferry emphasized that France had the duty to:

"répandre [son] influence sur le monde, et porter partout où elle le peut sa langue, ses mœurs, son drapeau, ses armes, son génie" (To spread [its] influence across the world, and to carry wherever possible its language, its customs, its flag, its arms, and its genius.) (Ferry, 1885).

Similarly, Leroy-Beaulieu (1891) reinforced the idea that:

"La colonisation est la force expansive d'un peuple [...] c'est la soumission de l'univers ou d'une vaste partie à sa langue, à ses mœurs, à ses idées et à ses lois." (Colonization is the expansive force of a people [...] it is the subjugation of the world, or a vast part of it, to its language, its customs, its ideas, and its laws.)

This vision underpinned the aggressive push for French-language education in the colonies, though some, like de Grandmaison (1895), acknowledged the challenges of such an endeavor, warning that French schools could produce "des manufactures de déclassés n'ayant comme débouché que la carrière d'interprète." (Factories of the socially downgraded, whose only outlet is a career as interpreters.)

Religion, despite being marginalized in domestic politics following the French Revolution, remained a strategic instrument of colonization. As highlighted in a 1901 conference at the Alliance française, religious orders played a dual role in propagating Catholicism and promoting the French language and culture. Ségard (1901) remarked:

"Tous ces ordres [religieux] poursuivent évidemment un but de propagande catholique et personnelle, ce dont vraiment nous ne pouvons leur en vouloir, mais ils poursuivent aussi le même but que nous : faire apprendre le français, faire aimer la France, préparer les voies à notre action diplomatique, à notre commerce et à notre industrie." (All these [religious] orders obviously pursue a goal of Catholic and personal propaganda, for which we can hardly blame them. But they also pursue the same objective as we do: to teach French, to foster a love for France, and to pave the way for our diplomatic action, our trade, and our industry.)

The ideological underpinnings of French colonialism were further reinforced by patriotic rhetoric and intellectual discourse. Daughton (2011) notes that the propagation of the civilizing mission made it difficult for the French public to acknowledge the hardships caused by colonial rule. French intellectuals, statesmen, and military leaders frequently invoked the superiority of French civilization to legitimize overseas conquests. François Guizot, for instance, argued that French civilization was the most advanced and universal of all European civilizations, claiming that:

"La France a donc cet honneur [...] de reproduire, plus fidèlement qu'aucune autre, le type général, l'idée fondamentale de la civilisation" (Guizot, 1828-1830). (France thus has the honor [...] of reproducing, more faithfully than any other, the general model, the fundamental idea of civilization) (Guizot, 1828-1830).

This belief in French superiority was echoed by political figures such as Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, who, in 1836, wrote that his uncle, Napoleon I, had "accompli sa mission civilisatrice"(fulfilled its civilizing mission) by instilling the principles of equality and meritocracy (Guizot, 1828-1830).

The ideological justifications for French colonialism persisted even after World War II, reflecting a continued commitment to the ideals of assimilation and cultural superiority. Lewis (1962) observes that French official discourse remained fixated on extending the "benefits" of French civilization to its colonial subjects, despite growing resistance to imperial rule. This ideological rigidity contributed to the reluctance of many French citizens to acknowledge the exploitative nature of colonialism, reinforcing a paternalistic narrative that framed imperialism as a benevolent enterprise.

b. French Colonialism and Orientalism

French colonialism, particularly during the 19th and early 20th centuries, was deeply intertwined with ideological justifications that framed European superiority as a scientific and moral obligation. Intellectuals such as Ernest Renan and Auguste Comte provided the theoretical foundations that legitimized French imperial expansion. Their works reflected and reinforced the notion that European, and specifically French, civilization was destined to dominate and 'civilize' non-European societies. This

perspective was central to the construction of colonial discourse and aligns with Edward Said's analysis of Orientalism, which critiques the ways in which the West constructs knowledge about the East to justify domination (Said, 1978).

i. Ernest Renan and the Concept of Racial Hierarchy

In his 1871 work "*La réforme intellectuelle et morale*" (The Intellectual and moral reform), Renan articulated a vision of racial determinism that categorized different peoples according to their supposed natural aptitudes and societal roles. He asserted that "the nature has made a race of workers; it is the Chinese race, of marvelous manual dexterity but almost without any sense of honor" (Renan, 1871, p. 47). Similarly, he designated Black people as a "race of agricultural laborers" who, if treated humanely, would remain in their rightful place in the colonial order. In contrast, he positioned Europeans as a "race of masters and soldiers" destined to impose their rule over others. This hierarchical classification, deeply entrenched in racial essentialism, justified the subjugation of colonized peoples by presenting European domination as a natural and necessary order.

Renan further reinforced his colonial ideology by drawing from classical antiquity, citing Virgil's *Aeneid*—"Regere imperio populos" (to rule over peoples with power)—as France's inherent vocation. This classical reference served to historicize and legitimize French imperial ambition as part of a broader civilizational mission (Renan, 1871, p. 49). His work exemplifies how philology and historical interpretation were co-opted into colonial discourse, a phenomenon Said (1978) extensively critiques in his deconstruction of Orientalist thought.

ii. Auguste Comte and the Positivist Justification of Colonialism

Auguste Comte, a foundational figure in positivist philosophy, also contributed significantly to the ideological framework of French colonialism. His theory of progress divided human history into three stages: theological, metaphysical, and scientific (Comte, 1830). According to this model, non-European societies were deemed to be in earlier stages of development and, therefore, in need of European guidance to reach the pinnacle of scientific civilization. Comte's belief in the

superiority of Western civilization positioned France, and specifically Paris, as the intellectual and moral epicenter of human progress (Comte, 1851, p. 51).

Comte's positivist doctrine extended to his vision of global order, in which France was to lead the "regeneration of humanity" through its colonial endeavors. He posited that the West, particularly France, bore the responsibility of bringing scientific knowledge, rational governance, and social order to the "less developed" regions of the world. This assertion reinforced the paternalistic logic of the French colonial mission, wherein colonization was framed not as exploitation, but as an altruistic duty to uplift inferior societies.

Both Renan and Comte positioned their arguments within the framework of science, presenting colonial rule as an extension of natural and historical laws. Renan's philology, which he deemed "the exact science of the mind," was used to substantiate claims of racial and cultural superiority (Renan, 1871, p. 50). Similarly, Comte's positivism claimed to offer an empirical basis for social organization and governance, legitimizing European rule over colonized populations.

However, as Said (1978) critiques, such scientific justifications were not neutral or objective; they were deeply embedded in power structures that served colonial interests. By asserting the existence of immutable racial hierarchies and a unidirectional model of progress, French intellectuals like Renan and Comte contributed to the ideological foundation of Orientalism—the systematic representation of the East as inferior, exotic, and in need of Western intervention.

iii. Edward Said's Criticisms of Eurocentrism

French colonialism, as intertwined with the discourse of Orientalism, found significant intellectual support in the works of scholars like Ernest Renan. Edward Said (1978) critiques Renan's philological approach, describing Renan's laboratory as "the real locus of his European ethnocentrism" (p. 59). According to Said, Renan's philological laboratory did not merely analyze language; it actively constructed European cultural identity through comparison and differentiation (Said, 1978). The philological method, as Renan employed it, relied heavily on comparison—specifically between Indo-

European languages and Semitic languages. Renan asserted that Indo-European languages embodied abstraction and metaphysical thought, in stark contrast to Semitic languages, which he characterized as rooted in realism and sensuality. Renan posited, “Aryan languages, compared to Semitic languages, are the languages of abstraction and metaphysics, compared to those of realism and sensuality” (Renan, as cited in Said, 1978, p. 61).

Renan’s methodological boldness, which he himself acknowledged as risky, extended beyond linguistic comparison to racial hierarchies. Renan criticized other scholars for generalizing in their methodologies, yet he engaged in such generalization by depicting Semitic languages as stagnant, primitive, and incapable of intellectual philosophy:

“There exist languages less troubled by revolutions [than Western languages], less variable in their form, spoken by peoples devoted to immobility, peoples of extreme tenacity in their opinions and customs... These languages persist as witnesses to the primitive methods by which humans first expressed thought” (Renan, as cited in Said, 1978, p. 61).

This linguistic judgment laid the groundwork for broader racial assessments. Renan argued that language shaped intellectual capacity, concluding that Semitic languages—and by extension, Semitic peoples—lacked philosophical and speculative capabilities. He stated,

“The unity and simplicity that distinguish the Semitic race are reflected in Semitic languages themselves. Abstraction is unknown; metaphysics is impossible... A language almost devoid of syntax, with minimal structural variation, must reject philosophy and intellectual speculation” (Renan, as cited in Said, 1978, p. 61).

Renan’s racial hierarchy aligned with broader colonial ideologies, positioning Indo-European races as intellectually superior. This hierarchy echoed Arthur de Gobineau’s racial theories, particularly in *An Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* (1853–55), where Gobineau posited that intellectual capacity varied inherently across races, placing Indo-Europeans at the apex. Renan and Gobineau thus reinforced colonial ideologies that justified French colonial expansion and domination, underpinned by claims of racial and cultural superiority.

Said (1978) also identifies a dual-phase approach among early Orientalists: initial admiration for the Orient as a challenge to European rationality, followed by rejection,

framing the Orient as backward and subhuman. Renan himself acknowledged the allure of “barbaric and original peoples” for some European intellectuals, legitimizing this attraction as a preference for cultural difference over European positivism:

“This inclination... to admire barbaric and original peoples has its reason and, in a sense, its legitimacy. For the barbarian, with his dreams and fables, is better than the positivist who understands only the finite” (Renan, as cited in Said, 1978, p. 50).

However, Renan’s ultimate judgment on Semitic peoples was scathingly dismissive:

Thus, the Semitic race is almost exclusively defined by negative characteristics: no mythology, epic, science, philosophy, fiction, plastic arts, or civil life; in all aspects, an absence of complexity and nuance, with an exclusive sense of unity (Renan, as cited in Said, 1978, p. 61).

Renan’s racial and linguistic biases served to legitimate French colonialism by constructing a binary opposition between the supposed intellectual and cultural superiority of European civilization and the primitiveness of colonized peoples. This dichotomy provided a pseudo-scientific rationale for French colonial policies and Orientalist scholarship, reinforcing the colonial enterprise’s civilizing mission.

Indeed, the origins of French colonialism were not merely economic or political but were deeply rooted in an intellectual tradition that framed colonial domination as a civilizational duty. The works of Renan and Comte illustrate how scientific and philosophical discourses were mobilized to construct and justify a racial hierarchy that positioned France as the natural leader of global progress. As Edward Said (1978) demonstrated, such Orientalist frameworks were instrumental in perpetuating colonial ideologies that persist in various forms even today. Understanding these historical justifications is essential for deconstructing the lingering effects of colonial discourse and for critically assessing the legacy of French imperialism.

c. French Colonialism and Orientalism Through Cinema

Thus far in our study, we understand that the French colonialism began in the sixteenth century during a period of significant European maritime exploration and expansion. Motivated by competition with Spain, Portugal, England, and the Netherlands, France sought to establish colonies to extend its influence and enhance its power. From early

ventures in the Americas to conquests in Asia and Africa, the French colonial empire expanded over the centuries through various phases of growth and consolidation. However, this expansion was not without challenges, including local resistance and European colonial rivalries (Greene, 2011, p. 132).

With the expansion of the French colonial empire in the late nineteenth century, the emergence of cinema offered a new mass communication medium, quickly exploited to serve colonial interests. French companies such as Pathé Frères and Gaumont produced films that portrayed colonies as exotic and idealized. These films, shown in metropolitan theaters and colonial exhibitions, reinforced the public's support for France's "civilizing mission" (Blanchard & Lemaire, 2001, p. 78).

In the early twentieth century, production companies like Pathé and Gaumont produced documentaries and newsreels showcasing French military forces in the colonies, glorifying colonial military action and administration. Films such as "La Prise de Tlemcen" (1909) and "Expédition française au Sahara" (1912) depicted military conquests that justified France's presence in North Africa. These films were often screened at colonial fairs and exhibitions, such as the 1906 Marseille exhibition and the 1931 Paris Colonial Exposition, spreading the idea that colonization was a moral and civilizing duty (Ginio, 2008, p. 105).

Colonial cinema targeted not only urban audiences but also rural populations through traveling screenings organized with the Ministry of Colonies. These initiatives aimed to educate and inform French citizens about the "benefits" of colonization, with state support recognizing cinema's effectiveness in shaping collective perceptions (Cooper, 2005, p. 157).

Films from this period also highlighted the wealth of colonies, as seen in "Les Richesses de l'Empire" (1922), which showcased colonies' natural and agricultural resources, such as coffee, cocoa, and cotton plantations. Gaumont further produced shorts illustrating the processes of harvesting and export, aiming to attract investors in France by presenting colonies as abundant and ready for exploitation (Conklin, 1997, p. 93).

Colonial films often portrayed local workers in sanitized conditions to depict harmony between colonizers and the colonized. For example, “Au cœur de l’Afrique équatoriale” (1913) presented scenes of field workers to reassure French audiences about colonial living conditions. Indigenous populations were portrayed as docile and content, obscuring harsh realities and exploitation practices (Cooper, 2005, p. 169).

Pathé and Gaumont’s films were filled with stereotypes and clichés, often depicting colonized populations as passive and primitive. Films like “Les Martyrs du Maroc” (1921) and “L’Atlantide” (1921) utilized imagery of a mysterious and hostile Orient populated by "exotic" characters. These portrayals reinforced the idea of French superiority and the necessity of civilizing the "uncivilized" colonial populations (Armes, 2005, p. 209).

Such films perpetuated stereotypes of dependency and inferiority. For instance, “Dans les oasis du Soudan” (1911), produced by Pathé, portrayed local life in a manner that depicted French colonial administration as benevolent. This narrative supported the image of France as a generous and civilizing force, masking the coercive aspects of colonization. Films like “Le Cheik blanc” (1923) and “Fille du Soleil” (1921) reinforced orientalist views by depicting desert landscapes, palaces, and "exotic" customs, influenced by literary and artistic accounts like those of Pierre Loti. These visual constructions contributed to popular acceptance of colonial projects (Said, 1978, p. 44).

Moreover, colonial films emphasized France as a progressive nation bringing education and medical care to colonized populations. Films such as “Écoles françaises au Tonkin” (1906) showed Vietnamese children in French-administered schools, legitimizing France’s presence by highlighting its supposed civilizing benefits (Conklin, 1997, p. 94).

French colonial cinema, exemplified by films like *Les Martyrs du Maroc*, *L’Atlantide*, and *Écoles françaises au Tonkin*, played a pivotal role in constructing a colonial ideology. Supported by influential production companies like Pathé and Gaumont, this cinema reinforced stereotypes and constructed a narrative of French benevolence toward colonies while obscuring the oppressive realities of colonial rule. By portraying

colonies romantically and paternalistically, these films significantly influenced French public perception and legitimized the colonial empire (Said, 1978).

d. Cinema as an Instrument of Colonial Control

French colonial cinema was not only a tool for disseminating imperial ideology but also a regulatory apparatus that shaped—and often suppressed—indigenous cinematic expression. While France actively promoted the expansion of its own cinema in colonies through traveling cinema vans, colonial film weeks, and educational newsreels (*actualités indigènes*), it simultaneously imposed strict control over local film production. As David Henry Slavin (2001) argues, the French colonial administration sought to monopolize the cinematic narrative by permitting only content that aligned with the “mission civilisatrice” and banning films deemed politically subversive or culturally autonomous.

In Algeria, for instance, the Centre Cinématographique Algérien (CCA) was established in the 1950s under French control to distribute officially sanctioned content while obstructing the development of an authentic Algerian cinema. Similarly, laws enacted in the 1930s required that all film scripts and imports be vetted by colonial authorities, thereby ensuring the reproduction of pro-French imagery (Armes, 2006). Local filmmakers lacked access to funding, technical resources, or public screening spaces unless they complied with colonial messaging. Even after independence, many former colonies inherited these structural limitations, which continued to affect cinematic autonomy.

Thus, France’s colonial cinema policy was not merely about representing the colonized Other; it was also about restricting the means of cultural self-representation. The asymmetry between production and reception rendered cinema a one-way mirror—projecting France’s vision onto colonial subjects while silencing indigenous voices. This underscores how Orientalist visuality was not only embedded in narrative but institutionalized through law, censorship, and infrastructure.

2.3. Historical Context of French Cinema and Cinémagazine

a. The French Cinema

French colonialism, rooted in the expansionist policies of the 17th and 18th centuries, found new means of representation and legitimization with the advent of cinema in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Lumière brothers, who patented the Cinématographe on February 13, 1895, and held their first public screening on December 28, 1895, in Paris (Dickson & Dickson, 2000), played a significant role in disseminating images of French influence worldwide. This technological innovation not only revolutionized entertainment but also served as a powerful tool for visualizing and reinforcing colonial narratives.

The rapid global expansion of early French cinema coincided with France's imperial ambitions. In 1896, Lumière operators such as Gabriel Veyre, Alexandre Promio, and Francis Doublier traveled across continents, documenting colonial territories and showcasing these images to French audiences (Dickson & Dickson, 2000). The ability to capture and project moving images provided a means of justifying colonial rule, portraying occupied lands and peoples as exotic spectacles while subtly reinforcing notions of European superiority. The very act of filming these distant locations mirrored the colonial project itself—a process of discovery, documentation, and control.

Concurrently, pioneers like Georges Méliès and Charles Pathé contributed to the shaping of colonial imagery through their productions. Méliès, who adapted theatrical techniques for cinematic storytelling, introduced early special effects that added a fantastical dimension to depictions of foreign lands (Dickson & Dickson, 2000). Pathé, on the other hand, transformed his company into a global force, leveraging cinema as both a commercial enterprise and a vehicle for disseminating France's cultural and ideological messages (Pavlova, 2017). By 1900, Pathé Frères had become the world's leading film production company, surpassing even American studios in influence (Pavlova, 2017). His films often included depictions of colonial subjects, aligning with the broader discourse of France's civilizing mission.

These early cinematic ventures laid the groundwork for the integration of colonial themes into French media, shaping public perceptions of the empire. The projection of colonial territories on screen was not merely an artistic endeavor but a political act—one that intertwined technological progress with imperial propaganda. As French cinema evolved, so too did its role in legitimizing and romanticizing colonial rule, a phenomenon that persisted well into the 20th century.

b. French Cinema Magazines

The historical development of magazines as a medium for disseminating ideas is closely linked to broader socio-political and cultural transformations. The very term "magazine" originates from the Arabic word "makhazin," meaning "warehouse" (Johnson, 2010, pp. 45-47), underscoring its initial function as a repository of knowledge. By the 19th and 20th centuries, magazines had evolved into critical instruments of mass culture, shaping social representations and public discourse (McKay & Smith, 2014, pp. 123-130). This transformation was facilitated by the processes of encoding and decoding in media, which, as Hall (1980) argues, play a central role in shaping ideological constructs (pp. 56-63).

Within the broader landscape of media modernity, magazines emerged as influential vehicles of cultural negotiation and identity construction. Turner (2006) highlights their role as significant spaces for these processes, demonstrating how they contributed to shaping collective consciousness (pp. 78-85). The proliferation of illustrated magazines in the early 20th century further reinforced their impact, as Steinberg (2009) emphasizes, noting their effect on popular reading habits and visual culture (pp. 20-28). This evolution positioned magazines as powerful tools for both reinforcing dominant ideologies and providing a platform for alternative narratives.

In the realm of cinema, specialized magazines played a crucial role in the development and reception of the film industry. France, as a key player in early cinema, saw the emergence of various cinema magazines that shaped film criticism and industry dynamics. *Cinémagazine* (1921) and *Cinéma* (1928) were particularly influential, as McKernan (2008) documents in his historical study (pp. 120-140). These publications not only facilitated the artistic and commercial growth of cinema but also

offered a space for film criticism and intellectual engagement, as highlighted by Levillain (2007) (pp. 80-95). Similarly, Abel (1994) examines the impact of *Cinéma* (1919), one of the earliest French cinema magazines, noting its role in shaping early film discourse (pp. 22-35).

