SCIENTIFIC CULTURE
www.sci-cult.com

SCIENTIFIC CULTURE, Vol. 12, No. 2.1, (2026), pp. 9470-9478
Open Access. Online & Print

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19980458

TOWARDS AN ORIENTALIST READING OF LISA JEWELL'S LITERARY WRITINGS

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Received: 15/03/2026
Accepted: 18/04/2026

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ABSTRACT

The present study set out to examine the contribution of selected Lisa Jewell's novels to the orientalist image of the East by accepting and propagating the assumption of Western cultural superiority over the East. Firstly, the origin and the geographical scope of Orientalism are briefly established. Secondly, the literary manifestations of the Western Orientalist stereotypes in Lisa Jewell's novels are discussed and critiqued, particularly (1) the social construct of the Orient as the stigmatized, inferior counterpart of the Occident, and (2) the reintegration challenges that may face Western emigrants to Eastern countries upon their return to their home countries. Evidence has been found in the study that, in her literary works, Lisa Jewell employs an Orientalist perspective that identifies the West as civilized and cultured and the East as chaotic and backward. Jewell also seems to highlight the universal reputation of Afghanistan as a principal producer of opium, which is considered a major challenge to the UK, pointing to the futile efforts made by the British government in the post-Taliban reign to combat its trafficking to the UK. She tends, like many Western writers, to present Islam as a threat to the Christian West. More importantly, she repeatedly underlines the fact that in spite of perceived differences, the East and the West could always co-exist and cooperate through mutual agreement based on their reciprocal need to be together.

KEYWORDS: Orientalist – Lisa Jewell – Immigrants- Veterans.

1. INTRODUCTION

In spite of the fact that the West has recently accepted the values of equity, diversity and inclusion as core values in its institutional frameworks and policies, the belief in the cultural superiority of the West over the East is deeply rooted in Western consciousness. Kamel (2025 :73) states that "Western thought has shaped the image of the East as mysterious, backward, and uncivilized—essentially the antithesis of the rational, progressive West".The Orientalist discourse , according to Said(2003) does not stem from misconstruction of the orient or ignorance about the East but rather from a deliberate systematic narrative purposefully created and fostered by enlightened circles in the West in order to negatively stereotype the East and Islam and portray them as "the other" who is opposed to development, and, thence assert Western supremacy.

The origin of the negative image of the East could be traced back to the Middle Ages, and, as many have pointed out, it gained momentum in the 19th century. Malik (2012) makes the important point that the 19th century European orientalist discourse, which fostered a negative stereotypical representation of the Orient in the West elicited an antagonistic response in non-Europeans, changing them from imitators of the supposedly civilized 19th century Europe to rejecters of almost all aspects of Western society.

According to Akbari (2009), medieval sources have made the erroneous generalization that northern climes, which are predominantly dwelled by Westerners are conducive to reason, good morals and a fair complexion, whereas, southern climes, which are mainly the abodes of Easterners are conducive to folly, bad morals and a dark complexion. The link between the color of skin and intelligence which justifies inequality among the human race has been found incorrect and is discredited

The attitude of Western supremacy is visible in the plots and themes of many contemporary literary writings. According to Said (2003), the Western portrayal of the Orient as mysterious, inscrutable and inferior is a characteristic feature of many European writers who deal with Eastern themes and characters. He goes further to claim that the Orientalist discourse is consciously configured by the West in order to justify Western colonialism and hegemony. This assertion, however, seems to be far-fetched and he fails to support it by any credible evidence.

With these points in mind, the next few chapters will try to illuminate (1) the social construct of the Orient as the stigmatized, inferior counterpart of the Occident, and (2) the reintegration challenges that may face Western emigrants to Eastern countries upon their return to their home countries in selected Lisa Jewell's novels.

Lisa Jewell is a contemporary novelist renowned for her artistic presentation of women's plight in male-dominated life settings. The existential predicament of woman in modern life, as can be seen in the novels under scrutiny, forms the thematic basis of her literary writing. Her novels provide rich and interesting content with a message to the reader that woman goes through physical and mental suffering as a mother, as a divorced woman, as a wife, and as a barren woman (Manickam,T. & Nagarathinam, K. (2022; 2023). In her novel 'Then She Was Gone', Laurel, the main character suffers the enforced disappearance of her adorable daughter and the efforts she makes to uncover the secrets behind her daughter's disappearance cause her to undergo a marital breakdown and a rift with her two daughters. Her novel 'The Making of Us' presents a few socially heterogenous characters bound together with the thread of their newly discovered common sperm donor father, with each trying in his/her way to find meaning to this newly discovered family line, and in her novel 'After the Party' Jem and Ralph who love each other and dream of a lifelong love are disillusioned by the disparities and incongruences in their outlook on life that nearly shatters their marriage. The endeavors a woman carries out to preserve her identity and status in a patriarchal society provide a significant key to an in-depth understanding of Jewell's novels.

2. ANALYSIS

2.1. The Easterner as the Inferior Counterpart of the Occident

In addition to these domestic feminine settings, Jewell's novels undertake a literary portrayal of a fundamental aspect of Orientalism by evoking vivid pictures of socially inferior unskilled immigrants assimilated in the culturally and materially hegemonic Western world. For example, in Jewell's novel 'Then She Was Gone', Laurel and Floyd who are involved in a romantic relationship go to a local Eritrean restaurant on their second date, apparently upon the suggestion of Laurel who has always wanted to try it but her ex-husband would never take her there because, as he has acknowledged, it does not meet his hygienic standards.

