



ACTA HISTRIAE
31, 2023, 2



UDK/UDC 94(05)

ISSN 1318-0185
e-ISSN 2591-1767



Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko - Koper
Società storica del Litorale - Capodistria

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KOPER 2023

ISSN 1318-0185
e-ISSN 2591-1767

UDK/UDC 94(05)

Letnik 31, leto 2023, številka 2

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Published by:**

Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko - Koper / Società storica del Litorale - Capodistria® / Inštitut IRRIS za raziskave, razvoj in strategije družbe, kulture in okolja / Institute IRRIS for Research, Development and Strategies of Society, Culture and Environment / Istituto IRRIS di ricerca, sviluppo e strategie della società, cultura e ambiente®

Sedež/Sede/Address:

Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko, SI-6000, Koper-Capodistria, Garibaldijeva 18 / Via Garibaldi 18, e-mail: actahistriae@gmail.com; https://zjdp.si/

Tisk/Stampa/Print:

Založništvo PADRE d.o.o.

Naklada/Tiratura/Copies:

300 izvodov/copie/copies

**Finančna podpora/
Supporto finanziario/
Financially supported by:**

Javna agencija za znanstvenoraziskovalno in inovacijsko dejavnost Republike Slovenije / Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency, Mestna občina Koper

**Slika na naslovnici/
Foto di copertina/
Picture on the cover:**

Mlada Čehinja kriči na sovjetske vojake na tanku med invazijo na Češkoslovaško pod sovjetskim vodstvom v Pragi 26. avgusta 1968 (arhiv BettmannGetty Images) / Una giovane donna ceca urla contro i soldati sovietici su un carro armato durante l'invasione della Cecoslovacchia da parte dei sovietici, a Praga il 26 agosto 1968 (Archivio BettmannGetty Images) / A young Czech woman shouts at Soviet soldiers on a tank during the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia, in Prague on Aug. 26, 1968 (BettmannGetty Images Archive).

Redakcija te številke je bila zaključena 30. junija 2023.

Revija Acta Histriae je vključena v naslednje podatkovne baze / Gli articoli pubblicati in questa rivista sono inclusi nei seguenti indici di citazione / Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in: CLARIVATE ANALYTICS (USA); Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), Social Scisearch, Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI), Journal Citation Reports / Social Sciences Edition (USA); IBZ, Internazionale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur (GER); International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) (UK); Referativnyi Zhurnal Viniti (RUS); European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS); Elsevier B. V.; SCOPUS (NL); DOAJ.

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Joseph Lennon: IRISH ORIENTALISM: A LITERARY AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY.
Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2004, 478 pages.

Joseph Lennon's *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* is a compelling exploration of the complex relationship between Ireland and the Orient. In this ground-breaking book, Lennon takes readers on a thought-provoking journey through Irish literature and intellectual discourse, shedding light on how the Irish imagination engaged with and interpreted the East. With meticulous research and insightful analysis, Lennon presents a comprehensive study that challenges traditional perspectives and narratives, deepens our understanding of Irish cultural identity, contributes to ongoing conversations about the dynamics of Orientalism and postcolonialism, and offers new insights into Irish cultural identity. This review examines the key themes, strengths, and contributions of Lennon's work, highlighting its significance in the field of literary and intellectual history. Scholars, students, and anyone interested in Irish literature and intellectual history will find this book to be a valuable and thought-provoking resource.

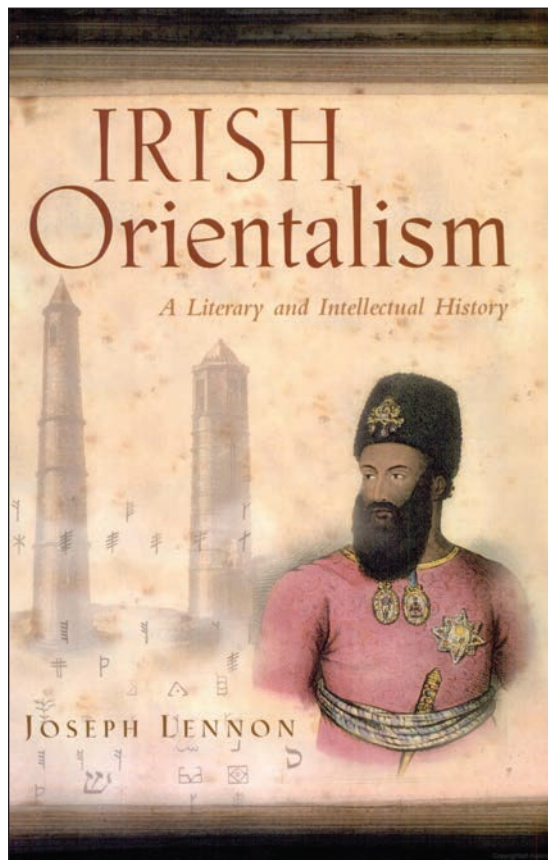
Lennon's writing style is accessible and engaging, making his book an enjoyable read for both academic scholars and general readers. His meticulous attention to detail, combined with his ability to present complex ideas in a clear and concise manner, ensures that readers are able to grasp the intricacies of Irish Orientalism without feeling overwhelmed by jargon or dense theoretical frameworks. Additionally, the book is well-structured, with each chapter building upon the previous ones to create a cohesive narrative that guides readers through the evolution of Irish engagement with the Orient. Moreover, Lennon's research is commendable, as he draws from a wide range of primary and secondary sources, including literary texts, historical documents, and critical studies. This comprehensive approach not only strengthens the validity of his arguments but also provides readers with a rich and diverse collection of materials to explore further. Lennon's thorough analysis of both well-known and lesser-known texts ensures that his study encompasses a broad spectrum of Irish Orientalist discourse, avoiding any oversights or omissions.