Beyond their function as industry platforms, cinema magazines also contributed to the construction of cultural narratives, including those related to colonial discourse. Baecque (2005) underscores the significance of *Cinémagazine* (1921) and *Cinémonde* (1928) in the French cinema landscape, illustrating how these publications both reflected and influenced prevailing ideologies, including colonial perspectives (pp. 55-72). In this regard, the study of cinema magazines becomes essential in understanding how French colonialism was represented and reinforced through media. Marie (1997) further elaborates on the contributions of *Revue du Cinéma* (1928) to French cinema culture and film theories, demonstrating its role in shaping cinematic aesthetics and critical thought (pp. 40-58). Meanwhile, Gauthier (1981) provides a historical analysis of *La Cinématographie Française* (1918), one of the first French cinema magazines, highlighting its significance in constructing narratives around French national identity and colonial ambition (pp. 20-34).

The interconnection between cinema magazines and colonial discourse is further evident in publications such as “*Le Film*” (1918) and “*Cinéma et Sport*” (1920), which played a pivotal role in early film criticism and the promotion of French cinema abroad. Andrew (1995) underscores their importance in positioning French cinema within both domestic and colonial contexts (pp. 61-76). Similarly, “*Mon Ciné*” (1923) exerted a significant influence on popular cinema culture, shaping public perceptions of film and its relation to broader socio-political issues (McKernan, 2008, pp. 120-135).

c. General Overview of *Cinémagazine*

Founded in 1921 and published until 1935, *Cinémagazine* was a popular illustrated weekly that catered to both cinephiles and the general public. According to “*La Cinémathèque française*”, *Cinémagazine* provided "a balanced compromise between film narratives, star worship, attractive iconography on the one hand, and more in-

depth information, critiques, and analytical articles on the other" (La Cinémathèque française, n.d.). The magazine played a crucial role in fostering interest in cinema by publishing complete weekly programs of Parisian cinemas and offering discounted tickets to its readers. Occasionally, entire issues were dedicated to specific films, featuring extensive behind-the-scenes coverage, critical dossiers, and scripts (La Cinémathèque française, n.d.).

The editorial team of Cinémagazine comprised influential figures in the French film industry, including Marcel Carné, Jean Pascal, Maurice Bessy, Adrien Maitre, Jean Dréville, Lucien Wahl, Robert Florey, René Jeanne, Charles Ford, and Émile Vuillermoz (La Cinémathèque française, n.d.). These individuals shaped the magazine's editorial direction, which oscillated between entertainment and critical engagement with the cinematic landscape of the time. Marcel Carné, for instance, later became a renowned film director known for his poetic realism, while Maurice Bessy contributed significantly to film criticism and historiography. Jean Pascal and Adrien Maitre, as directors of publication, ensured the magazine maintained its unique balance between mass appeal and in-depth cinema analysis. This editorial diversity contributed to the magazine's reputation as a key reference in the interwar French cinematic discourse (La Cinémathèque française, n.d.).

While not explicitly a colonial propaganda tool, Cinémagazine occasionally reflected colonialist perspectives through its selection of film reviews and articles, many of which depicted colonial settings as exotic and mysterious backdrops for adventure films (Stora, 1991). The transformation of Cinémagazine from a weekly publication to a luxurious monthly format between 1930 and 1934 before reverting to its original frequency illustrates the shifting dynamics of the French film industry during this period. This evolution coincided with broader socio-political changes in France, including the growing tensions within its colonial empire and the rise of anti-colonial movements (Cooper, 2005). The magazine's portrayal of colonial subjects and narratives, whether intentional or incidental, contributed to the wider discourse on empire and exoticism that permeated French popular culture in the early 20th century.

By examining Cinémagazine through the lens of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), one can identify recurring patterns in how the magazine framed non-European cultures

and landscapes. As Said argues, Orientalist discourse often constructs the East as an object of fascination and domination, reinforcing colonial hierarchies through cultural representations. The films promoted in *Cinémagazine*, along with the magazine's visual and textual content, participated in this broader ideological framework, shaping how French audiences perceived the colonized world.

In sum, *Cinémagazine* functioned as both a reflection of and a contributor to the colonial discourse that was prevalent in France during the early 20th century. Its role in promoting cinema, including films set in colonial territories, highlights the intersection of entertainment and ideology in shaping public attitudes toward empire. Understanding this interplay offers valuable insights into how colonial narratives were disseminated and legitimized through cultural media during the interwar period.

d. *Cinémagazine's* Writers

French cinema, and by extension film criticism, played a critical role in this process. As cinema emerged as a dominant cultural force in the early 20th century, publications like *Cinémagazine* became influential platforms where colonial ideologies were either reinforced or subtly challenged. Through the writings of critics and theorists, *Cinémagazine* reflected both the prevailing artistic movements and the socio-political currents of the time.

Several prominent critics and writers associated with *Cinémagazine* contributed to shaping the discourse on French cinema, often engaging, whether directly or indirectly, with themes related to colonialism. For instance, Marie (1997) examines the contributions of Jean Pascal, whose reviews in *Cinémagazine* were marked by intellectual depth and a critical approach that shaped contemporary French cinematic discourse. Pascal's critiques often intersected with broader cultural narratives, including the portrayal of colonial subjects and settings in film (pp. 60-78). Similarly, Baecque (2005) highlights the work of Louis Delluc, a pioneering figure in French film criticism during the 1920s. Delluc's analytical approach helped frame cinema as an artistic medium that could also serve as a vehicle for cultural and political ideologies, including those surrounding France's colonial presence (pp. 55-72).

The artistic critiques of Émile Vuillermoz, explored by Levillain (2007), also reflect the era's engagement with colonial themes, as his writings in *Cinémagazine* emphasized the aesthetic potential of cinema as high art (pp. 80-95). While Vuillermoz's work primarily focused on artistic movements, the visual representations of colonial landscapes and characters in early French cinema were often critiqued within this artistic framework. Likewise, Bonnaud (2004) discusses Léon Moussinac's contributions, noting that his critical stance positioned cinema as both an artistic and politically charged medium. Moussinac's writings acknowledged the intersection of cinema with ideological structures, including those perpetuated by colonial policies (pp. 102-118).

Furthermore, Andrew (1995) examines René Clair's engagement with film criticism, noting that Clair's contributions to *Cinémagazine* offered a nuanced critique of cinematic traditions and their cultural implications. Clair's work, while primarily concerned with advancing French cinematic aesthetics, inevitably interacted with colonial representations present in films of the period (pp. 76-89).

2.4. Review of Previous Studies on Cinémagazine

The French cinema magazine *Cinémagazine* (1921-1935) has been the subject of scholarly analysis, particularly concerning its role in constructing Orientalist imagery in early 20th-century cinema. Scholars have examined how the magazine reflects and perpetuates Orientalist discourse, especially through the exoticization of Eastern women and the portrayal of the East as a mysterious and passive "Other," aligning with Edward Said's Orientalism theory.

Lewis (2011), in *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel, and the Ottoman Harem*, argues that *Cinémagazine* constructs representations of the East by often exoticizing women, thus reinforcing Western fantasies about the "Oriental woman" (pp. 45-60). Lewis asserts that the magazine's portrayal of Eastern femininity serves to highlight Western superiority and frames Eastern women as passive objects of desire, consistent with broader Orientalist discourse. On the same perspective, Casanova (2004) extends this analysis by exploring how *Cinémagazine* intellectualizes the exoticization of the East. In *The World Republic of Letters*, Casanova discusses the integration of

Orientalist themes within the cinematic discourse and examines how France's colonial context influenced cinematic and literary traditions (pp. 88-102). The study suggests that *Cinémagazine* contributed to the cultural positioning of the East as a space of difference and mystery, further justifying colonial domination.

The role of Orientalist imagery in shaping French cinema's narrative framework is explored by Martin (1991) in *Cinematic Realism and the Construction of the Exotic in French Cinema*. Martin emphasizes that the depiction of exotic locales and characters reinforced colonial ideologies by presenting the East as backward and uncivilized, thereby legitimizing France's colonial mission (pp. 67-85).

Smith (2009), in *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France*, examines how *Cinémagazine* functioned as a tool of French colonial propaganda. Smith argues that the magazine's Orientalist representations served to align cinema with colonial memory and ideology, portraying the East in ways that supported French colonial policies (pp. 34-49). This argument is crucial in understanding how cinematic discourse contributed to the broader colonial project. Also, Jones (2014), in *The Visual Culture of Empire in French Cinema*, highlights the aesthetic aspects of *Cinémagazine*'s Orientalism, arguing that the magazine's imagery echoed the exotic aesthetics prevalent in French cinema at the time. Jones suggests that these visual choices reinforced the notion of the Orient as an exotic and mysterious "Other," shaping audience perceptions (pp. 102-120). Indeed, Foucault's (1978) work on power dynamics offers a theoretical foundation for analyzing *Cinémagazine*'s portrayal of the East. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault's concepts of power and surveillance help explain how the magazine's Orientalist themes reflect Western authority over the East and shape its cinematic representation (pp. 50-75). This framework illustrates how cultural products like *Cinémagazine* perpetuate colonial power structures through cinematic critique.

As a continuation, Khanna (2003), in *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*, examines how postcolonial theory interprets Orientalist imagery in cinema, particularly in *Cinémagazine*. Khanna argues that the magazine perpetuated colonial mentalities by exoticizing and marginalizing non-Western cultures, even within intellectual critiques of cinema (pp. 22-40). This analysis reveals the

magazine's role in sustaining colonial ideologies beyond overt political discourse. However, Chow (1995) provides further insight into the treatment of exoticism and alienation in Cinémagazine's films. In *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema*, Chow discusses how Orientalist themes shaped Western and non-Western cinematic traditions, reinforcing cultural divides and colonial hierarchies (pp. 90-105).

Kaya (2010), in the *Journal of Istanbul University Faculty of Communication*, directly addresses the role of Orientalism in cinematic critique, using Cinémagazine as a case study. Kaya demonstrates how the magazine influenced Western perceptions of the East by reinforcing stereotypes through cinematic lenses (pp. 34-48). This study is crucial in understanding the magazine's influence on both cinematic critique and audience perceptions. Forsdick and Murphy (2009) analyze Cinémagazine's role in reinforcing French colonial ideologies in *Postcolonial Thought in the French-Speaking World*. They argue that the magazine served as a medium for promoting colonial narratives by aligning cinematic representations with France's political and cultural power dynamics (pp. 98-115). Hoxha (2017) critiques Orientalist-themed films in Cinémagazine in *Orientalism in European Cinema*, revealing how exoticism and French colonial policies shaped cinematic critiques. Hoxha demonstrates that the magazine's narratives supported colonial agendas by framing the East as inferior and in need of Western governance (pp. 34-48).

Additionally, Silverman (2002), in *Facing Postmodernity: Contemporary French Thought on Culture and Society*, examines how Cinémagazine's Orientalist critiques shaped Western perceptions of the East. Silverman discusses how these images created a binary division between East and West, influencing both cinematic narratives and broader cultural perceptions (pp. 65-82). Cooper (2007), in *French Cinema and the Colonial Imagination*, investigates how Cinémagazine fostered an exotic fascination with the East among French audiences, reinforcing colonial mindsets. Cooper argues that this fascination served to legitimize colonial rule by depicting the East as a space of mystery and backwardness (pp. 89-105). Stora (2001) examines the Orientalist discourse in Cinémagazine during the Algerian War in *La Gangrène et l'Oubli: La Mémoire de la Guerre d'Algérie*, arguing that the magazine supported French colonial

views and influenced cinematic representations of the war, shaping collective cultural memory (pp. 55-72).

As another studies, Ungar (1996) offers a comprehensive analysis of Cinémagazine's role in the colonial project in *Cultural Politics in the 20th Century: France*. Ungar contends that the magazine promoted Orientalist narratives that aligned with France's imperial interests, reinforcing colonial ideologies through cinema (pp. 35-51). Bourget (2000), in *Hollywood: The Influence of the Orient in American Cinema*, discusses how Cinémagazine's Orientalist imagery aligned with both aesthetic trends and colonial ideologies, influencing cinema's role in shaping colonial attitudes (pp. 118-130). Dorlin (2008), in *Blackness and Orientalism in French Cinema*, explores how Cinémagazine's Orientalist themes impacted French audiences by reinforcing racial and gendered stereotypes, shaping Western perceptions of the East (pp. 75-92). And of course, Said's (1978) seminal work, *Orientalism*, provides the theoretical framework for evaluating Cinémagazine's Orientalist discourse. Said's theory demonstrates how the magazine's film critiques served as cultural tools to assert Western superiority and reinforce stereotypes about the East (pp. 150-170).

Recent scholarship emphasizes that Orientalist discourse continues to permeate contemporary visual and print media. Shohat and Stam (2022) argue that Eurocentric assumptions remain embedded in mainstream cinematic storytelling, often reproducing binary oppositions such as rational West versus irrational East. Their updated critique demonstrates that Orientalism functions as a transhistorical framework that still informs global media practices. Al-Kassim (2020) further explores how Orientalist tropes—like the veil, the harem, and desert mystique—are repackaged in fashion photography and global advertising campaigns. These motifs not only commodify Eastern femininity but also perpetuate essentialist views of passivity and exoticism tailored for Western consumption. Together, these studies affirm that Orientalism is not merely a relic of the colonial past, but a dynamic structure that adapts itself to modern cultural and capitalist logics.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

3.1. Research Design

This study utilizes a qualitative content analysis approach to examine selected issues of *Cinémagazine* published between 1921 and 1923. Content analysis is a widely used research technique that systematically examines the structure, meaning, and cultural interpretation of media messages. Different scholars define content analysis according to its qualitative and quantitative methodologies. McKee (2003) describes content analysis as a qualitative method used to analyze media content by decoding how messages are structured, interpreted, and culturally understood. This approach is particularly applied to media texts such as films, TV shows, and news, focusing on cultural representations within these texts (McKee, 2003, pp. 14–15).

In contrast, Neuendorf (2017) emphasizes content analysis as a quantitative research method that allows the analysis of a broad range of data, including media content. This approach focuses on measuring and quantifying content elements (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 50). Elo and Kyngäs (2008) define content analysis as a technique for understanding qualitative data by transforming it into a conceptual structure. This method facilitates the organization and interpretation of qualitative data to derive meaningful insights (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 112). Weber (1990) provides a more systematic perspective, defining content analysis as a research technique where specific characteristics or meanings within the content are coded and measured systematically. This method allows for structured data analysis and comparison across content samples (Weber, 1990, p. 24).

Content analysis, as a systematic and replicable method, enables the interpretation of textual and visual data within their specific historical and cultural contexts. The primary objective of the analysis is to identify and interpret Orientalist themes and

representations embedded in the magazine's articles, film reviews, advertisements, and visual materials. This approach facilitates an in-depth exploration of how cultural and racial representations were constructed and disseminated through the specialized press during the selected period.

The chosen time frame of 1921 to 1923 corresponds to a pivotal period in French cinema history, characterized by advancements in filmmaking technology and the entrenchment of colonial ideologies in cultural artifacts. By narrowing the focus to this period, the study aims to provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of Orientalist representations during an era when cinema and its related publications wielded substantial cultural influence.

3.2. Sampling Strategy

This research employs a purposive sampling strategy, which is appropriate for qualitative studies aiming to investigate specific phenomena within a defined historical and discursive context. The goal is to select texts and visuals from *Cinémagazine* that are most relevant to the theoretical framework of Orientalism and that reflect colonial representations of the Orient in early French cinema journalism.

The first sampling criterion is the presence of articles or reviews focusing on films set in Oriental or colonial contexts. These texts were chosen because they often construct the East as a cinematic backdrop for Western narratives, thus serving as a medium for projecting exoticized geographies and imperial power dynamics. Particular attention was given to reviews that include interpretive commentary on storylines, settings, costumes, and character portrayals that reflect an orientalist or colonial imaginary.

The second criterion is the inclusion of visual elements—such as posters, still images, and illustrations—that depict Oriental settings, characters, or symbols. These visual materials are crucial for understanding how the East was not only written about but also visually imagined and consumed. The imagery was analyzed for its use of aesthetic codes such as costume, architecture, body posture, and landscape design, all of which contribute to the construction of the “Orient” as an exotic and othered space.

Third, preference was given to content that reinforces or relies on stereotypes, tropes of exoticism, or overt colonial narratives. This includes texts and visuals that portray Eastern cultures as irrational, sensual, dangerous, backward, or in need of Western intervention. These materials are particularly important because they align with the core tenets of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, offering concrete examples of how colonial ideology permeated cultural production.

Finally, the study focuses on issues of Cinémagazine published between 1921 and 1923. This temporal frame was selected for both practical and theoretical reasons: it marks the magazine's formative editorial period, during which its visual and discursive style was established, and it overlaps with a peak period in French colonial expansion and its cultural justification in media. Within this scope, the selected texts and visuals were organized chronologically and coded as T1 to T17, enabling a structured and comparative analysis.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The data corpus for this study consists of a curated selection of materials extracted from Cinémagazine issues published between 1921 and 1923. Specifically, the corpus includes seventeen textual entries comprising film reviews, feature articles, and editorial commentary. These texts were accompanied by a range of visual materials such as film posters, production stills, and hand-drawn illustrations that contributed to the visual construction of Orientalist themes. All materials were manually retrieved from the digital archives of Cinémagazine, ensuring their historical authenticity and contextual relevance.

The analytical process followed a deductive coding approach grounded in Edward Said's (1978) theory of Orientalism. Central to the analysis was the identification of recurrent motifs and discursive patterns aligned with key Orientalist concepts, including but not limited to exoticism, eroticization, cultural hierarchy, and the construction of the "Other." A preliminary keyword list was generated based on a close reading of the materials and informed by Said's conceptual vocabulary.

Each unit of data was coded thematically. For example, references to garments such as veils, silk robes, or harem attire were grouped under the code “exotic costume,” which was then associated with the broader theme of the eroticized Eastern woman. Similarly, depictions of vast deserts, mirages, caravans, or ancient ruins were coded as “mystical desert,” feeding into the theme of the Orient as a mythical and timeless fantasy space. Political representations, particularly those involving tyrannical rulers or religious fanatics, were coded under “irrational ruler,” reinforcing the theme of the East as politically backward and incapable of rational governance.

This structured coding process enabled the researcher to trace the visual and textual mechanisms through which Cinémagazine contributed to the ideological production of Orientalist discourse. By connecting individual codes to overarching themes, the analysis revealed how representational strategies operated within a colonial media ecology that normalized and aestheticized imperial hierarchies.

3.4. Thematic Analysis Approach

This study adopts the six-phase thematic analysis method developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which provides a structured and rigorous framework for analyzing qualitative data. This method allows for the systematic identification, organization, and interpretation of recurring patterns (themes) within a dataset, making it particularly suitable for examining ideological representations in cultural texts. The thematic analysis process in this research was applied to both textual and visual materials from Cinémagazine, enabling an in-depth exploration of Orientalist discourses through integrated multimodal data.

In the first phase, familiarization with the data, all selected textual and visual materials were read, viewed, and annotated multiple times. This iterative engagement with the corpus allowed the researcher to become immersed in the content, facilitating an intuitive and analytical understanding of the materials. Preliminary observations were noted concerning recurring narrative structures, linguistic formulations, and visual iconography that appeared to align with Orientalist tropes.

The second phase, generating initial codes, involved the systematic identification of recurring words, visual signs, and representational motifs across the dataset. These were coded using theoretical concepts derived from Edward Said's framework, including "eroticized femininity," "passivity," "barbaric male," and "sacred mystery." Each code served as a unit of meaning that highlighted specific mechanisms of representation contributing to broader ideological constructions.

In the third phase, searching for themes, the generated codes were grouped into larger, conceptually meaningful categories. These included overarching themes such as Exoticism, Gendered Orientalism, and Colonial Superiority. This phase marked the transition from descriptive coding to interpretive analysis, as patterns of representation were synthesized into coherent thematic clusters.

The fourth phase, reviewing themes, entailed evaluating the internal consistency of each theme and assessing its applicability across the full dataset. The themes were tested against the texts and images to determine whether they adequately captured the complexity of the representations and whether they aligned with the theoretical framework. Where necessary, some themes were revised, merged, or discarded to maintain analytical rigor.

In the fifth phase, defining and naming themes, each theme was clearly delineated and defined in relation to the research objectives and conceptual framework. Supporting evidence—both textual excerpts and visual examples—was selected to illustrate each theme's function within the corpus. The naming of themes was also refined to reflect their theoretical significance and analytic clarity.

The final phase, producing the report, involved composing the analytical narrative by contextualizing the thematic findings within the historical and theoretical backdrop of Said's *Orientalism* (1978). This ensured that the analysis did not merely describe patterns of representation but critically explained how these patterns operated as part of a colonial discourse. A detailed summary of the identified themes and their corresponding codes is presented in Table 1 (see Chapter III, Section 3.5).

3.5. Code Table of Textual Representations

To enhance the depth and clarity of the thematic analysis, a structured code table was developed to categorize and synthesize the Orientalist representations identified in the selected *Cinémagazine* issues between 1921 and 1923. Each text examined in the study was assigned a unique code (T1 to T17) and organized chronologically by publication year. The code table includes the original French and translated English titles of the texts, as well as a summary of the dominant Orientalist themes and the broader analytical categories they represent.

This tabular framework enables a systematic comparison of how Orientalist imagery was constructed and reproduced over time. It also facilitates the thematic grouping of recurring representational motifs, such as the exoticization of Eastern women, the portrayal of the East as backward and irrational, and the reinforcement of colonial hierarchies through cinematic discourse.

The table serves not only as a descriptive instrument but also as an analytical tool to evaluate the intersection of gender, race, colonial ideology, and media in early twentieth-century French film journalism. The categorization of themes allows for a comparative lens through which one can examine the consistency and variation in Orientalist discourse across different cinematic texts and visual materials.

The inclusion of the following table thus contributes to the methodological rigor of the research, bridging textual data and critical theory. It anchors the thematic analysis in a clearly defined dataset and ensures transparency and replicability in the coding process. The resulting framework aligns with Edward Said's conceptualization of Orientalism, allowing for a nuanced interpretation of how knowledge and power operate in cultural representations of the "Orient." A summary of the coded texts is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 3.1. Overview of Analysed Texts and Identified Orientalist Themes in Cinémagazine (1921-1923)

Text Code	Year	Title (FR/ENG)	Orientalist Themes Identified	Category
T1	1921	La Vierge de Stambul / The Virgin of Istanbul	Exoticization of Women, Cultural Hierarchy	Gender / Exoticism
T2	1921	L'Atlantide / The Atlantide	Othering, Mythologization, Cultural Superiority	Colonial Power / Exoticism
T3	1921	L'Orient et le Cinéma / The Orient and the Cinema	Intellectual Othering, East-West Binary	Representation / Knowledge
T4	1921	Les Contes des Mille et Une Nuits / The Tales of a Thousand and One Nights	Mythical Orient, Fantasy, Femininity	Fantasy / Gender
T5	1922	La Glorieuse Reine de Saba / The Glorious Queen of Sheba	Heroic Exoticism, Gendered Orientalism	Gender / Myth
T6	1922	Au Coeur de l'Afrique Sauvage / In the Heart of Wild Africa	Savage Africa, Exotic Backdrop	Primitivism / Colonial Justification
T7	1922	Le Cinéma en Indochine / Cinema in Indochina	Colonial Superiority, Civilizing Mission	Colonialism / Knowledge
T8	1922	KISMET / KISMET (Fortune)	Fate, Passive Orient, Stereotyping	Mysticism / Exoticism
T9	1922	Le Maroc à l'Écran / Morocco on the Screen	Visual Exoticism, Erotic Orientalism	Visual Culture / Gender
T10	1922	Theodora / Theodora	Byzantine Othering, Cultural Nostalgia	History / Mythical Orient
T11	1922	Incha'Allah / InshaAllah (God willing)	Islamic Fatalism, Passive Orient	Religion / Cultural Stereotype
T12	1923	Le Cinéma dans les Harems / Cinema in the Harems	Gendered Orientalism, Sensuality	Gender / Space
T13	1923	Le Voile du Bonheur / The Veil of Happiness	Veiled Women, Submissiveness	Gender / Religion
T14	1923	L'expédition Vandenberg / The Vandenberg Expedition	Colonial Adventure, Civilizing Gaze	Colonialism / Heroism
T15	1923	L'industrie du Film en Turquie / The Film Industry in Turkey	Semi-Oriental Europe, Cultural Hierarchy	Modernity / Othering
T16	1923	La Sultane de L'Amour / The Sultana of Love	Eroticized Women, Royal Exoticism	Gender / Fantasy
T17	1923	Douglas Fairbanks "Le Voleur de Bagdad" / Douglas Fairbanks "The Thief of Bagdad"	Mythic Orient, Heroic Narratives	Adventure / Orientalism

This table summarizes the text codes (T1–T17), publication years, titles (in French and English), dominant Orientalist themes, and thematic categories.

3.6. Validity and Reliability

To enhance validity, all codes and themes were cross-checked with theoretical definitions from Said (1978) and related Orientalism literature (Bhabha, 1994; MacKenzie, 1995). To minimize researcher bias, reflexive memoing was employed during the coding process. While inter-coder reliability was not applicable in this single-coder study, transparency in the codebook, process steps, and source citations ensures methodological rigor and academic integrity.

In addition to employing a thematic analysis of textual and visual content, this study also draws upon insights from media archaeology to deepen the analytical framework. Media archaeology, as formulated by Friedrich Kittler (2020), emphasizes the material and technological infrastructures that shape media production and reception. When applied to colonial-era print culture, this approach enables researchers to uncover how editorial practices, printing technologies, and distribution systems contributed to the formation and circulation of ideological content. In the case of *Cinémagazine*, this perspective reveals not only what was said about the “Orient,” but also how the magazine’s visual layout, printing conventions, and serialized storytelling structures facilitated the normalization of colonial hierarchies. Thus, media archaeology allows for a more nuanced understanding of how Orientalist discourse was not merely textual but embedded within the very mechanics of media dissemination.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Orientalist Representations in Cinémagazine

The following findings result from a systematic textual and visual analysis of selected narratives and illustrations published in Cinémagazine between 1921 and 1923. This analysis is conducted through the critical lens of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), which exposes how Western representations of the East serve ideological, cultural, and political functions.

According to Said, Orientalism is not merely a body of knowledge about the Orient but a discourse through which the West asserts power over the East. The concepts applied in this chapter include: Power and Knowledge Nexus – how the West produces knowledge about the East to justify control (Said, 1978, pp. 32–36); Fixed Identities and Binary Oppositions – the West as modern and rational vs. the East as traditional and irrational (pp. 70–73); Cultural Hierarchies – positioning the West as superior and the East as inferior (pp. 120–123); Exoticization – framing the East as mysterious, sensual, and picturesque (pp. 118–121); Representation of Eastern Women – depicting women as erotic, silent, and submissive (pp. 186–189); Oriental Despotism and Violence – constructing Eastern men as tyrannical and emotionally unstable (pp. 105–108); Homogenization of the East – presenting a diverse region as a monolithic "Other" (pp. 302–305); Colonial Justification – using these narratives to legitimize imperial dominance (pp. 150–153).

Each textual and visual element is analyzed as a cultural artifact that reflects the ideological mechanisms of Western hegemony over the imagined "Orient." The findings highlight recurring tropes and narrative structures that align with these concepts and demonstrate the enduring impact of Orientalist discourse on early 20th-century French cinematic journalism.

a. Findings in Light of Orientalism from Cinémagazine's 1921 Issues

Table 4.1. Cinémagazine's 1921 Orientalist Issues

Years	Issues	Text Titles (FR/ ENG)	Text Codes
1921	No: 2	La Vierge de Stambul/ The Virgin of Istanbul	T1
1921	No: 5	L'Atlantide/ The Atlantide	T2
1921	No:10	L'Orient et le Cinema / The Orient and the Cinema	T3
1921	No: 48	Les Contes des Mille et Une Nuits / The Tales of a Thousand and One Nights	T4

The table above presents the Findings in Light of Orientalism from Cinémagazine's 1921 Issues. In order to undertake a clearer and more structured analysis, the selected texts (referred to as T1, T2, T3, and T4) have been organized chronologically according to their publication dates in Cinémagazine. Accordingly:

i. Findings on Orientalism from T1

T1 refers to the article "La Vierge de Stambul / The Virgin of Istanbul", published in the second issue of the magazine in 1921. "La Vierge de Stambul" is a serialized narrative by Raymond Deuté, published in the French cinema magazine Cinémagazine. The article aligns with the broader Orientalist discourse prevalent in Western literary and cinematic portrayals of the East, particularly the Ottoman Empire. It reflects the exoticization and romanticization of Istanbul and its people, reinforcing Western stereotypes about the Orient as a land of mystique, sensuality, and intrigue.

The serialized narrative begins by introducing Sari, a young street beggar in Istanbul, whose appearance is described in a sensualized and dehumanizing way. The narrator writes:

« Sous ses vêtements sordides, dont le soleil avait depuis longtemps rongé les couleurs voyantes, son corps était jeune et souple. » "Beneath her sordid garments, whose bright colors had long since been eroded by the sun, her body was young and supple." (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 2, p. 17)

This depiction fuses poverty with eroticism, presenting Sari as both victimized and desirable—an embodiment of the Orientalist trope of the exoticized, passive Eastern woman. According to Said (1978), such portrayals reduce women of the East to silent objects of fantasy for the Western gaze (pp. 186–187).

Captain Pemberton, the American officer and romantic interest, is framed as a moral savior and bearer of Western virtue. His thoughts reveal a desire to rescue Sari spiritually:

« Ne serait-ce pas une bonne action que de lui apprendre à la connaître et à l'élever vers le Créateur ? » “Would it not be a good deed to teach her to know Him and to raise her toward the Creator?” (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 2, p. 19)

This echoes the colonial logic of the “civilizing mission,” where the West assumes the responsibility to elevate and redeem the supposedly inferior East (Said, 1978, pp. 120–123). The binary between Sari’s untamed sensuality and Pemberton’s spiritual authority reinforces Said’s concept of cultural hierarchy (pp. 70–73).

The story also constructs a violent Eastern antagonist in the figure of Achmed-Hamid, described as brutal and irrational. At one point, he proclaims:

« Jusqu’à cette heure, comme une hyène malfaisante, ton chien de Roumi souffrira de la faim dans une cage de mon palais ! » “Until now, like a malevolent hyena, your Roumi dog will suffer from hunger in a cage of my palace!” (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 2, p. 21)

This metaphor dehumanizes the Western man as an animal while emphasizing the Eastern ruler’s cruelty. Said (1978) explains that the construction of the East as despotic and emotionally unstable legitimizes Western dominance and moral superiority (pp. 105–108).

The arc of the narrative culminates in a moment of Western vengeance presented as justice:

« Le capitaine de Pemberton planta lui-même son poignard vengeur dans la poitrine de l’infâme ravisseur. » “Captain Pemberton himself plunged his avenging dagger into the chest of the infamous captor.” (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 2, p. 23)

The violent elimination of the Eastern villain by the Western hero fulfills the Orientalist narrative of redemption through force. Said (1978) identifies this as a recurring justification for imperial violence framed as a moral necessity (pp. 150–153).

Finally, Sari's emotional transformation signifies her submission to Western ideals. The narrator writes: « Serait-il possible que l'amour fit d'elle une autre femme ? » "Could it be possible that love would make her another woman?" (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 2, p. 22)

This question encapsulates the colonial fantasy of regeneration through Western love and guidance. According to Said (1978), this reinforces the idea of the East as incomplete without the intervention and influence of the West (pp. 208–211).

The serialized narrative *La Vierge de Stambul*, published in issue No. 2 of *Cinémagazine* (1921), is accompanied by a series of illustrations (I1 to I1-C) that visually amplify the Orientalist discourse embedded in the text. These images function as ideological extensions of the narrative, reinforcing the portrayal of the East as exotic, sensual, irrational, and violent.



Illustration 4.1. Achmed-Hamid's Harem / Achmed-Hamid's Harem (I1)

This image, « Le Harem d'Achmed-Hamid » “Achmed-Hamid’s Harem” (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 2, p. 18), shows a group of women in decorative clothing lounging in a richly adorned space while a dancer performs, likely for an unseen male observer. The composition of the image, including the women’s languid postures and the exotic décor, fulfills the Orientalist fantasy of the harem as a site of eroticism and submission. Edward Said (1978) notes that the Orient was often depicted as “feminine,” “passive,” and “available for penetration by the active West” (p. 206).

At the center of the image stands a female dancer, adorned in exotic and revealing garments, while other women surround her in passive or suggestive postures. The architectural elements—striped columns, ornate arches, and Moorish-inspired designs—amplify the exotic setting, conforming to what Said identifies as “a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and Western empire” (Said, 1978, p. 202).

The harem, a private space rendered visible for the Western viewer, serves as a stage for voyeuristic pleasure and colonial control. The depiction reinforces the imagined geography of the East as a domain of sensuality and mystique (Said, 1978, pp. 118–121).



Illustration 4.2. Pemberton Surprend Sari / Pemberton Surprises Sari (I1-A)

This illustration features Captain Pemberton interrupting a moment between Sari and another woman. His upright posture and Western uniform contrast starkly with the emotionally expressive postures of the women. This contrast visually represents the binary of rational West versus irrational East—a central tenet of Orientalist representation.

Here, Pemberton appears as the bearer of order, morality, and discipline, intervening in a space coded as emotional, chaotic, and feminine. Said (1978) asserts that the West “assumes the power to describe, to name, to represent the Orient” (p. 40). This image thus enacts the colonial fantasy of rescue and reform.



Illustration 4.3. Achmed-Hamid Veut Tuer Sa Favorite / Achmed-Hamid Wants to Kill His Favorite (I1-B)

This is a scene of Orientalist spectacle and violence. Achmed-Hamid stands above a kneeling woman with a curved sword raised, ready to strike. His elaborate clothing, menacing expression, and exaggerated posture emphasize his role as the archetypal “Oriental despot.” According to Said (1978), such imagery consolidates the notion of the East as “barbaric,” “unpredictable,” and ruled by despotic passions (pp. 105–108).

The woman's submissive position and expression of fear reinforce the idea of the Eastern woman as both victim and object—simultaneously powerless and eroticized. This image legitimizes Western intervention under the guise of protecting women and civilizing the savage.



Illustration 4.4. Sari Fait des Confidences au Méhari / Sari Confides in the Camel (I1-C)

In this quieter scene, Sari sits beside a camel, gazing into the distance in a pose of introspection. While not overtly violent or erotic, this image participates in the romanticization and infantilization of the Orient. The camel functions as a cultural signifier of the desert and the East, placing the scene in an imagined, ahistorical geography of exotic timelessness (Said, 1978, pp. 302–305).

Sari's expression and childlike posture contribute to a portrayal of the Eastern woman as mysterious yet naïve, waiting to be interpreted and guided. As Said explains, Orientalist images transform complex human subjects into types—symbolic representations that serve a Western narrative (1978, p. 286).

These illustrations are not passive accompaniments to the text; they are active ideological constructs. Through the visual codes of sensuality, submission, danger, and

exoticism, the images reinforce the narrative's Orientalist logic. In line with Edward Said's critique, they function as instruments of symbolic domination, reducing the Orient to a repository of Western fantasies and justifications for control.

ii. Findings on Orientalism from T2

T2 corresponds to "L'Atlantide / The Atlantide", which appeared in issue No. 5 in 1921. The article was published in *Cinémagazine* in 1921 during a period of national cinematic ambition in France. It discusses the film *L'Atlantide*, directed by Jacques Feyder and based on Pierre Benoît's colonial adventure novel. Benoît's imaginative world, written from a place of comfort— « Dans sa petite chambre, il écrit... Il ne connaît d'autres restrictions que celles de son imagination. » (In his small room, he writes... He knows no other restrictions than those of his imagination.) (*Cinémagazine*, 1921, No. 5) — demonstrates the Western author's authority to fabricate the Orient without experiencing it. This supports Said's view that the Orient is often a projection of Western fantasies rather than a reality (Said, 1978, p. 1).

The article emphasizes the decision to shoot in North Africa as a gesture of authenticity:

« La réalisation ne s'est pas opérée dans quelque jardin de Nice [...] mais bien où se déroule le roman, sur les lieux mêmes, dans la région de Touggourt. » (This realization did not take place in some garden in Nice, but rather on the actual locations, in the Touggourt region.) (*Cinémagazine*, 1921, No. 5).

This reinforces the Orientalist fascination with "authentic" desert landscapes as sites of timeless mystery and adventure (Said, 1978, pp. 118–121), turning the Sahara into a cinematic stage for European myths.

The article frames *L'Atlantide* as a declaration of national and imperial strength:

« Ce film est appelé à prouver [...] que la France peut être la première dans l'industrie cinématographique—comme elle est la première en tant de choses déjà. » (This film is destined to prove that France can be the leader in the film industry—just as it is the leader in so many other things already.) (*Cinémagazine*, 1921, No. 5)

This declaration of cultural superiority mirrors France's colonial ideology, suggesting that cinematic dominance reflects and reinforces imperial dominance (Said, 1978, pp. 150–153).

Benoît romanticizes the East's riches:

« Les bijoux millénaires de l'Égypte et de l'Arabie, j'en ai paré le petit front d'épervier d'Antinéa. » (The millennia-old jewels of Egypt and Arabia, I adorned the little hawk-like forehead of Antinéa with them.) (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 5)

This portrayal transforms Eastern artifacts into objects of Western aesthetic consumption and conquest, a key function of Orientalism as described by Said (1978, pp. 120–123).

Benoît jokes about the filming location:

« Vous n'allez pas faire la sottise d'aller jusqu'au Hoggar... Je vous assure qu'il y a des coins très bien dans la forêt de Fontainebleau. » (You are not going to make the foolish mistake of going all the way to the Hoggar... There are very nice spots in the Fontainebleau forest.) (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 5)

This dismissive tone trivializes the geography and culture of North Africa, reducing the Orient to a fictional, interchangeable backdrop—an “imagined geography” (Said, 1978, pp. 302–305).

Antinéa, the seductive queen of Atlantis, embodies the Orientalist femme fatale—at once beautiful, powerful, and dangerous. Her characterization reflects Said's argument that Eastern women are often reduced to exotic, erotic tropes that serve both fantasy and fear (Said, 1978, pp. 186–189).

In addition to its textual content, Cinémagazine issue No. 5 supplements the narrative surrounding *L'Atlantide* with visual materials that further solidify Orientalist tropes. These images are not merely illustrative but serve as ideological extensions of the text, reinforcing and visually amplifying the themes of exoticism, gendered power relations, and colonial spectacle previously discussed. The iconographic analysis that follows examines two such illustrations—I2 (“Portraits des personnages masculins et de Tanit-Zerga”) and I2-A (“Antinéa sur son trône”)—in light of Edward Said's theoretical

framework. As with the textual analysis, the images are interpreted through concepts such as the exoticization of the Orient, the performativity of colonial identity, and the symbolic representation of Eastern women as both mystical and threatening.



**Illustration 4.5. Portraits des Personnages Masculins et de Tanit-Zerga /
 Portraits of Male Characters and of Tanit-Zerga (I2)**

This composition features four characters in exoticized costumes, with emphasis on turbans and desert gear. The composition features four figures, identified as characters from the film, including “Le Guide Bon Djemaâ”, Captain Morhange, Lieutenant Massard, and Tanit-Zerga. The staging reflects Orientalism’s performative nature, where Western actors adopt Eastern attire to inhabit the fantasy of the Orient (Said, 1978, p. 286).