Lennon masterfully examines the multifaceted aspects of Irish Orientalism, exploring the intersections of literature, politics, religion, and nationalism. By delving into both Irish writing about the East and Irish encounters with Oriental cultures, he provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play. The book explores a wide range of themes, including exoticism, cultural borrowing, religious encounters, political ideologies, and postcolonial perspectives, all of which contribute to a nuanced understanding of the Irish engagement with the Orient.

Lennon's work raises important questions about the nature of cultural exchange and appropriation. Through his examination of Irish writers' engagement with Oriental cultures, Lennon prompts readers to consider how ideas,

symbols, and narratives are borrowed, reimagined, and reinterpreted across different cultural contexts. This exploration of cultural borrowing and exchange adds depth to our understanding of the dynamics of literary and intellectual history, emphasizing the fluidity and interconnectedness of cultural production. In his analysis, Lennon skillfully navigates a vast array of literary works, from canonical figures like Jonathan Swift and W.B. Yeats to lesser-known writers who contributed to the discourse of Irish Orientalism. By examining poetry, fiction, travel writing, and intellectual debates, he reveals the diversity of perspectives and motivations that shaped Irish responses to the East. This breadth of coverage ensures that readers gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

One of the key strengths of Lennon's work lies in his ability to uncover and analyze the often overlooked connections between Irish literature and Orientalism. He illuminates how the Irish engaged with the Orient in a manner distinct from their British counterparts, forging a unique path that reflects Ireland's historical, religious, and political context. Lennon's research fills a significant gap in the scholarship on Orientalism, showcasing the distinctive contributions made by Irish authors and intellectuals to this discourse. Lennon's examination of the intersections between Irish nationalism and Orientalism is particularly enlightening. He skillfully demonstrates how Orientalist tropes and ideas were incorporated into the construction of Irish national identity, challenging the assumption that Irish cultural identity was solely based on opposition to British imperialism. By highlighting the ways in which Irish nationalists drew inspiration from Oriental cultures and narratives, Lennon prompts readers to rethink traditional notions of Irish identity formation.



Another noteworthy contribution of Lennon's work is his incorporation of postcolonial perspectives. He deftly analyzes the power dynamics inherent in Irish encounters with the East, interrogating the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. By exploring the ways in which Irish writers and intellectuals negotiated their own position within the global hierarchy of power, Lennon offers a valuable contribution to postcolonial literary studies.

Further strength of Lennon's work is his attention to the nuances and complexities within Irish Orientalism. Rather than presenting a monolithic view, he highlights the variations and contradictions that exist within Irish literary and intellectual responses to the Orient. By doing so, Lennon avoids oversimplification and acknowledges the diverse range of perspectives and motivations that shaped Irish engagement with the East. This nuanced approach challenges the notion of a singular Irish identity or a uniform Orientalist discourse, and instead reveals the intricacies and tensions inherent in the subject matter.

Another commendable aspect of Lennon's research is his incorporation of marginalized voices and perspectives. He not only explores the works of well-known Irish writers but also delves into the writings of lesser-known figures who contributed to the discourse of Irish Orientalism. This inclusion of voices that have been historically marginalized provides a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the topic, enriching the overall narrative.

Additionally, Lennon's analysis of the religious dimension of Irish Orientalism is particularly enlightening. He examines the encounters between Irish Catholicism and Eastern religions, shedding light on the ways in which Irish writers and intellectuals navigated the complexities of religious identity and spirituality in the context of Orientalist discourse. By exploring the interplay between religion, culture, and literature, Lennon offers a fresh perspective on the Irish engagement with the Orient, further deepening our understanding of the complexities of Irish cultural history.

While Lennon's work is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the field, one potential limitation is his interpretation of Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* (1817) as an Arabic romance, "discussing the similarity in Irish and Arab temperaments and natures," (p. 156) which is surprisingly untrue. *Lalla Rookh* is a Persian romance with Persian characterisation and setting, and is set in the context of a romanticized portrayal of Persia (present-day Iran).

Lennon's *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* is a significant addition to the field of literary and intellectual history, offering a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationship between Ireland and the Orient. It is thought-provoking work that sheds light on an often overlooked aspect of Irish cultural history. Through his meticulous research, insightful analysis, and engaging writing style, Lennon challenges traditional perspectives and offers new insights into the complexities of Irish engagement with the Orient. By examining the intersections of literature, politics, religion, and nationalism, he uncovers the multifaceted motivations and implications of Irish Orientalism.

This book serves as a valuable resource for scholars and students interested in Irish studies, literary and intellectual history, postcolonial studies, and Orientalism. Lennon's work not only deepens our understanding of Irish cultural identity but also contributes to broader discussions on the complexities of cultural encounters and the power dynamics inherent in the construction of national narratives. This book is an invaluable resource for scholars, researchers, and readers interested in Irish studies, literary and intellectual history, postcolonial studies, and cultural exchange. By illuminating the multifaceted nature of Irish Orientalism, Lennon invites us to critically examine the dynamics of cultural encounters and the construction of identity in a global context.

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