Tanit-Zerga’s submissive posture among male military figures suggests a gendered and colonial dynamic, in which Eastern femininity is both subdued and symbolic—a stand-in for the land itself, awaiting domination.



Illustration 4.6. Antinéa sur Son Trône / Antinéa on Her Throne (I2-A)

This iconic image shows Antinéa in regal splendor on a throne adorned with lion heads. Her luxurious attire, exotic setting, and aloof gaze symbolize the mystical and dangerous allure of the East. She is less a character than a visual fantasy, embodying the timeless, sensual Orient described by Said (1978, pp. 186–189).

The desert becomes a stage, Antinéa a queen of myth—an Oriental other who threatens and fascinates the West. The visual rhetoric of royalty, mystery, and isolation transforms the image into a symbolic representation of the East itself, available for Western exploration and conquest.

L’Atlantide and its visual representations perfectly illustrate Edward Said’s critique of Orientalism as a discourse that constructs the East through Western desire, fear, and power. Through costumes, settings, and archetypal characters, the film and the article repackage North Africa as an exotic playground for French cinematic and colonial ambitions. In doing so, Cinémagazine participates in the broader ideological system that sustains imperialism through cultural production.

iii. Findings on Orientalism from T3

T3 designates "L'Orient et le Cinéma / The Orient and the Cinema", published in issue No. 10 in 1921. René Jeanne's article L'Orient et le Cinéma was published in Cinémagazine No. 10 (1921), a time when French cinema actively engaged in the romanticization and fictionalization of the Orient. Jeanne's text serves both as a critique of inadequate cinematic attempts and as an enthusiastic manifesto for a more intense and sensual use of the East in film.

The West's Enduring Fascination with the East. Jeanne opens with a rhetorical assertion:

« Est-ce qu'il y a quelqu'un parmi nos contemporains les plus prosaïques qui n'a jamais succombé à l'illusion de l'Orient ? Je ne le crois pas. » (Is there anyone among our most prosaic contemporaries who has never fallen victim to the mirage of the Orient? I do not believe so.) (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 10)

This positions the Orient as a collective Western fantasy, seductive and timeless. Said (1978) defines such representations as ideological projections of European identity through an imagined Other (p. 1).

Oriental Influence as Lifestyle and Escape. Jeanne writes:

« Il nous reste les œuvres de Pierre Loti, Claude Farrère, Chevrillon, et Rudyard Kipling [...] qui augmentent notre désir de prendre, si je puis dire, un 'bain oriental'. » (We are left with the works of Loti, Farrère, Chevrillon, and Kipling [...] which increase our desire to take, if I may say, an 'Oriental bath'.) (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 10)

This metaphor reveals a desire to immerse oneself in the Orient as an aesthetic and sensual escape, echoing the fetishization of the East in Orientalist discourse (Said, 1978, pp. 118–121).

Erotic Critique of Cinema's Failures. Jeanne critiques the film *La Sultane de l'Amour* for lacking sensual authenticity:

« Pourquoi cette danseuse [...] n'a-t-elle pas exécuté la danse des Abeilles [...] le plus beau poème de sensualité jamais inventé ? » (Why did this dancer [...] not perform the Bee Dance [...] the most beautiful poem of sensuality ever invented?) (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 10)

This lament reveals a Western aesthetic hunger for eroticized representations, where the Orient is judged not by its accuracy but by how well it stimulates colonial fantasies (Said, 1978, pp. 186–189).

Fantasy over Geography. Jeanne celebrates *La Fille des Dieux* for evoking an idealized Orient:

« Un Orient fantasque [...] que nous aurions du mal à trouver sur n'importe quelle carte. » (A fantasy Orient [...] that we would be hard-pressed to find on any map.) (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 10)

This reflects Said's observation that the Orient in Western discourse is not a real place, but an imagined one, produced for Western consumption (1978, pp. 302–305).

Cinema as a Colonial Conquest. The closing statement is revealing: « L'Orient [...] se prépare à devenir le conquérant de nos écrans ! » (The Orient [...] is setting itself up as a conqueror of our screens!) (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 10)

Here, Orientalist cinema is celebrated not for its realism, but for its ability to “colonize” the Western imagination with light, sensuality, and exoticism—ironically reversing the political conquest into a visual one, which remains firmly under Western control.

Alongside Jeanne's textual celebration of Oriental fantasy, the illustrations accompanying *L'Orient et le Cinéma* visually reinforce the very tropes he promotes. The following iconographic analysis focuses on three images—I3 (“Visages voilés, âmes closes”), I3-A (“L'Atlantide : La scène des momies”), and I3-B (“Mlle Steacia Napierkowska dans L'Atlantide”)—each of which transforms the Orient into a tableau of mystery, sensuality, and spectacle. Through costume, posture, and mise-en-scène, these visuals stage a dreamlike Orient ready for Western projection and control.



Illustration 4.7. Visages Voilés, Âmes Closes / Veiled Faces, Closed Souls (I3)

This photograph of veiled North African women against a desert backdrop encapsulates the Orientalist symbolism of the veil: secrecy, eroticism, and difference. The veil becomes a metaphor for the East's supposed opacity and emotional inaccessibility, aligning with Said's view of the Orient as "silent, available for interpretation, but never speaking back" (Said, 1978, p. 292).



Illustration 4.8. L'Atlantide: La Scène des Momies / L'Atlantide: The Mummy Scene (I3-A)

Here, European explorers in white uniforms inspect ancient tombs. This moment literalizes the colonial appropriation of Eastern history, casting the Orient as a “museum of civilizations,” unlocked and claimed by the West (Said, 1978, pp. 206–207). The contrast between light and shadow visually signals the “Enlightenment West” versus the “mystical East.”



Illustration 4.9. Mlle Steacia Napierkowska dans L’Atlantide / Mlle Steacia Napierkowska in L’Atlantide (I3-B)

A female dancer performs for a Western officer, her body adorned and choreographed for maximum visual effect. She is both passive and performative—a living ornament of the East. This dynamic reinforces the colonial male gaze, which consumes without reciprocation (Said, 1978, pp. 186–189). The spectacle is not cultural expression, but erotic display, framed by Western desires.

René Jeanne’s article and its accompanying imagery embody the full force of Orientalist representation as defined by Edward Said. From veiled women to erotic dancers, from mystical tombs to cinematic critique, *L’Orient et le Cinéma* positions the East as a realm of fantasy and possession, curated for the Western spectator. Cinema here becomes a colonial stage, and the Orient, a fabricated world of aesthetic pleasure and imperial nostalgia.

iv. Findings on Orientalism from T4

T4 refers to "Les Contes des Mille et Une Nuits / The Tales of a Thousand and One Nights", which was featured in issue No. 48 in 1921. The 1921 adaptation of The Tales of One Thousand and One Nights published in Cinémagazine illustrates the French fascination with "Eastern" opulence and spectacle. Based on centuries-old Arab, Persian, and Indian storytelling traditions, the tales are filtered here through a Western colonial imagination. Presented as cinematic material, the stories are stylized to highlight themes of sensuality, mysticism, and moral duality—hallmarks of the Orientalist vision.

The central tale cycle is framed by the strategy employed by Scheherazade herself. Every story she tells is designed to leave the Sultan craving more, postponing his decision to execute her. Through her intellect and storytelling, she gradually transforms the Sultan's hardened heart, exemplifying the power of narrative to both heal and transform.

Luxury and Violence in the East: The dual image of the East as both magnificent and brutal appears through Sultan Schahriar's tale:

"Elle est aperçue par des pêcheurs de la côte qui la traînent au somptueux palais du sultan. Ce dernier, ayant appris qu'elle professait la foi d'Allah, la condamne à mort." (She is spotted by fishermen who drag her to the splendid palace of the sultan. Upon learning that she professes the faith of Allah, he condemns her to death.) (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 48)

This contrast between architectural opulence and religious punishment embodies the Western perception of the East as culturally rich yet morally regressive—what Said terms the aestheticized barbarism of the Orient (1978, pp. 120–123).

Eroticism and Secrecy: The Harem Fantasy. In a striking example of exotic tension, a prince hides in a harem's pool: "Le prince [...] reste au fond des eaux jusqu'au coucher du soleil." (The prince [...] stays submerged until sunset.) (Cinémagazine, 1921, No. 48)

The harem, here, is rendered as both a space of sensual fantasy and secret peril. Said (1978) notes that such representations reduce the East to a sensual and enclosed domain, especially the harem, which becomes a recurring motif of forbidden eroticism (pp. 186–189).

Scheherazade: Narrative as Domestication. Scheherazade’s power lies not in political or physical strength, but in her storytelling, which transforms the Sultan’s cruelty over time. Yet even this transformation fits the Western fantasy of taming the barbaric Orient through cleverness and aesthetics—ultimately reinforcing Western values under the guise of narrative charm (Said, 1978, pp. 32–36).

The three images accompanying this adaptation—I4 (“Scène du tribunal oriental avec esclaves à genoux”), I4-A (“Le sultan grotesque et la femme séduisante”), and I4-B (“Scène du harem”)—visually reproduce the dualistic, Orientalist vision presented in the text. Through iconographic exaggeration, costume, and composition, they construct a fantasy of the East as dominated by power, pleasure, and spectacle. Each image projects Western desires and anxieties onto the East, transforming it into a cinematic theatre of domination and desire.



Illustration 4.10. Scène du Tribunal Oriental avec Esclaves à Genoux / Oriental Courtroom Scene with Kneeling Slaves (I4)

A sultan presides over a gilded court while nearly nude, submissive figures kneel before him. The visual symmetry of servitude and the ornamental setting signal the archetypal “Oriental despot,” echoing Said’s critique of the absolute, irrational ruler who governs by spectacle and fear (1978, pp. 105–108).



Illustration 4.11. Le Sultan Grotesque et la Femme Séduisante / The Grotesque Sultan and the Seductive Woman (I4-A)

This image amplifies Orientalist caricature: a grotesquely exaggerated male figure dominates the frame, contrasted by a passive, eroticized woman. Her submission is not only gendered but aestheticized—her body serving as an object of pleasure. The presence of a Black servant subtly racializes the hierarchy, embedding colonial visual codes of domination (Said, 1978, pp. 186–189).

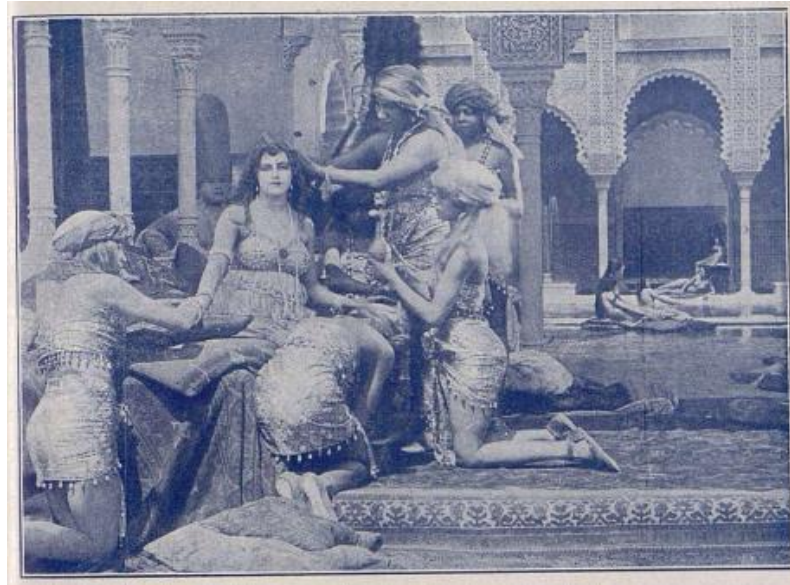


Illustration 4.12. Scène du Harem / Harem Scene (I4-B)

In this classic Orientalist tableau, semi-nude women lounge and pamper a central figure in a richly adorned interior. The uniformity and stillness of the women erase their individuality, turning them into props of male fantasy. The harem is portrayed not as a domestic reality, but as a dreamscape of sexual submission—echoing Said’s argument that the East is imagined rather than observed (1978, pp. 118–121; 302–305).

This adaptation of *The Tales of One Thousand and One Nights* encapsulates the triple fantasy of Orientalism: the East as a place of power, peril, and pleasure. The text and its images reinforce colonial tropes of feminine submission, despotic rule, and opulent exoticism. Far from being a faithful cultural representation, it is a symbolic conquest—a literary and visual colonization that renders the Orient a mirror for Western fascination and superiority.

b. Findings in Light of Orientalism from Cinémagazine's 1922 Issues

Table 4.2. Cinémagazine's 1922 Orientalist Issues

Years	Issues	Text Titles (FR/ ENG)	Text Codes
1922	No: 6	La Glorieuse Reine de Saba/ The Glorious Queen of Sheba	T5
1922	No: 15	Au Coeur de l'Afrique Sauvage/ In the Heart of Wild Africa	T6
1922	No: 21	Le Cinema en Indochine / the Glorious Rene of Sheba	T7
1922	No: 23	KISMET / KISMET (Fortune)	T8
1922	No: 35	Le Maroc a l'Ecran / Mocco on the Screen	T9
1922	No: 46	Theodora / Theodora	T10
1922	No: 48	Incha'Allah / InshaAllah (God willing)	T11

The above table continues to present the Findings in Light of Orientalism from Cinémagazine's 1922 Issues. For the sake of analytical clarity and chronological coherence, the selected texts (T5 to T11) are arranged according to their publication order in Cinémagazine. Each text offers valuable insights into how the Orient and non-Western cultures were represented in early French cinematic discourse. Accordingly:

i. Findings on Orientalism from T5

T5 corresponds to "La Glorieuse Reine de Saba / The Glorious Queen of Sheba", published in issue No. 6 in 1922. The article romanticizes the legendary biblical queen, portraying her through an exoticized lens that merges Oriental sensuality with regal mystique, reinforcing stereotypical narratives of the East as both alluring and distant.

Published in Cinémagazine in 1922, La Glorieuse Reine de Saba promotes a spectacular reconstruction of the Queen of Sheba's kingdom. Written in a period marked by Eurocentric historical imagination and colonial grandeur, the article embodies the Orientalist logic that the East is a lost civilization whose glory can only be revived through Western intervention — especially via cinema.

The Orient as Magnificent Spectacle. The film is described as:

« La plus imposante reconstitution de l'Orient antique avec ses pompes, son faste et sa magnificence. » (The most imposing reconstruction of the ancient Orient with its pomp, splendor, and magnificence.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 6)

This extravagant portrayal aligns with Said's critique of the aestheticized and romanticized image of the East, reduced to theatrical display for Western pleasure (Said, 1978, pp. 118–121).

Resurrecting the Lost East through Western Imagination. The film seeks to:

« Faire revivre un monde qui était mort depuis l'aurore de l'Histoire. » (Bring back to life a world that had been dead since the dawn of History.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 6)

This expression suggests that Eastern history only becomes relevant when revived and reinterpreted through Western creativity. As Said notes, Orientalism thrives on the idea that the Orient is inert and must be rediscovered and narrated by the West (1978, pp. 32–36).

Western Authority over Eastern Representation. The article proudly states:

« Le premier problème à résoudre fut la question des costumes, ornements et style d'architecture qui ne se trouvaient décrits dans aucun livre. » (The first problem to solve was the question of costumes, ornaments, and architectural style, which were not described in any book.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 6)

This illustrates the Orient as unknowable yet representable, a paradox at the heart of Orientalism. Lacking authentic sources, the West creates its own version of the East — not to discover it, but to invent it (Said, 1978, p. 55).

Homogenization of Cultures:

« Les styles adoptés furent : Assyrien, Babylonien et Égyptien [...] une ville exotique géante s'éleva bientôt aux environs de Hollywood. » (The styles adopted were: Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian [...] a giant exotic city soon rose near Hollywood.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 6)

Here, disparate cultures are amalgamated into a single Orientalist aesthetic, supporting Said's notion of the "mythic geography" of the Orient—a fantasy of timelessness and sameness (1978, p. 55; 302–305).

Eroticization of Eastern Women. On the Queen of Sheba's entrance:

« Ébloui par sa beauté et par la magnificence de sa suite, Salomon descendit de son trône. »
(Dazzled by her beauty and the magnificence of her entourage, Solomon descended from his throne.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 6)

The queen's sexual and visual power is framed as irresistible, portraying her as an Oriental femme fatale whose allure disarms even a biblical king. This reflects Said's observation that Eastern women are often depicted as passive, mysterious, and dangerous to Western order (1978, pp. 186–189; 207).

The visual representations accompanying the article—I5 ("Reconstitution du royaume oriental antique") and I5-A ("Betty Blythe dans le rôle de la Reine de Saba")—reproduce the Orientalist tropes emphasized in the text. Through lavish costuming, exaggerated architecture, and sensual posturing, these images construct the East as a timeless dreamworld, aestheticized for Western visual consumption and filtered through a lens of exoticism, eroticism, and cultural superiority.



Illustration 4.13. Reconstitution du Royaume Oriental Antique / Reconstruction of the Ancient Oriental Kingdom (I5)

This large-scale tableau features guards, dancers, massive temples, and ceremonial architecture, visually representing the East as ritualistic, hierarchical, and grandiose. The use of mixed cultural elements (Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian) illustrates the homogenization of Eastern identity under the Western gaze. Said's concept of "imaginative geography" (1978, p. 55) is vividly at play — the Orient is not a real space, but a symbolic landscape of mythic otherness.



Illustration 4.14. Betty Blythe dans le Rôle de la Reine de Saba / Betty Blythe as the Queen of Sheba (I5-A)

Seated in a stylized pose, Blythe's Western body becomes the embodiment of the Oriental woman. Her costume — a fusion of sheer textiles, jewels, and military headdress — constructs femininity as ornamented, passive, and erotic. Her central placement enacts the colonial male gaze, turning her into both queen and object.

As Said explains, women in Orientalist discourse often symbolize the East itself: "passive, seductive, and ultimately conquerable" (Said, 1978, p. 207). Her character is less historical than symbolic—a metaphor of the East as available, silent, and aestheticized.

La Glorieuse Reine de Saba exemplifies the Orientalist vision of cinema as a tool for reimagining and owning the East. Through both text and imagery, the Orient is

presented not as a complex historical entity, but as a theater of fantasy—decadent, feminine, and dead—awaiting Western revival. The Queen of Sheba is not a sovereign historical figure, but a screen for Western desire and projection, reinterpreted through a colonial aesthetic logic that celebrates Western creativity over Eastern legacy.

ii. Findings on Orientalism from T6

T6 refers to "Au Cœur de l'Afrique Sauvage / In the Heart of Wild Africa", featured in issue No. 15. This piece exemplifies colonialist representations of Africa as an untamed, primitive, and mysterious continent, aligning with the broader trope of the "Dark Continent" that permeates Orientalist and imperial discourse.

Published in Cinémagazine in 1922, the article presents a Swedish documentary film *Au cœur de l'Afrique sauvage* as an ethnographic and visual exploration of East Africa. Produced by the Swedish Biograph Company and directed by Oscar Olsson, the film is emblematic of colonial-era cinema that aestheticized the African continent as wild, exotic, and in need of Western governance. It aligns with the early 20th-century fascination with Africa as a site of both danger and wonder—an ideological framework deeply tied to colonialism and Orientalist discourse.

Africa as a Wild, Untamed Continent:

« L'Afrique de l'Est est la région la plus riche du monde en faune féroce [...] foyer des tribus noires qui n'ont pas encore été soumises à l'influence de la civilisation européenne. » (East Africa is the world's richest region in ferocious wildlife [...] and home to Black tribes yet to come under European civilization's influence.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 15)

This framing positions Africa as a natural wilderness, untouched and primitive, awaiting European order. It echoes Said's concept of the Orient as a space of chaos, defined by contrast to European rationality (Said, 1978, pp. 105–108; 120–123).

The "Noble Savage" and Cultural Essentialism:

« Ces tribus noires sont extrêmement fières de leurs cérémonies et de leurs grands spectacles. » (These Black tribes take immense pride in their ceremonies and grand displays.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 15)

While seemingly admiring, this statement exoticizes cultural practices, treating them as anthropological curiosities rather than living traditions. This exemplifies what Said terms “cultural othering”—where non-Western customs are romanticized but never normalized (Said, 1978, pp. 186–189).

Europeans as Organizers and Civilizers: « Une caravane de 70 porteurs noirs a été assemblée. » (A caravan of 70 Black porters was assembled.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 15)

This passage illustrates the utilitarian role of Africans in the Western colonial project. They are not subjects but objects—tools in the service of documentation, framed through a colonial gaze that denies their agency (Said, 1978, pp. 32–36).

Exoticization of the Maasai:

« Leur alimentation se compose exclusivement de viande, de lait et de sang. » (Their diet consists exclusively of meat, milk, and blood.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 15)

This focus on “strange” dietary habits reflects Orientalist tendencies to emphasize bodily and cultural difference. Even admiration is framed as alienation—turning the Maasai into figures of fascination whose way of life is seen as biologically and culturally distant from Western norms (Said, 1978, p. 207).

The images accompanying *In the Heart of Savage Africa*—I6 to I6-C—extend the Orientalist discourse of the text by offering a spectacle of primitivism and savagery, captured through a European lens. These photographs objectify people, animals, and landscapes, reducing them to visual fragments of the colonial fantasy. Said’s notion of “epistemological othering” is central here: the images do not reveal Africa—they construct it for the Western viewer (Said, 1978, p. 332).



Illustration 4.15. Le Zèbre à Raies Minces, le Plus Beau de l'Espèce / The Fine-Striped Zebra, the Most Beautiful of Its Kind (I6)

This image aestheticizes African wildlife as a visual treasure. The zebra becomes a symbol of untouched nature, echoing the trope of Africa as a zoological Eden for Western discovery. The absence of ecological or indigenous context reduces the animal to ornament and spectacle (Said, 1978, pp. 118–121).



Illustration 4.16. Très Amateurs de Bijoux, les Femmes s'en Parent à Profusion / Very Fond of Jewelry, the Women Adorn Themselves in Profusion (I6-A)

This portrait objectifies African women through their accessories, emphasizing excess rather than cultural meaning. By focusing on visual eccentricity, the image strips African adornment of significance, turning women into ethnographic décor—a tactic typical of colonial anthropology (Said, 1978, pp. 186–189).

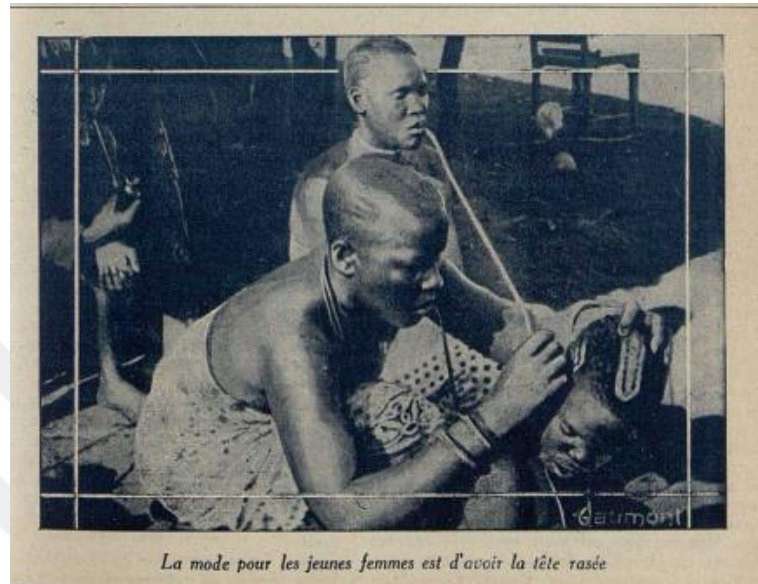


**Illustration 4.17. La Mode pour les Jeunes Femmes Est d’Avoir la Tête Rasée /
Fashion for Young Women Is to Have a Shaved Head (I6-B)**

Here, hair is used to mark difference. Shaving the head is framed as a curious “fashion”, ignoring its potential social, spiritual, or ritual dimensions. The image exemplifies ethnographic voyeurism, where ordinary acts are exoticized under the camera’s gaze, reinforcing cultural inferiority (Said, 1978, p. 332).



Illustration 4.18. Un Festin Inimaginable où Mâchoires, Serres et Becs se Confondent / An Unimaginable Feast Where Jaws, Claws, and Beaks Merge (I6-C)

This photograph of vultures feeding metaphorically conflates African nature with savagery. It dramatizes death and violence as naturalized features of the landscape, legitimizing the idea that Africa needs the order and control of Western civilization (Said, 1978, pp. 105–108).

In the Heart of Savage Africa is a clear example of visual and textual Orientalism. The documentary and its presentation in Cinémagazine transform Africa into an imaginary domain, where wild nature and exotic customs coalesce to justify colonial authority. Africans are depicted as subjects of curiosity or labor, while the land is a stage of rawness awaiting refinement. Through both text and image, this media object performs what Said calls “the epistemological conquest of the Other”—a reduction of Africa to a knowable, ownable, and governable object for the West (Said, 1978, p. 332).

iii. Findings on Orientalism from T7

T7 designates "Le Cinéma en Indochine / Cinema in Indochina", which appeared in issue No. 21. The article reflects on the presence and expansion of French cinema in colonial Indochina, subtly justifying colonialism through cultural dissemination and reinforcing the civilizing mission narrative embedded in colonial ideology.

Published in Cinémagazine No. 21 in 1922, the article *Le Cinéma en Indo-Chine* by Robert Marcel-Desprez reflects the use of cinema as a colonial tool in French Indo-China. The magazine, a voice for both cinematic and imperial propaganda, operated in tandem with France's civilizing mission, particularly during events like the 1922 Marseille Colonial Exhibition. This context firmly positions the article within the ideological machinery of colonialism, where cinema serves to document, educate, and dominate non-European subjects under the guise of enlightenment.

Cinema as an Instrument of Colonial Power :

« M. Têtard, le diligent chef du service cinématographique de l'Indo-Chine, a présidé à la préparation de la section du film de l'Exposition de Marseille. » (Mr. Têtard, the diligent head of the cinematic service in Indo-China, presided over the preparation of the film section for the Marseille Exhibition.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 21)

The presentation of Têtard as a cultural envoy underscores the role of cinema as soft power, where film projection becomes a metaphor for France's imperial presence. This reinforces what Said calls the institutional capacity of the West to define and disseminate representations of the Orient (Said, 1978, pp. 94–97).

Heroic Narrative of Technological Conquest:

« Ce ne fut pas toujours entreprise aisée [...] 10 caisses d'accessoires pesant plus de 3.000 kilos. » (It was not always an easy task [...] 10 crates of equipment weighing over 3,000 kilos.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 21)

The emphasis on technical difficulty dramatizes the act of film projection as a civilizing adventure, transforming the filmmakers into modern-day explorers. This narrative echoes colonial myths of hardship overcome in the name of progress, justifying dominance through technological superiority.

Construction of the “Other France”: « La section cinématographique de l’‘Autre France’. » (The cinematic section of the ‘Other France’.(Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 21)

This phrase constructs a binary between metropole and colony, aligning the “Other” with the exotic and peripheral. As Said explains, the Orient becomes intelligible only when contrasted with a rational, civilized West (Said, 1978, pp. 1–3; 302–305).

Exoticization of Indigenous Peoples:

« Quelques chefs Maures [...] types de race pure, arrivant en droite ligne du pays Brakna. »
(Some Moorish chiefs [...] types of pure race, arriving straight from Brakna.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 21)

Here, indigenous peoples are reduced to racialized archetypes, staged for Western viewing. This reflects what Said calls essentialist typologies, where colonial subjects are fixed in time, defined by appearance rather than agency (Said, 1978, pp. 207–210).

Colonial Cinema as Political Tool:

« Une participation directe des Noirs à la guerre contre l’Allemagne [...] collaboration au travail de reconstitution de la paix. » (A direct participation of Black people in the war against Germany [...] collaboration in the work of rebuilding peace.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 21)

The article closes by justifying France’s colonial project through claims of collaboration and gratitude. This moral framing of empire perpetuates the Orientalist illusion of the colonizer as a benefactor, not an oppressor (Said, 1978, pp. 150–153).

The photographic series accompanying *Le Cinéma en Indo-Chine* (I7 to I7-E) visually translates the article’s colonial discourse. These images depict Western technological mastery, cultural surveillance, and racial hierarchy, forming a cinematic spectacle that upholds the imperial order. Said’s theory of “capturing the Orient” through institutional authority (1978, p. 94) is enacted here with striking clarity: the camera does not observe, it dominates.

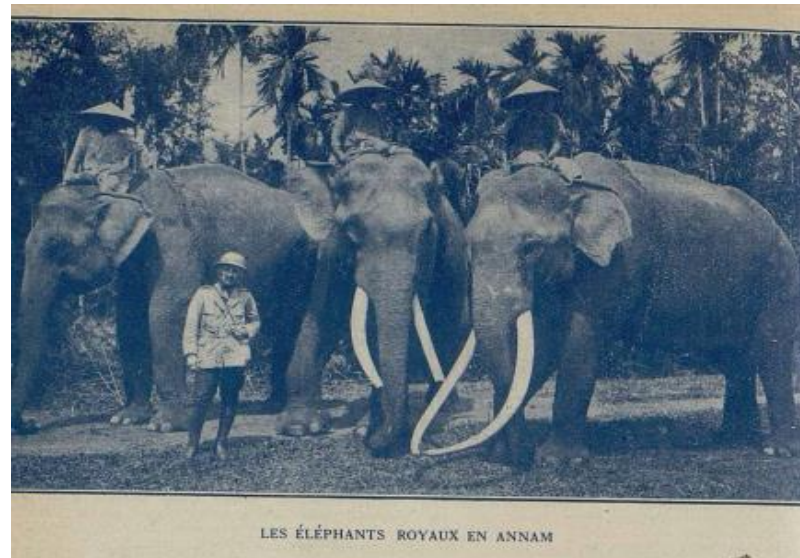


**Illustration 4.19. Les Éléphants Royaux en Annam / Royal Elephants in Annam
(I7)**

This image contrasts regal animal pageantry with colonial military presence. The European officer's authoritative stance juxtaposed with native elephant riders encapsulates a visual hierarchy: indigenous customs serve as decorative, while Western authority commands. The elephant becomes a cultural prop in the colonial theater (Said, 1978, pp. 118–121).



**Illustration 4.20. Installation de Tournage en Pirogue / Film Setup in a Canoe
(I7-A)**

The image of locals stabilizing a European cameraman in a precarious canoe reflects colonial dependence on indigenous labor, stripped of intellectual agency. The caption's tone trivializes their role, reinforcing a paternalistic view of colonized peoples as useful but intellectually inferior (Said, 1978, pp. 186–189).



Illustration 4.21. Prise de Vues: Danses Laotiennes / Filming: Laotian Dances (I7-B)

Laotian dancers perform under Western direction. The ritual becomes performance, stripped of cultural significance and framed through the cinematic lens. This spectacularization of the “Other” echoes Orientalist theatre, where cultural practices are visualized as exotic entertainment (Said, 1978, p. 207).



Illustration 4.22. Le Chef du Service Donne ses Instructions / The Chief Gives Instructions (I7-C)

A European man coordinates a colonial meal scene. His position—seated, central, commanding—portrays rational order amidst exotic disorder. Local bodies fade into the backdrop, reinforcing a visual order that mimics the political one.

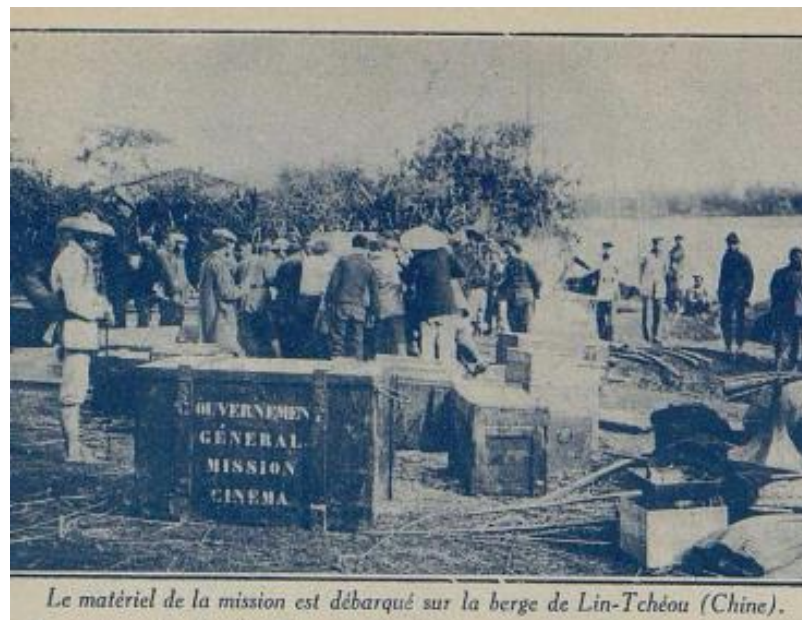


Illustration 4.23. Débarquement du Matériel de Mission / Unloading Mission Equipment (I7-D)

A moment of colonial logistics: crates labeled “Mission Cinéma” dominate the frame. The spectacle of machinery and laboring bodies presents the cinema not as culture, but as infrastructure of control—a technology of empire (Said, 1978, p. 94).



**Illustration 4.24. Portrait de Groupe des Opérateurs et Artistes Français /
 Group Portrait of French Operators and Artists (I7-E)**

This final image centers Western presence and authorship. The formal poses, European dress, and visible cameras symbolize epistemic authority. These are not just creators—they are narrators of the Orient’s story, defining reality through cinema.

Le Cinéma en Indo-Chine presents an exemplary case of how cinema was enlisted into the French imperial project as a tool of conquest, pedagogy, and spectacle. The text and accompanying images construct the colonies as both stage and audience—visible but voiceless, captured but never credited. Said’s observation that the Orient is “not a free subject of thought or action” (1978, p. 94) is fully illustrated in this cinematic encounter: the indigenous are documented, not engaged; framed, not framed-with.

iv. Findings on Orientalism from T8

T8 corresponds to "KISMET / KISMET (Fortune)", published in issue No. 23. The film review interprets Eastern fate and mysticism through a Western narrative framework, presenting destiny and fortune as central Oriental themes while simultaneously reducing complex cultural concepts to exotic clichés.

The review of Kismet in Cinémagazine reflects early 20th-century French cinematic criticism deeply imbued with Orientalist assumptions. Produced during a period of colonial expansion and fascination with exoticism, the magazine's treatment of the film reveals how Western cinema constructed the East as a space of mystery, sensuality, and fatalism, aligning perfectly with Said's theoretical framework.

The East as an Exotic and Timeless Realm:

« Kismet nous raconte l'histoire de la 'folle journée' du mendiant Hajj [...] boire jusqu'à la lie la coupe de luxure et de volupté. » (Kismet tells us the story of the 'mad day' of the beggar Hajj [...] to drink to the dregs the cup of luxury and voluptuousness.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 23)

This romanticization of Baghdad as a space outside of time supports Said's argument that the Orient is framed as static and removed from historical progress, existing as an eternal backdrop for Western storytelling (1978, pp. 118–121).

Emotional Excess and Irrationality:

« Mendiant, menteur et voleur, qui sacrifie ses ennemis avec la férocité d'un tigre et la joie innocente d'un enfant... » (A beggar, liar, and thief, who sacrifices his enemies with the ferocity of a tiger and the innocent joy of a child...) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 23)

The protagonist Hajj embodies the stereotype of the volatile Oriental subject, swinging between cruelty and innocence. This fits the Orientalist depiction of Easterners as emotionally extreme and irrational (Said, 1978, pp. 186–189).

The Palace as a Space of Spectacular Decadence: « À travers les magnifiques perspectives du palais des Califes. » (Through the magnificent perspectives of the Caliph's palace.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 23)

The palace's depiction emphasizes visual excess and stagnation, rendering Eastern power as ornamental rather than functional. As Said explains, the Orient is often dramatized for Western aesthetic pleasure rather than understood in its political complexity (1978, p. 72).

Fatalism and Submission to Destiny: « Hajj fait la nique au Destin [...] il s'endort tranquillement. » (Hajj mocks Fate [...] he falls asleep peacefully.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 23)

The ending cements the Orientalist stereotype of fatalism—the belief that Eastern societies are governed by destiny rather than agency. Hajj's passive acceptance aligns with the notion that the East lacks the drive for self-determination celebrated in Western narratives (Said, 1978, pp. 1–3).

The images accompanying *Kismet*—I8 and I8-A—visually crystallize the Orientalist logic articulated in the text. Through spectacle, costume, and performance, they transform the East into a theatrical fantasy, supporting Said's assertion that the Orient was not a lived reality but a European invention (1978, p. 1).

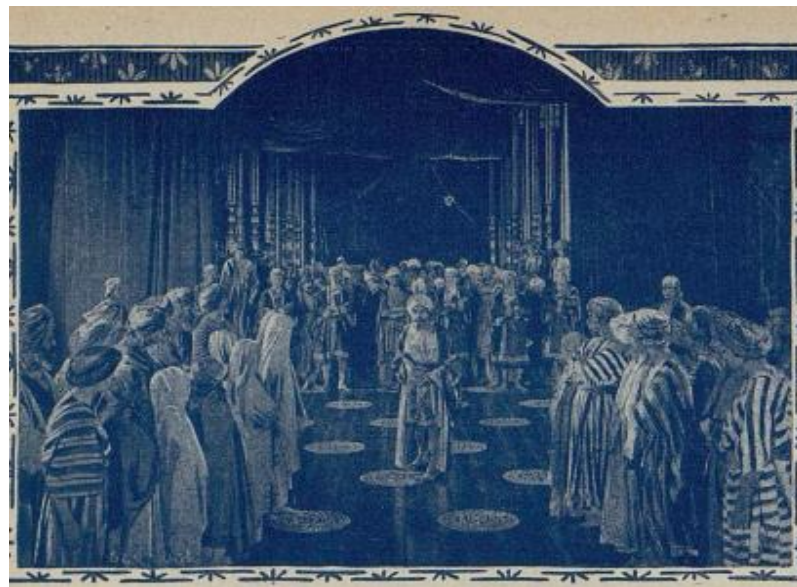


**Illustration 4.25. La Cour du Calife: Espace de Représentation Spectaculaire /
The Caliph's Court: A Space of Spectacular Performance (I8)**

The wide shot of the palace court emphasizes ornamental excess. Characters in elaborate costumes are rigidly posed, creating a scene of timeless spectacle rather than dynamic governance. The architectural grandeur and ceremonial stillness align with Said's view that the Orient is often immobilized in visual fantasy for Western audiences (1978, p. 72).



Illustration 4.26. Otis Skinner dans le Rôle de Hajj: Le Visage du Fanatisme Oriental / Otis Skinner as Hajj: The Face of Oriental Fanaticism (I8-A)

In this close-up, Otis Skinner's exaggerated facial expression and theatrical costuming construct a grotesque stereotype of Eastern masculinity. His depiction aligns with the Orientalist trope of emotional instability and latent violence, captured for Western consumption. The fact that a Western actor portrays an Eastern character highlights the performative theatricality of Orientalism (Said, 1978, pp. 186–189).

Kismet and its presentation in Cinémagazine exemplify the Orientalist mechanisms of early Western cinema. The text and images reduce Baghdad and its people to symbols of excess, irrationality, and fatalism, staging the East as a timeless fantasy realm opposed to Western modernity. Following Said's critique, Kismet demonstrates how cinema helped manufacture the Orient as a consumable fiction, confirming Western superiority and reinforcing colonial worldviews.

v. Findings on Orientalism from T9

T9 refers to "Le Maroc à l'Écran / Morocco on the Screen", found in issue No. 35. This piece depicts Morocco as a visual spectacle of tradition, mystery, and exotic beauty, echoing common Orientalist motifs that portray North African spaces as culturally rich yet static and in need of Western gaze for visibility.

Published in Cinémagazine, Le Maroc à l'Écran by René Jeanne offers a commentary on several French films produced in colonial Morocco during the early 1920s. This period marks a turning point in how French cinema began to frame colonial spaces not just as backdrops, but as narrative extensions of French imperial ideology. Jeanne's text reflects this trend by simultaneously celebrating the "authenticity" of Moroccan settings and reinforcing cultural hierarchies rooted in Orientalist discourse.

The east as a temporal stagnation and exoticism:

« Le Maroc tel qu'il est en 1922 : rébarbatif d'aspect, moyenâgeux de mœurs et d'allures. » (Morocco as it is in 1922: forbidding in appearance, medieval in customs and manners.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 35)

This framing casts Morocco as frozen in time, bypassing historical evolution to serve as a living museum for French imagination. According to Said, the Orient is often described as "unchanging" to validate the West's role as civilizer and interpreter (Said, 1978, pp. 118–121).

Colonial Superiority and Control:

« Admirablement reçus par le maréchal Lyautey [...] collaboration des services civils et militaires, français et indigènes. » (Admirably received by Marshal Lyautey [...] with collaboration from civil and military services, French and indigenous.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 35)

Here, the act of filming becomes a metaphor for colonial orchestration. Indigenous people are not co-creators but are framed as helpers within a structure of French control, echoing Said's concept of the Orient as a space that must be framed and managed by the West (1978, pp. 32–36).

Infantilization of the Moroccan Subject:

« Ses habitants si farouches [...] si doux, ingénus et hospitaliers, quand on a gagné leur confiance. » (Its inhabitants so fierce [...] so gentle, ingenuous, and hospitable, once one has gained their trust.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 35)

This patronizing duality—wild yet tameable—reduces Moroccans to childlike figures, simultaneously threatening and docile, reinforcing Western paternalism. Said notes that such depictions erase complexity in favor of cultural simplicity (1978, pp. 186–189).

The Orient as a Set for French Narratives:

« M. Luitz-Morat [...] ne put obtenir que figurassent dans ces scènes, les femmes du sultan. » (Mr. Luitz-Morat [...] could not include the Sultan's women in these scenes.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 35)

This disappointment at not gaining full access to harem life illustrates the colonial desire to penetrate forbidden spaces. The Orient is staged as a realm of secrets and seductions, echoing the Western gaze that objectifies Eastern spaces and bodies for consumption (Said, 1978, pp. 207–210).

The seven accompanying images (I9 to I9-F) visually enact the same Orientalist logic Jeanne articulates textually. They display the harem, veiled women, decorative architecture, and colonial ceremony—all recurring motifs that Edward Said identifies as tools to aestheticize, control, and narrate the Orient on Western terms (1978, p. 94). These visuals do not document Morocco; they reconstruct it through a colonial frame.



Illustration 4.27. Au Seuil du Harem / At the Threshold of the Harem (I9)

This image crystallizes the fantasy of limited access. The harem is not revealed but hinted at—a space marked by secrecy, sensuality, and patriarchal control. The central figure's elevated posture mirrors the Orientalist trope of Eastern despotism, where power is both spectacular and dangerous (Said, 1978, pp. 118–121).



Illustration 4.28. Portrait de Nadia Napierkowska / Portrait of Nadia Napierkowska (I9-A)

A French actress in costume embodies the Oriental woman as fantasy: posed, dressed in striped caftan and headscarf, standing before architecture meant to signify cultural difference. Her identity is not lived but performed, aligning with Said's claim that the Orient is invented for Western entertainment (1978, p. 1).



Illustration 4.29. Gaston Modot Captif / Gaston Modot Captive (I9-B)

This image portrays a French actor restrained, visually inverting the colonial order momentarily. However, such scenes function not to critique empire but to heighten the narrative of Western heroism, justifying intervention through depictions of vulnerability (Said, 1978, pp. 150–153).



Illustration 4.30. Georges Melchior au Sol / Georges Melchior on the Ground (I9-C)

A French character is physically subdued by a mounted Moroccan figure. The imbalance creates visual drama, reinforcing the “dangerous East” trope, where temporary domination by the native figure sets the stage for colonial reassertion and rescue (Said, 1978, pp. 105–108).



Illustration 4.31. Mlle Fréa en Tenue Traditionnelle / Miss Fréa in Traditional Dress (I9-D)

Again, a French actress is styled as an “authentic” Moroccan woman. Her passivity, half-turned posture, and ornamental costume evoke the exotic female subject, designed to be looked at but not heard. This reflects the feminization and silencing of the Orient, a theme Said highlights (1978, pp. 186–189).



Illustration 4.32. Palais du Pacha de Marrakech / Palace of the Pasha of Marrakech (I9-E)

This architectural view reduces a political site to an aesthetic object. Its framing, tilework, and arches turn the palace into décor, stripped of political function. Said discusses how the Orient is presented as a beautiful ruin, lacking modern agency (1978, pp. 118–121).



Illustration 4.33. Le Sultan, les Français, et l'Ordre Colonial / The Sultan, the French, and the Colonial Order (I9-F)

This group photo places the Sultan at the center, but within a framing that signals French control. The image simulates harmony while visually subordinating the native ruler to the cinematic and diplomatic structure imposed by France. It encapsulates the colonial fantasy of benevolent governance (Said, 1978, pp. 32–36).

René Jeanne's *Le Maroc à l'Écran* and its visual documentation exemplify the Orientalist apparatus at work in French colonial cinema. Through text and image, Morocco is rendered timeless, aestheticized, feminized, and governable—a fantasy constructed to serve the ideological project of empire. These representations do not reflect Moroccan reality but reproduce a cultural hierarchy where French creativity and reason dominate exotic chaos. As Edward Said argues, “The Orient was almost a European invention” (1978, p. 1)—and *Le Maroc à l'Écran* is one of its most vivid cinematic expressions.

vi. Findings on Orientalism from T10

T10 designates "Theodora / Theodora", published in issue No. 46. The article discusses the portrayal of the Byzantine empress with Orientalist overtones, blending decadence,

sensuality, and spectacle to frame Eastern history as both fascinating and morally ambiguous.

Published anonymously in Cinémagazine (1922), the article on Théodora presents the Byzantine world through a romanticized and exoticized lens. It reflects early French cinema's fascination with Eastern settings as spaces of visual grandeur and moral ambiguity. Although the film claims historical fidelity, the article's discourse and tone reveal a clear Orientalist inflection, reinforcing stereotypes of excess, sensuality, and irrationality associated with the East.

Byzantium as a Realm of Decadence and Corruption:

« Théodora, si elle porte le diadème impérial, n'a mis aucun frein à ses débauches. » (Theodora, though she wears the imperial diadem, has placed no restraint on her debauchery.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 46)

This portrayal aligns Byzantium with moral decay, echoing Orientalist narratives where Eastern civilizations are corrupted by sensuality and excess. Said notes that Western representations often define the Orient as immoral and stagnant, contrasting with a supposedly superior Western morality (Said, 1978, pp. 118–121).

The Femme Fatale Archetype: « Théodora subrepticement fait boire le philtre à l'amant toujours chéri. » (Theodora stealthily makes her still-beloved lover drink the potion.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 46)

Theodora embodies the Orientalist construction of the Eastern woman: seductive, manipulative, and dangerous. Said underlines that Orientalist discourse often feminizes and exoticizes the Orient, presenting it as both alluring and treacherous (1978, pp. 186–189).

Tyrannical Rule and Noble Rebellion:

« Il jure de venger la mort de son ami sur l'Empereur et son épouse tyrannique et perverse. » (He swears to avenge his friend's death on the Emperor and his tyrannical and perverse wife.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 46)

The Eastern court is presented as a site of despotism and oppression, setting up a contrast between noble rebellion (embodied by the Greek Andréas) and corrupt imperial authority. Said describes this binary opposition as a key mechanism through which the West justifies its moral and civilizational superiority (1978, pp. 72–75).

The Spectacle of the Exotic: « L'épopée byzantine transposée à l'écran constitue un joyau de haut prix. » (The Byzantine epic transposed to the screen constitutes a precious jewel.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 46)

The emphasis on visual spectacle—precious, extravagant, distant—transforms Byzantium into an ornamental Orient, valued more for its aesthetic appeal than its historical reality. Said argues that the Orient is often converted into a static, artistic fantasy for Western consumption (1978, p. 121).

The illustrations accompanying Théodora (I10 and I10-A) visually reproduce the same Orientalist themes present in the text. They stage hierarchical power, moral decadence, and exotic theatricality, turning Byzantine civilization into a cinematic Orient tailored to Western fantasies of otherness and spectacle (Said, 1978, p. 94).

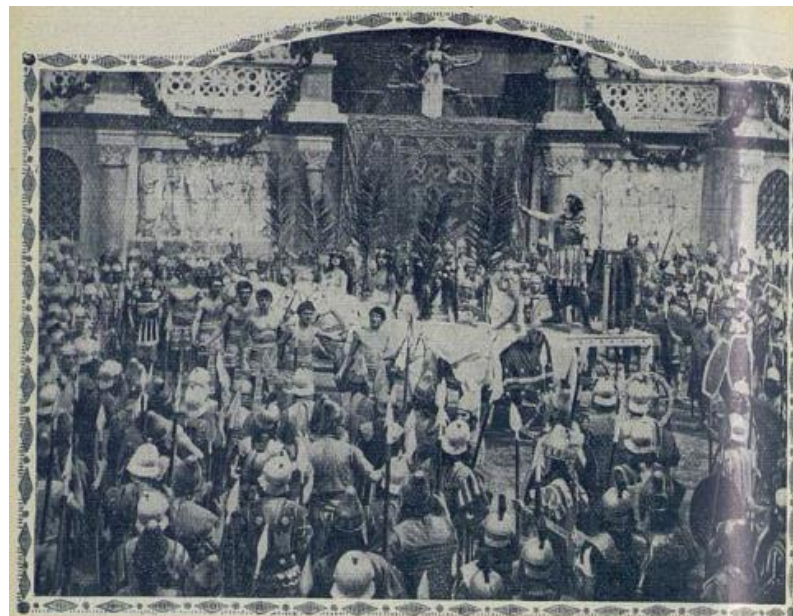


Illustration 4.34. Spectacle Impérial et les Masses / Imperial Spectacle and the Masses (I10)

This wide imperial court scene centers on Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora addressing a mass of submissive figures. The visual symmetry, ornate costumes, and ritualized hierarchy depict absolutist rule and ritualized obedience, typical of Orientalist imagery where the East is shown as dominated by spectacle rather than rational governance (Said, 1978, pp. 72–75).

The crowd's deference evokes an image of Byzantium as a theatrical monarchy, emphasizing excess, control, and emotional distance, contrasting with Western ideals of democracy and transparency.



Illustration 4.35. L'Archétype de la Femme Fatale Orientale / The Archetype of the Oriental Femme Fatale (I10-A)

Although the figure depicted is a male actor (possibly Otis Skinner), the exaggerated costume, facial expression, and framing encapsulate the performative theatricality of Oriental power. The turbans, heavy fabrics, and ornamental motifs strip individuality in favor of staged otherness.

The close-up expression—simultaneously gleeful and sinister—reinforces Western projections of irrational emotion and latent violence onto Eastern figures, echoing the magazine's depiction of Theodora's manipulative behavior (Said, 1978, pp. 186–189).

The textual and visual portrayal of Théodora in *Cinémagazine* constitutes a full-fledged Orientalist construction. Byzantium is not presented as a historical civilization but as a fantasy space where treachery, sensuality, and despotism reign. Through both narrative and imagery, the article contributes to a Eurocentric vision of the East, reaffirming Western superiority by projecting moral, political, and cultural inferiority onto an exoticized past. In accordance with Edward Said's critique, the Orient is once again shown not as a reality to be understood but as a stage to be dramatized—where Western viewers can both marvel at and feel superior to the imagined "Other."

vii. Findings on Orientalism from T11

T11 corresponds to "Incha'Allah / InshaAllah", featured in issue No. 48. The review utilizes the religious expression "God willing" as a cultural symbol to evoke fatalism and passivity, which are frequently attributed to Oriental societies in colonial discourse, thereby reinforcing reductive stereotypes.

Published in *Cinémagazine* in 1922, the review of *Inch'Allah*, directed by Frantz Toussaint, offers a striking example of how early French cinema participated in the Orientalist construction of North Africa. Through both its narrative description and its aesthetic evaluation, the article presents Morocco as an exotic land governed by prophecy, passion, and fate, thus reinforcing broader colonial narratives of Western superiority and Eastern backwardness.

Mysticism, Fatalism, and Exotic Destiny:

« L'Empire du Moghreb sera sauvé d'un désastre par une jeune fille très belle dont le père sera né là-bas et pour laquelle sept hommes mourront dans la même nuit. » (The Empire of the Maghreb will be saved from disaster by a very beautiful young girl whose father was born there and for whom seven men will die in the same night.) (*Cinémagazine*, 1922, No. 48)

The entire plot revolves around a mystical prophecy, reinforcing the Orientalist trope of the East as a land ruled by fate and supernatural forces, rather than reason or political agency (Said, 1978, pp. 118–121).

Aestheticization of the Desert Landscape:

« Un torrent de lumière baigne le désert au sable d'or, mer infinie aux vagues un moment figées mais que le moindre souffle anime. » (A torrent of light bathes the golden sand desert, an infinite sea with waves momentarily frozen but animated by the slightest breath.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 48)

The desert becomes a mythical and aestheticized space, stripped of real socio-political context. Said identifies this aesthetic fascination with the Orient as a way to neutralize and commodify it for Western consumption (1978, pp. 118–121).

Gendered Orientalism and the Role of Women: « Zilah, souple et féline. » (Zilah, supple and feline.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 48)

Female characters like Zilah are cast in hypersexualized and animalistic terms, embodying Western fantasies of Eastern women as exotic, sensual, and elusive. This reflects what Said describes as the fetishization and feminization of the Orient (1978, pp. 186–189).

« Djahila, tantôt toute séduction et passion feinte, tantôt perfide et désespérée. » (Djahila, sometimes all seduction and feigned passion, sometimes treacherous and desperate.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 48)

The trope of the treacherous femme fatale persists, reinforcing the notion that Eastern women, when not passive, are dangerous and morally suspect.

The Barbaric Ruler and the Noble Savage: « Un prince paresseux et débauché, sans s'occuper de son peuple. » (A lazy and debauched prince, uninterested in his people.) (Cinémagazine, 1922, No. 48)

The depiction of Sultan Khaled as a corrupt and indifferent ruler supports the colonial myth that Eastern governance is inherently despotic, justifying Western intervention (Said, 1978, pp. 72–75).

Meanwhile, the desert warriors, although noble and brave, are depicted as fatalistic and primitive, suggesting that only through Europeanization or exceptional internal figures (like Zilah) can progress be achieved.

The visual material accompanying *Inch'Allah* (I11) visually amplifies the Orientalist discourse found in the text. Through portraiture techniques and ethnographic stylization, the image constructs Saïd, the male protagonist, as both a romanticized and objectified figure of Eastern fatalism—a static subject fit for Western cinematic imagination (Said, 1978, p. 94).



**Illustration 4.36. Portrait de Brahim El Hadjeb (Saïd) dans *Inch'Allah* /
Portrait of Brahim El Hadjeb (Saïd) in *Inch'Allah* (I11)**

In I11, Brahim El Hadjeb is framed in an oval portrait, emphasizing isolation and aesthetic presentation. His traditional turban, somber gaze, and rugged attire contribute to the ethnographic aestheticization of the Oriental male.

The oval frame suggests timelessness and exotic difference, situating Saïd not as a contemporary character but as an icon of desert fatalism. This mirrors the textual construction of Saïd as a "fanatic" who is motivated not by reason but by destiny and tradition.

In Edward Said's terms, this mode of portraiture reduces the Eastern subject to a timeless symbol: emotional, static, and spiritually intense, contrasting sharply with the rational, dynamic West (Said, 1978, p. 121).

Inch'Allah as reviewed in Cinémagazine offers a vivid case study of colonial cinematic Orientalism. The film's narrative and visuals collaboratively construct Morocco as an exotic, fated, and aesthetically consumable landscape populated by noble savages, treacherous femmes fatales, and decadent rulers.

Through mystical prophecy, sensual imagery, and fatalistic characterization, Inch'Allah reinforces colonial stereotypes, framing the Orient not as a political or historical reality but as a romanticized object of Western fantasy. In line with Edward Said's critique, the East here is not represented but rather invented and controlled through cinematic and narrative devices that consolidate Western epistemological authority.

c. Findings in Light of Orientalism from Cinémagazine's 1923 Issues

Table 4.3. Cinémagazine's 1923 Orientalist Issues

Years	Issues	Text Titles (FR/ ENG)	Text Codes
1923	No: 7	Le Cinema Dans Les Harems / Cinema In The Harems	T12
1923	No: 8	Le Voile Du Bonheur / The Veil of Happiness	T13
1923	No: 19	L'expédition Vandenberg / The Vandenberg Expedition	T14
1923	No: 21	L'industrie Du Film En Turquie / The Film Industry in Turkey	T15
1923	No: 25	La Sultane de L'Amour / The Sultana of Love	T16
1923	No: 25	DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS "Le Voleur De Bagdad" / The History Of Cinema in Egypt	T17

The table above continues to outline the Findings in Light of Orientalism from Cinémagazine's 1923 Issues. To maintain analytical consistency, the texts (T12 to T17) have been classified in chronological order based on their publication dates in Cinémagazine. These entries offer significant examples of how Orientalist themes were constructed, represented, and disseminated through cinematic discourse during the early 1920s:

i. Findings on Orientalism from T12

T12 refers to "Le Cinéma dans les Harems / Cinema in the Harems", published in issue No. 7 in 1923. This text focuses on the imagined and hypersexualized portrayal of the harem, reinforcing fantasies of secrecy, sensuality, and female subjugation, central to the Orientalist imagination.

Published in Cinémagazine in 1923, Z. Rollini's article "Le Cinéma dans les Harems" reflects the pervasive Orientalist imagination of the early 20th century. Writing for a French readership fascinated by the exotic, Rollini employs the familiar Orientalist vocabulary of mystery, sensuality, and timelessness to describe the harem and Istanbul. His piece reveals how cinema — and its surrounding discourse — functioned as a means of projecting and consolidating Western fantasies about the East.

The Harem as an Eroticized and Forbidden Space:

« La civilisation occidentale et les idées modernes n'ont encore pénétré que superficiellement. » (Western civilization and modern ideas have only superficially penetrated.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 7)

Rollini portrays the East — particularly Turkey — as resistant to modernity, a timeless world locked behind veils and thick walls. The verb "pénétrer" (penetrate) suggests a voyeuristic and colonial desire to invade and reveal what is hidden, echoing Said's analysis of the West's need to "unveil" the Orient (Said, 1978, p. 96).

« Le harem sacré, inviolable, interdit à tout étranger. » (the sacred, inviolable harem, forbidden to any foreigner.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 7)

The harem becomes the epitome of Orientalist fantasy: both erotic and unattainable, a space defined by its inaccessibility and thus intensified in Western imagination (Said, 1978, pp. 63–66).

The Veil and the Construction of Otherness

« Le voile seul, si léger qu'il soit, suffit à rendre la vie de la femme turque bien différente de celle de la Française. » (The veil alone, however light it may be, is enough to make the life of the Turkish woman very different from that of the French woman.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 7)

The veil serves as a symbol of irreducible cultural difference, marking the Eastern woman as Other. This fixation supports the Orientalist binary between modern Western women and supposedly static Eastern women (Said, 1978, p. 186).

The Politically Active but Hidden Woman:

« Quelle petite bouche aux lèvres peintes de carmin soufflera sa nomination de ministre. »
(Which little mouth with carmine-painted lips will whisper his appointment as minister.)
(Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 7)

Eastern women are imagined as wielding secretive and erotic power, operating in shadows rather than public political life. This depiction merges fetishization and fear, constructing Eastern femininity as both seductive and threatening (Said, 1978, p. 187).

The Romanticized Yet Decaying Orient:

« De grandes maisons de pierre remplacent maintenant les cabanes de bois... mais l'âme orientale y survit toujours. » (Large stone houses now replace the wooden huts... but the Oriental soul still survives there.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 7)

Modernization is depicted as a superficial veneer. The “Oriental soul” remains immutable, reinforcing the idea that the East, unlike the West, is timeless and fundamentally incapable of true change (Said, 1978, p. 121).

« Qui n'a pas lu Les Désenchantées de Loti et entrevu l'Orient à travers la magie de son talent d'écrivain ? » (Who hasn't read Les Désenchantées by Loti and glimpsed the Orient through the magic of his writing?) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 7)

The citation of Pierre Loti anchors Rollini's article within the French literary Orientalist tradition, confirming that cinema continues the work begun by colonial literature: aestheticizing and fossilizing the East for Western enjoyment (Said, 1978, p. 2).

The iconography accompanying *Le Cinéma dans les Harems* (T12) visually amplifies the themes of seclusion, exoticism, and typological fixation described in the text. Through staged and highly symbolic imagery, the visuals replicate the Orientalist grammar that turns Muslim women into spectacular objects of curiosity (Said, 1978, p. 63).



Illustration 4.37. La Vie Monotone de la Musulmane / The Monotonous Life of the Muslim Woman (I12)

A smiling Muslim woman is photographed behind ornate latticework. The grillwork emphasizes confinement and opacity, aligning with the Orientalist view of Eastern women as inaccessible and culturally static. The caption stresses the "monotony" of her life, implying civilizational inferiority. This visual serves to infantilize and domesticate the Muslim woman for Western consumption (Said, 1978, p. 186).



Illustration 4.38. L'Incognito / The Incognito (I12-A)

This veiled figure, fully cloaked in black, symbolizes the ultimate inaccessibility of the Eastern woman. Her identity is erased, replaced by the veil itself — reinforcing the narrative that the Orient exists as a hidden enigma, always requiring Western interpretation or intervention (Said, 1978, p. 96).



Illustration 4.39. Type de Musulmane / Type of Muslim (I12-B)

Labeling the photograph as a “Type” racializes the subject, reducing her individuality into an ethnographic specimen. This practice, typical of colonial photography, exemplifies the taxonomical gaze of Orientalism, where difference is cataloged and appropriated (Said, 1978, p. 94).

Through both text and images, *Le Cinéma dans les Harems* exemplifies the Orientalist logic of exoticization, gendered othering, and colonial voyeurism. Z. Rollini’s article and its accompanying visuals do not document reality but rather produce a fantasy: an East that is erotic, stagnant, unknowable, and ultimately available for Western exploration and conquest. This case vividly demonstrates Edward Said’s argument that Orientalism operates not merely through discourse but through a total system of knowledge production, encompassing literature, journalism, visual art, and, crucially, cinema.

ii. Findings on Orientalism from T13

T13 corresponds to "Le Voile du Bonheur / The Veil of Happiness", featured in issue No. 8. The article discusses veiling in the context of Eastern societies, framing it as a symbol of both repression and mystique, thus perpetuating Western narratives about gender and freedom in the Orient.

Published in Cinémagazine in 1923, André Tinchant's article "Le Voile du Bonheur" offers a detailed account of the production of Georges Gleroepeau's film adaptation of a theatrical piece set in Ming Dynasty China. The article showcases how French cinematic discourse of the period simultaneously celebrated and domesticated the exotic Other through claims of authenticity, while reinforcing deeply entrenched Orientalist visions of China as static, aestheticized, and narratively subordinate to Western frames.

The Exoticization of China as a Timeless Land:

« L'action, vous ne l'ignorez pas, se passe en Chine, vers 1620, sous la dynastie des Ming, époque restée célèbre par les richesses artistiques qu'elle nous a laissées. » (The action, as you know, takes place in China, around 1620, under the Ming Dynasty, an era famous for the artistic wealth it left us.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 8)

The portrayal of China emphasizes its artistic treasures, reducing an entire civilization to a historical showcase for Western admiration. As Edward Said notes, the Orient is often depicted as "locked in time" — a cultural museum rather than a dynamic society (Said, 1978, p. 108).

Western Control Over Eastern Representation: « Il acquiesça aussitôt et me laissa carte blanche. » (He immediately agreed and gave me carte blanche.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 8)

The production's artistic direction is authorized by Western figures such as Louis Aubert and Clemenceau, underscoring the Western monopoly over how the East is to be represented. Through the concept of "carte blanche," the East becomes a blank canvas for Western imagination, fulfilling what Said describes as the "authority of representation" (Said, 1978, p. 94).

Reconstruction of "Authentic" Chinese Spaces and Attire: « La décoration générale est confiée au grand peintre, M. Orazi. » (The overall decoration is entrusted to the great painter, Mr. Orazi.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 8)

Despite the invocation of authenticity, all creative control rests in Western hands. The decor and costumes are reconstructions filtered through Western artistic interpretation, emphasizing that authenticity in Orientalist cinema is always a selective, curated fantasy (Said, 1978, p. 121).

Casting as a Performance of "Authenticity":

« Tous les artistes, me répondit-il, sont, sans une exception, du pays de Confucius. » (All the artists, he replied, are, without exception, from the land of Confucius.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 8)

Even when using Chinese actors, the production ultimately objectifies them within a Western framework, treating their presence as visual proof of authenticity while scripting their roles according to French cinematic expectations. This reflects Said's argument that the Orient, even when embodied by real subjects, is produced and consumed according to Western categories (Said, 1978, p. 1).

The visual representation accompanying *Le Voile du Bonheur* (T13) deepens the Orientalist construction presented in the article. Through staged photography, particularly of the lead actress, the film reaffirms the East as a land of aestheticized, passive femininity, where individual identity is subsumed under decorative exoticism.



Illustration 4.40. Mlle Sussi Watta / Miss Sussi Watta (I13)

The image of Mlle Sussi Watta portrays her as the quintessential "ideal" Chinese woman: serene, traditional, and ornamental. Her posture, the framing, and her stylized braid conform to the aesthetic codes of Orientalist visual culture.

Rather than presenting an autonomous subject, the portrait reduces her to an aesthetic emblem — a living tableau of restrained exotic beauty. As Said asserts, such visual tropes “transform living human beings into static, knowable, and ultimately controllable objects” (Said, 1978, p. 207). The lighting and careful costuming emphasize not her individuality but her role as a visual conduit of "Chineseness". In this sense, her presence validates the authenticity of the film not by her performance, but by her silent conformity to visual expectations.

Le Voile du Bonheur as presented in *Cinémagazine* offers a rich example of how French cinematic culture in the early 1920s appropriated and aestheticized the Orient. André Tinchant's article, while ostensibly celebrating cinematic craftsmanship and historical fidelity, ultimately reinforces a vision of China that is static, exotic, and subordinate to Western aesthetic control.

Through the lens of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, the film's production emerges not as a tribute to Chinese culture, but as a reproduction of the West's own fantasies and

hierarchies, where the Orient exists to be displayed, narrated, and preserved by Western authority.

iii. Findings on Orientalism from T14

T14 designates "L'Expédition Vandenberg / The Vandenberg Expedition", published in issue No. 19. This piece documents an expedition to Africa, reinforcing colonial ideals of exploration and conquest, while presenting the African landscape and people through an exoticized and objectifying lens.

The article L'Expédition Vandenberg, published anonymously in Cinémagazine in 1923, presents an account of a cinematic journey into Central Africa. Framed as a scientific mission sponsored by prestigious institutions such as the Muséum d'Histoire naturelle and the Société de Géographie, the expedition is portrayed as a noble endeavor to document and unveil the mysteries of the African continent for European audiences.

In reality, the article, like many contemporaneous colonial productions, reinforces Orientalist structures, presenting Africa not as a historical agent but as a field of spectacle, strangeness, and scientific conquest. The colonial and cinematic gaze converge to create a visual and textual narrative that objectifies African subjects and affirms Western superiority.

The Exoticization and Objectification of Africa:

« Les tribus, aux coutumes étranges, offrent un spectacle à la fois pittoresque et inquiétant. »
(The tribes, with their strange customs, offer a spectacle that is both picturesque and unsettling.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 19)

The portrayal of African societies as "strange" and "picturesque" frames them not as complex civilizations but as visual curiosities for Western consumption. As Edward Said notes, Orientalism reduces non-Western cultures to a theatrical spectacle staged for the West's interpretive control (Said, 1978, p. 63).

The Colonial Scientific Gaze:

« L'expédition vise à compléter les connaissances laissées par les célèbres explorateurs Baker et Livingstone. » (The expedition aims to complete the knowledge left by the famous explorers Baker and Livingstone.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 19)

The framing of the expedition as a scientific continuation of British colonial exploration legitimizes European epistemological dominance. African realities are deemed incomplete or invisible until "verified" and "completed" by European institutions, reflecting what Said identifies as the colonial "authority to represent" (Said, 1978, p. 94).

Paternalism and Racial Hierarchies:

« Certaines tribus, surprises, se réfugient dans les forêts à la vue de l'expédition ; d'autres rient et honorent leurs visiteurs. » (Some tribes, surprised, flee into the forests at the sight of the expedition; others laugh and honor their visitors.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 19)

The paternalistic tone positions Africans as either fearful children or naive admirers of European presence, reinforcing racial hierarchies and the infantilization of African societies — a consistent element of colonial and Orientalist discourse (Said, 1978, p. 108).

Cinema as a Tool of Domination and Spectacle: The article celebrates the power of cinema to transport Europeans to Africa "without fatigue," emphasizing the role of the camera in unveiling and possessing exotic landscapes and bodies. The indigenous people are described as "photogenic," their visual appeal reinforcing their object status within Western visual regimes.

Said argues that the Orient (and by extension colonial Africa) was transformed into a "stage on which the East is confined" (Said, 1978, p. 63). The cinematic apparatus here acts not as a window onto African life, but as a mechanism for controlling its image and meaning.

The photographic illustrations accompanying *L'Expédition Vandenberg* (T14) extend the textual Orientalism into a visual grammar of colonial domination. The

subjects are portrayed not as individuals, but as aestheticized representatives of a static, primitive Africa — an Africa that exists primarily for European spectatorship.



Illustration 4.41. Guerriers de l'Afrique Equatoriale / Warriors of Equatorial Africa (I14)

This image features two African men adorned with ritualistic body paint and traditional weaponry. The caption—"Warriors of Equatorial Africa"—essentializes their identity, reducing them to ethnographic types.

The symmetrical pose, direct gazes, and decorative framing transform them into living artifacts, reinforcing what Said terms the "museum effect" of colonial display (Said, 1978, p. 118). Their individuality is eclipsed; they exist within the frame as timeless, picturesque objects ready for Western collection and study.



Illustration 4.42. Une Elégante du Centre Africain / An Elegant One from the African Center (I14-A)

In this photograph, a Central African woman adorned with a lip plate and intricate jewelry is presented as a curiosity. The caption's ironic tone—"An elegant woman from Central Africa"—exposes the Western fascination with bodily difference as a sign of cultural inferiority or strangeness.

This type of representation mirrors the ethnographic postcards analyzed by Malek Alloula, wherein African women were cataloged and aestheticized for French colonial consumption. As Said asserts, such imagery constructs the Other not as a historical agent, but as a fixed and knowable spectacle (Said, 1978, p. 94).

L'Expédition Vandenberg exemplifies how early French cinema and press appropriated the African continent into a colonial archive of images and narratives. Under the guise of scientific exploration and documentary realism, the article and its visuals transform African societies into aesthetic objects, flattening cultural complexity into consumable spectacle.

Through Edward Said's *Orientalism*, it becomes clear that the expedition is not about understanding Africa, but about mastering it visually and epistemologically. Africa

exists within the colonial imagination not as a living entity, but as an eternal Other, endlessly observable yet never fully knowable.

iv. Findings on Orientalism from T15

T15 refers to "L'Industrie du Film en Turquie / The Film Industry in Turkey", which appeared in issue No. 21. This article provides a rare perspective on cinema production in a non-Western context. However, even as it acknowledges Turkey's cinematic aspirations, it subtly reflects Western superiority by framing Turkish efforts as imitative or nascent compared to French cinema.

The article *L'Industrie du Film en Turquie*, authored by Robert de Marchi and published in *Cinémagazine* on May 8, 1923 (No. 21), offers a revealing insight into how early 20th-century French critics framed the emergence of non-European cinema. Written during the last months of the Ottoman Empire and on the eve of the Turkish Republic's founding, the text mirrors broader French colonial and cultural attitudes that positioned the East as needing Western guidance.

Cinémagazine, a widely read outlet for film news and criticism, reflected France's cultural hegemony and its view of itself as an arbiter of global artistic progress. De Marchi's piece must be understood within this broader Orientalist context.

The Infantilization of Turkish Cinema:

« Le Cinéma français se trouve en enfance d'après certains spécialistes érudits français, nous devons dire alors, en nous basant sur ce même principe, que le Cinéma turc n'est pas encore né. » (W French cinema is still in its infancy, 'according to certain learned French specialists'; therefore, based on this same principle, we must say that Turkish cinema has not yet been born.) (*Cinémagazine*, 1923, No. 21)

By describing Turkish cinema as "not yet born," de Marchi infantilizes the Turkish artistic scene, reinforcing the Orientalist dichotomy between a mature, rational West and a primitive, nascent East. As Said argues, the Orient is often cast as locked in a timeless state of underdevelopment (Said, 1978, p. 108).

Religious Censorship as a Barrier to Progress:

« Les Mystères du Bosphore furent interdits [...] en contradiction avec les lois religieuses mahométanes. » (Les Mystères du Bosphore was banned [...] due to contradiction with Mohammedan religious laws.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 21)

The invocation of "Mohammedan laws" frames Islam as an obstacle to artistic expression and modernization. The use of the term "Mohammedan" — outdated even at the time — reflects an Orientalist tendency to depict Islamic culture as rigid, repressive, and inherently incompatible with progress (Said, 1978, p. 108).

Western Superiority and the Call for Intervention:

« De faire un tout petit sacrifice et d'engager [...] un de nos metteurs en scène. » (To make a small sacrifice and hire one of our directors.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 21)

De Marchi's suggestion that Turkish cinema could only succeed through French expertise epitomizes the Orientalist belief that the West must intervene to guide and civilize non-Western societies. The phrase "small sacrifice" minimizes the significance of Turkish creative agency and reaffirms France's self-ascribed cultural superiority.

Patronizing Praise of Turkish Efforts:

Although de Marchi acknowledges the success of *Chemise de Feu* (adapted from a novel by Halide Edib Adıvar), his praise remains laced with condescension:

« La première de ce film fut une véritable révélation pour le public constantinopolitain. » (The premiere of this film was a true revelation for the Constantinople audience.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 21)

The phrase positions the Turkish audience as naive, easily astonished by modest artistic achievements, reinforcing the Orientalist trope of Eastern societies as childlike and perpetually surprised by modernity.

The visual component accompanying *L'Industrie du Film en Turquie* (T15) extends these Orientalist tropes, particularly through the representation of Turkish filmmakers and actors as "types" rather than as autonomous cultural innovators.



Illustration 4.43. Mouhsin Erthogroul Bey, Mouniré Eyoub Hanoum, Behssat Bey (I15)

This triptych presents three figures central to the early Turkish film industry: Mouhsin Bey Erthogroul (director), Mouniré Eyoub Hanoum (actress), and Behssat Bey (actor).

The image's composition underscores the Orientalist themes present in the text:

Mouhsin Bey Erthogroul, depicted in formal Ottoman attire (including the fez), appears detached and formal, visually suspended between tradition and modernity. His averted gaze evokes Said's argument that the Oriental subject is often denied full modern agency and framed instead as static or transitional (Said, 1978, p. 94).

Mouniré Eyoub Hanoum, centrally placed, is styled according to Western fantasies of the veiled, modest Eastern woman. Her downcast eyes and concealed hair reinforce Orientalist projections of feminine passivity and erotic mystery, fitting the pattern Said identifies where the Eastern woman becomes a symbol of both sensuality and cultural backwardness (Said, 1978, p. 207).

Behssat Bey, dressed in theatrical costume, evokes the trope of performative identity. His elaborate clothing and rigid pose align with the notion that Eastern modernity must first pass through a stage of exotic performativity before being "civilized" through Western influence.

Both the text and image in *L'Industrie du Film en Turquie* exemplify the Orientalist framework Edward Said critiques. Turkish cinema is presented not as an emergent national industry but as an amusing, exotic curiosity requiring Western tutelage. De Marchi's condescending suggestions and the triptych's visual composition both reassert a cultural hierarchy that places France at the center of artistic legitimacy and Turkey at its periphery.

In doing so, *Cinémagazine* contributes to the broader colonial project of defining, regulating, and "improving" the cultural productions of non-Western societies, ensuring that even in cinema, the Orient remains a space of tutelage, spectacle, and arrested development under the Western gaze.

v. Findings on Orientalism from T16

T16 corresponds to "*La Sultane de l'Amour / The Sultana of Love*", published in issue No. 25. This romanticized depiction of an Eastern female figure draws heavily on Orientalist tropes of passion, luxury, and submission, portraying the "sultana" as a figure of exotic desire shaped by Western fantasies.

The article announcing *La Sultane de l'Amour* was published in *Cinémagazine* (No. 25, 1923), during a period when French cinema heavily engaged with colonial and exotic themes. *Cinémagazine*, a leading French film journal, was a key vehicle for promoting cultural perceptions rooted in France's colonial imagination. The magazine's framing of Eastern cultures as sites of fantasy and spectacle reflects the broader Orientalist discourse analyzed by Edward Said (1978).

The film, directed by René Le Somptier and Charles Burguet and written by Frantz Toussaint—an author known for Orientalist narratives—was produced by Pathé Consortium Cinéma. The production illustrates how Western media industries appropriated and aestheticized Eastern cultures for Western audiences, contributing to the cultural dimension of colonialism.

The Fantasy of the Orient: « Une merveilleuse évocation de l'Orient » (A marvelous evocation of the Orient.) (*Cinémagazine*, 1923, No. 25)

The announcement explicitly positions the Orient not as a real place, but as an aesthetic fantasy, echoing Said's observation that the East is often imagined as a theatrical, seductive spectacle rather than represented with accuracy (Said, 1978, p. 63). The word "évocation" emphasizes that what is offered is an artistic dreamscape, not a lived cultural reality.

Reinscription of the Thousand and One Nights Myth: « Conte inédit des Mille et une Nuits » (An original tale from the Thousand and One Nights.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 25)

By invoking The Thousand and One Nights, the film taps into long-standing Western fantasies of harems, palaces, and Oriental decadence. As Said notes, these narratives position the East as a "timeless," "sensual" space built for Western consumption, reinforcing colonial binaries between the rational West and the exotic East (Said, 1978, p. 58).

The Aestheticization and Commodification of the East:

The focus on "composition cinégraphique" highlights the Orientalist practice of converting the East into a purely visual and aesthetic object. Rather than exploring historical depth or cultural complexity, the East is flattened into a series of decorative images for Western pleasure.

Although the film claims authenticity, it is entirely a Western production. Frantz Toussaint, a French Orientalist writer, authors the narrative; the directors are French; and the actors—France Dhélia, Marcel Levesque, Gaston Modot—are all European. Thus, the Orient is framed as a subject to be narrated, staged, and performed by Europeans, confirming Shohat and Stam's concept of "epistemic violence" (Shohat & Stam, 1994).

Through these elements, *La Sultane de l'Amour* exemplifies the Orientalist process by which the East is stripped of its voice and turned into a spectacle of difference, mystique, and sensuality for Western audiences. The promotional material

accompanying *La Sultane de l'Amour* (T16) visually reinforces the Orientalist imaginary built by the text, even though it is primarily typographical.



Illustration 4.44. *La Sultane de l'Amour* (Publicité de Film) / *The Sultana of Love* (Film Advertisement) (I16)

The advertisement operates as a visual artifact of Orientalism through its language and layout:

Absence of Authentic Imagery: There is no photographic or pictorial depiction of actual Eastern characters or landscapes. Instead, meaning is constructed through suggestive language—"Mille et une Nuits", "évocation de l'Orient"—that primes the audience for an encounter with fantasy rather than history.

Linguistic Aestheticization: The textual elements serve a visual function: the ornate typography and phrasing create a spectacle in themselves. As Said (1978) explains, Orientalist discourse often involves a "structure of attitude and reference" that makes the Orient consumable without needing real knowledge (p. 58).

The Sultana as a Fantasy Object: The very title, *La Sultane de l'Amour*, reduces a potentially powerful Eastern figure (the sultana) to an embodiment of sensual love,

erasing political or historical complexity. This continues the trend, noted by Said, of feminizing and eroticizing the Orient to reinforce Western dominance.

Thus, even in its minimalist form, I16 stages the East as a mythical, feminized domain intended to entertain, intrigue, and reassure the Western viewer of their cultural superiority.

Both the text and the promotional image for *La Sultane de l'Amour* exemplify the Orientalist frameworks critiqued by Edward Said. Through aestheticization, fantasy, and cultural appropriation, the film announcement transforms the Orient into a site of Western fantasy, reinforcing colonial hierarchies. *La Sultane de l'Amour* is not an exploration of Eastern culture, but a carefully curated Western projection, designed to fascinate and dominate through spectacle. As such, *Cinémagazine's* coverage of the film participates actively in the broader Orientalist discourse that shaped public perceptions of the East during the colonial era.

vi. Findings on Orientalism from T17

T17 refers to the article on Douglas Fairbanks' "*Le Voleur de Bagdad / The Thief of Baghdad*", also featured in issue No. 25. The review explores this Hollywood production's use of Oriental motifs—flying carpets, magical cities, and heroic thieves—highlighting the international spread of Orientalist themes and their influence on Western cinematic imagination.

The article *Douglas Fairbanks dans Le Voleur de Bagdad* was published in *Cinémagazine* (No. 25, 1923) and authored by Robert Florey, an influential figure in early Hollywood cinema. *Cinémagazine*, a leading French film journal, reflected dominant cultural currents of the 1920s, often portraying non-Western cultures through the lens of exoticism and spectacle.

The coverage of *Le Voleur de Bagdad* offers a vivid illustration of how Hollywood—and its European commentators—reproduced Orientalist fantasies. Florey's article fits squarely within the ideological framework described by Edward Said (1978), where

the "Orient" is imagined as a space of mystery, sensuality, and subjugation, destined for Western consumption and domination.

The Exoticization of the Orient:

« Les splendeurs des Mille et Une Nuits, les enchantements d'Aladin et de sa Lampe Merveilleuse. » (The splendors of One Thousand and One Nights, the enchantments of Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 25)

Florey's invocation of *Les Mille et Une Nuits* situates the film within the tradition of Western fantasy about the East. As Said argues, the Orient is depicted not as a real, complex space but as a magical and timeless realm, tailored to European dreams of adventure and sensual excess (Said, 1978, p. 63).

The East as a Space of Lawlessness and Western Appropriation:

« S'approprié tout ce qui lui plaît [...] personne ne peut lui offrir la moindre résistance. » ([He] appropriates everything he pleases [...] no one can offer him the slightest resistance.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 25)

Fairbanks' character, operating freely and unchallenged in the imagined Baghdad, exemplifies the colonial fantasy of Western dominance. The Orient here is portrayed as a chaotic, passive backdrop, needing Western mastery—reaffirming Said's notion that the East exists as a field for Western intervention and gratification (Said, 1978, p. 108).

Racial Otherness and Body Modification:

« La couleur de sa peau brune n'ayant pas été déclarée assez photogénique, on lui a essayé une demi-douzaine de maquillages foncés. » (His brown skin was not considered photogenic enough, so six different dark makeup applications were tried on him.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 25)

Florey's commentary on modifying the appearance of a Black actor reveals how Hollywood's Orientalism also intersected with racial hierarchies. Non-Western bodies had to be aesthetically altered to conform to Western visual expectations, reinforcing the constructedness of the "Oriental" image (Shohat & Stam, 1994).

Western Control over the Eastern Landscape:

« La place complète a 60.000 pieds carrés [...] un demi-dollar environ par pied. » (The entire square is 60,000 square feet, and the cost per square foot of cement laid and varnished is about fifty cents.) (Cinémagazine, 1923, No. 25)

The monumental artificial construction of Baghdad reflects Western cinematic power to remake and possess the East. As Said notes, the Orient in Western imagination is not encountered but fabricated—a space sculpted to satisfy colonial narratives of supremacy and spectacle (Said, 1978, p. 6).

The images accompanying Florey's article (T17) reinforce the textual Orientalism, particularly by centering Fairbanks' white masculinity against an exoticized and submissive Eastern backdrop.



Illustration 4.45. Un Aspect Impétueux de Douglas Fairbanks / An Impetuous Aspect of Douglas Fairbanks (I17)

This portrait shows Fairbanks half-naked, adorned with a headband and large earring, smiling confidently. His exposed body and bold posture embody Western virility and dominance. As Said (1978) argues, Orientalist art often stages the Western hero's physical and moral superiority against an imagined effeminate East (p. 207).



**Illustration 4.46. Une Attitude de Douglas dans Le Voleur de Bagdad / A
Douglas Attitude in the Thief of Baghdad (I17-A)**

Fairbanks is pictured mid-action, framed by stylized Moorish architecture. The exaggerated theatricality of his posture, set against exotic decor, underlines the East as a mere stage for Western adventure. The Orient, here, loses its specificity, reduced to decorative background for Western triumph (Said, 1978, p. 6).

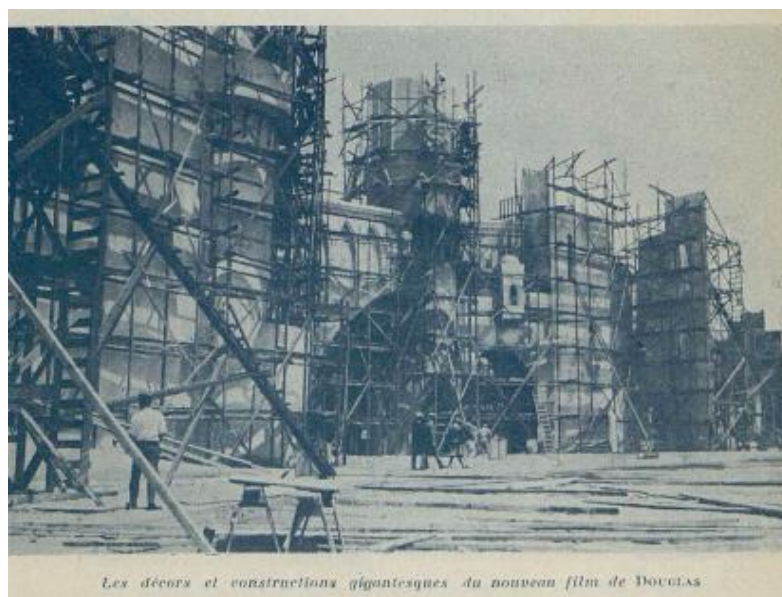


**Illustration 4.47. Les Décors et Constructions Gigantesques du Nouveau Film de
Douglas / The Gigantic Sets and Constructions of Douglas' New Film (I17-B)**

This wide shot showcases the colossal fabricated sets of "Baghdad," dwarfing the workers below. It symbolizes Western technological might and imaginative control over the East, confirming Said's assertion that Orientalist representations produce the Orient as a constructed fantasy space for Western domination (Said, 1978, p. 108).

Both Robert Florey's article and the associated images of *Le Voleur de Bagdad* exemplify the Orientalist framework critiqued by Edward Said. The film transforms Baghdad into an exotic playground, where a Western hero operates unopposed, and Eastern peoples and spaces are subordinated to Western narratives of adventure and conquest.

The visual and textual strategies of *Cinémagazine*—through Fairbanks' hyper-masculine portrayal, the aestheticization of the Orient, and the monumental reconstruction of Baghdad—highlight how cinema served as an extension of colonial ideology, reshaping the East into a consumable spectacle for Western audiences. In this cinematic imaginary, the Orient ceases to be a place of real cultural richness and becomes instead a mirror reflecting Western fantasies of power, freedom, and control.

4.2. Discussions on Orientalist Findings from *Cinémagazine*

The findings obtained from *Cinémagazine* (1921–1923), which have been thematically classified under exoticization, gendered representation, colonial superiority, and cultural infantilization, should not be viewed as isolated reflections of editorial preference. Rather, they function as cultural inscriptions within a broader ideological framework of Orientalism. As theorized by Edward Said (1978), Orientalism is not merely a distorted mode of representing the East; it is a structured discourse that supports, legitimizes, and perpetuates Western imperial dominance. The articles and visual materials analyzed in this study exemplify how cinema journalism served as a medium for disseminating and naturalizing this ideological discourse to the French public.

Said's framework identifies Orientalism as an episteme—a system of knowledge—that enables the West to construct the East as inferior, exotic, irrational, and timeless. This construction is evident across the texts analyzed in *Cinémagazine*, where the

Orient appears not as a dynamic and heterogeneous entity, but as a static backdrop for European exploration, moral superiority, and civilizing intervention. Whether in the form of veiled women (T12, T13), mystical deserts (T2, T8), or decadent rulers (T10, T11), these images replicate a fixed semiotic structure that affirms the ontological difference between the West and the East.

From a visual semiotics perspective, these elements function as what Roland Barthes (1972) defines as “mythologies”—signs that naturalize dominant ideologies by masking their constructedness. The repetition of specific motifs—arches, turbans, harems, passive female poses—produces a grammar of othering that aestheticizes colonial domination. The Orient, in this schema, is not just distant, but available for consumption, interpretation, and symbolic conquest.

Moreover, the corpus also aligns with Said’s later insights on self-Orientalism, wherein Eastern elites or cultural figures reproduce Orientalist tropes in exchange for visibility or legitimacy within a Western-dominated media system. In texts such as *Le Voile du Bonheur* (T13) or *Le Maroc à l’Écran* (T9), we witness local figures engaging in performative roles that cater to Western expectations of authenticity and exoticism. These examples reflect what Hamid Dabashi (2006) terms the “native informer” function—wherein indigenous participation reinforces hegemonic narratives rather than subverts them.

These observations suggest that the discourse of Orientalism in *Cinémagazine* cannot be reduced to a unidirectional process of representation. Rather, it constitutes a multi-layered system of meaning-making—one that draws from and contributes to cinematic, political, economic, and affective regimes of power. As Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (1994) argue, Orientalism in media is not merely a question of textual content, but of broader institutional arrangements including production, distribution, reception, and global circulation.

a. Situating *Cinémagazine* in the Context of Decolonial Media Debates

Before delving into recent scholarly developments, it is essential to recognize the historical role of cinema and journalism in shaping mass cultural consciousness. In

their seminal work “Le cinéma et la presse”/” Cinema and Press” 1895–1960, René Jeanne and Charles Ford (1961) articulate the reciprocal influence between the cinematic field and the journalistic sphere in constructing public opinion. They argue that during periods of ideological upheaval—such as the interwar years and both World Wars—cinema and press were not merely vehicles of entertainment but instruments of persuasion and national identity formation.

This analytical lens proves particularly salient when examining the publication context of Cinémagazine. Between 1921 and 1923, France, under the Bloc National government, was at the height of its imperial confidence. As Burrows (1986) contends, the ideology of the mission civilisatrice justified cultural domination in North Africa and the Middle East by casting colonized subjects as civilizationally immature. Jean-Yves Mollier (1999) similarly underscores the press’s function as a cultural apparatus for broadcasting colonial ideology to a mass readership. Within this ideological terrain, Cinémagazine operated as a vehicle for aestheticizing colonial narratives, deploying the visual and textual economy of exoticism and eroticism to reproduce and normalize hierarchical East-West relations.

Contemporary scholars have expanded Said’s framework to address its limitations and blind spots. Aijaz Ahmad (1992), for instance, critiques Orientalism for treating the West as a monolithic actor and overlooking internal ideological contradictions. Applying this critique, we find in Cinémagazine a dialectical interplay: while many texts reflect colonial condescension (e.g., T15, *L’Industrie du Film en Turquie*), others simultaneously express fascination, aesthetic admiration, or ambiguity (e.g., T16, *La Sultane de l’Amour*).

Lisa Lowe (1991) similarly expands Orientalist critique by highlighting hybridity and the entangled nature of colonial representation. Her insights are particularly useful for interpreting the ambivalence in depictions of Eastern women, who are both eroticized and allegorized as figures of Western anxiety and romantic escapism. For example, in *La Sultane de l’Amour* (T16), the titular character serves as both a symbol of exotic sensuality and a vessel for European narrative resolution.

Additionally, scholars such as Vivek Chibber (2013) remind us that Orientalism should also be interpreted within the context of capitalist modernity. The commodification of the Orient in cinematic texts like *L'Expédition Vandenberg* (T14) and *In the Heart of Savage Africa* (T6) reveals not just ideological processes but also market-driven logics. The Orient becomes a cinematic product—one that satisfies the consumer desires of French metropolitan audiences while simultaneously reinforcing colonial values.

b. Contemporary Decolonial Reflections on Orientalist Archives

Beyond classical postcolonial analysis, recent scholarship has pushed the boundaries of Orientalism studies by exploring how coloniality continues to shape visual epistemologies in contemporary media systems. Alia Al-Saji (2021) critiques the coloniality of the gaze itself, arguing that ethical seeing requires a decolonization of visual habits and institutional frameworks. Similarly, Banerjee (2020) identifies how contemporary global media—while adopting progressive discourses—still reinforce stereotypical narratives of the non-West through selective visibility and exoticized framing. Gržinić (2023) emphasizes that aesthetic structures in media reproduce “colonial time,” a temporality that situates the non-West in an arrested state of development and spectacle. These perspectives complement Achille Mbembe’s (2021) assertion that decolonization today must address not only political power but also the affective and representational mechanisms that mediate global subjectivity.

Mignolo and Walsh (2021) further call for an epistemic disobedience that challenges Eurocentric categories and aesthetics from within the media apparatus. In this light, figures such as Todd (2020) argue that even abstract concepts like ontology—when uncritically adopted—can reinforce colonial frameworks. These interventions urge scholars to read Orientalist archives like *Cinémagazine* not only through textual critique but through a broader interrogation of media infrastructures, aesthetic regimes, and temporal imaginaries. As Vincendeau (2021) points out, French interwar cinema operated within a nexus of colonial fantasy and gendered visibility—contributing to a cinematic economy where empire was rendered pleasurable, familiar, and invisible. Integrating these insights reinforces the argument that *Cinémagazine* participated in a historically situated, yet ideologically persistent system of cultural imperialism.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has examined the French cinema magazine *Cinémagazine* (1921–1923) through the analytical lens of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, with the aim of exploring how early film journalism participated in the discursive construction of the "Orient" as a cultural Other. By analyzing 17 texts (T1–T17) and accompanying visual materials (I1–I17-B), the study demonstrated that *Cinémagazine* consistently relied on Orientalist tropes—representing Eastern spaces as exotic, stagnant, or irrational; depicting Eastern women as eroticized and passive; and portraying Western intervention as culturally superior and historically inevitable.

In line with Said's thesis that Orientalism is a system of knowledge and power designed to produce and control representations of the East, this research confirmed that French cinema journalism during the interwar period was not a neutral observer of cinema, but an active participant in shaping colonial imagination. Articles such as *L'Industrie du Film en Turquie* and *Le Maroc à l'Écran* exemplify how cinema criticism served to reinforce the ideology of the mission civilisatrice and situate French cultural identity as inherently modern, rational, and progressive.

By engaging with both classical and contemporary scholarship, this study reveals that Orientalist representations in *Cinémagazine* were not merely reflections of early twentieth-century French imperial culture, but foundational elements in the aesthetic and ideological construction of cinematic modernity. Integrating recent critiques—such as those of Al-Saji (2021), Banerjee (2020), and Vincendeau (2021)—has shown that the Orientalist logic persists today through evolving media infrastructures, visual epistemologies, and global circuits of cultural production.

This thesis makes several significant contributions to the interdisciplinary field of media and postcolonial studies:

Extending Orientalism into Media Studies: While Edward Said's work has been extensively applied in literature and political discourse, its integration into film journalism remains under-explored. This research bridges that gap by situating Cinémagazine within Orientalist epistemology and revealing how cinematic discourse normalized imperial hierarchies;

Reviving a Neglected Archive: French cinema magazines of the 1920s have received limited scholarly attention. By analyzing Cinémagazine, this thesis brings historical specificity to how Orientalist ideology was embedded in the press, demonstrating that exoticism and colonial narratives were not peripheral, but central to the construction of film culture;

Engaging with Post-Saidian and Decolonial Critique: While grounded in Said's original framework, the study also acknowledges its critiques—particularly the need to account for hybridity, economic logics, self-Orientalism, and the colonality of gaze, time, and knowledge production. This multi-dimensional approach allows for a more layered understanding of both complicity and resistance within cultural production.

Despite its contributions, the thesis is subject to certain limitations:

Temporal and Corpus Constraints: The analysis is limited to materials from 1921 to 1923. While this timeframe captures the early editorial direction of Cinémagazine, it excludes the magazine's later evolution and possible shifts in representational strategies;

Western-Centric Perspective: The thesis focuses primarily on French representations of the Orient, with little incorporation of Eastern perspectives or responses. This methodological limitation, while consistent with Said's discursive approach, restricts the scope for exploring dialogic or counter-hegemonic narratives;

Theoretical Dependence on Said (1978): While the study engages with critiques of Orientalism, it still relies heavily on Said's conceptual binary. More intersectional or regionally grounded theories (e.g., subaltern studies or decolonial theory) might offer alternative insights into the production and circulation of cinematic knowledge.

To expand the scope and depth of inquiry, future research could pursue the following directions:

Comparative Transnational Analysis: a cross-cultural comparison with other European cinema magazines (e.g., *Kinematograph Weekly* in Britain or *Film-Kurier* in Germany) could reveal how Orientalist discourses were shaped by distinct national ideologies and colonial trajectories;

Reception Studies and Audience Response: investigating how these Orientalist films and articles were received by contemporary audiences in North Africa, the Middle East, or Southeast Asia could provide insight into how Orientalist narratives were resisted, internalized, or reinterpreted;

Application of Digital Humanities Tools: employing text mining or image recognition software could help identify broader patterns in visual and textual Orientalism across a larger corpus. This approach would allow researchers to map representational trends beyond qualitative interpretation alone;

Tracing Orientalism into the Present: comparing early Orientalist cinema discourse with postcolonial and post-9/11 media representations in contemporary French film criticism (e.g., *Cahiers du cinéma*, *Positif*) could shed light on the persistence or transformation of imperial imaginaries in modern contexts.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Orientalism was not an ancillary aspect of French film culture, but a central narrative logic woven into the fabric of cinematic journalism. By historicizing and problematizing these representations, the thesis invites a critical rethinking of how media not only reflect but also shape the geopolitical imagination of empire—past and present.

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