" Laurel and Floyd have their second date that Tuesday. This time they stay local, and go to an Eritrean restaurant near Floyd that Laurel had always wanted to try but Paul would never agree to

because they had a three-star hygiene rating taped to their window"(Jewell, 2018:63)

From the above quotation, two points come to light. Firstly, by marking the restaurant as Eritrean, Jewell is probably conscious of the fact that restaurant industry is a big employer of immigrants in London as proven by the report of the Fiscal Policy Institute's Immigration Research Initiative (2012) which provides evidence that low-skilled Eastern immigrants commonly own restaurants, grocery stores, real estate firms and truck transportation services. The same point is given further support by Hanson, et. al. (2017) who claim that immigrants spread themselves across a range of jobs that include eating and drinking establishments. Secondly, for Laurel's ex-husband, presumably a classy English gentleman who would not compromise hygienic standards, the service provider being Eritrean may have further consolidated his relatively low opinion of the restaurant. The certainty with which he holds his negative attitude towards the Eritrean restaurant 'he would never agree' suggests that his lack of confidence in the restaurant may have been further aggravated by racial prejudice against it as a non-Western institution.

In a similar vein, the image of an Easterner performing a low-ranking job for a Western employer is present in Jewell's novel 'the Making of Us'. While taking a tour around the playground, Lydia's feelings are hurt by the scene of American mothers who fail to fulfill their expected caring roles for their babies. She sees them fully engrossed in their computer screens, leaving their babies to bond with hired Asian nannies. Not only that, but she sees the nannies nourish the babies by organic juices, which implies that the mothers deny them breastfeeding. The replacement of a mother's role of bonding with and nurturing her baby with a nanny and bottles of organic juices is a perfect example of the total commercialization of domestic childcare services.

"She walked three times round the old cemetery (Lydia is the one who is walking), averting her gaze from the playground where Asian nannies pushed French babies on swings and American power mummies tapped data into BlackBerries while their offspring slurped organic juices out of recyclable cartons" (Jewell, 2011: 44).

The perception of the Orient as culturally and socially distant from the Occident is mirrored in the relationship between Lydia and her Asian housekeeper, Juliet. Juliet is a live-in housemaid, and is therefore supposed to be an extended part of Lydia's family. However, in spite of the friendly terms between them, Lydia keeps Juliet out of her family matters and never confides family secrets to her.

" The small Asian woman looked at Lydia as if she had lost her mind and then back at Dean. 'Are you sure?' she asked. Lydia smiled. 'Positive, thank you, Juliette. This is my brother.' Juliette's face softened then opened and she unleashed a wide smile. 'Ah,' she said, nodding enthusiastically. 'Your brother!' She beamed at Lydia and then she approached Dean with her arms outstretched. She took both his hands in hers and shook them up and down. 'I did not know you had a brother! So nice to meet you. So nice to meet you! Yes. Yes. I can see it now.' She pointed at his face and then at her own. 'I can see that he is your brother.' She turned to Lydia and wagged her finger. 'You did not tell me you had a brother,' she chastised" (Jewell, 2011: 197)

To widen the cultural and social difference between Juliet and Lydia, Jewell draws Juliet's character as both 'small' and 'Asian'. By way of downplaying her physical size as well as her cultural heritage, Juliet's character is established as far unworthy of Lydia's companionship.

While Lydia is fully aware of the unbridgeable cultural gap that separates her from her live-in maid, Juliet can hardly see any barriers between her and her Western fosterer. For example, she is deluded into thinking that Lydia, who sees nothing more in her than a housekeeper, deserves her reproach for not telling her about her newfound brother. Juliet's position in Lydia's household is reflected in Lydia's answer to her brother's inquiry about Juliet's identity:

All this is just ...' she spread her arms out '... for show.' 'And what's the deal with her?' Dean gestured towards the kitchen at the other side of the house. 'Juliette?' He nodded. 'My, er, housekeeper.'(Jewell, 2011: 198)

The dazzling clarity with which Lydia answers: ' My, er, housekeeper' leaves no room for doubt that Lydia views Juliet as nothing more than a hired live-in domestic helper. Allegorically, this point suggests the fact that in spite of perceived differences, the East and West could always co-exist and cooperate through mutual agreement based their reciprocal need to be together.

The unfair advantage that Westerners may enjoy compared to non-Westerners is probably best reflected in the scene of Jewell's novel "Then, She Was Gone" where Floyd reminisces about his childhood education. He recounts the experience of having gone to an international school where his command of English language and culture gave him enormous advantage over the speakers of non-Western languages. Though the text does not indicate the way

he was privileged, one could easily make it out that his command of English might have eliminated bias against and/or have drawn positive attention to him.

"There was one school, one town, in Germany. I liked that school. It was an international school, kids from all over the world; a lot of them couldn't even speak English. And a transient intake, kids coming and going all the time. So, for once I had an advantage. I could speak English. And I was there for nearly four years, from eleven to fourteen. So, I started off as one of the youngest and became one of the oldest. This was good stuff. Formative. Almost transformative. I'd see new kids arrive, little ones, foreign ones, tiny little Korean kids or Indian kids or Nigerian kids, struggling with the language, struggling with the culture shock. And that made me feel normal. I had a girlfriend there. Mathilde. She was French"(Jewell, 2018: 273)

Floyd's classmates who came from former European colonies were unfairly disadvantaged. They felt disoriented and confused, and presumably went through all sorts of challenges. The culture shock that Floyd says those little students coming from the third world (a western denomination for Asian and African countries, among others) were exposed to, must have caused them physical and emotional discomfort, and made them feel completely out of place. Ample support for this last point is found in Winkelman's (1994: 121) statement that "cultural shock reactions may provoke psychological crises or social dysfunction when reactions to cultural differences impedes performance"

Ironically, Floyd's third world schoolmates' feeling of being disadvantaged in the West due to linguistic and cultural factors shows the West's disrespect of cultures and languages outside its scope.

This presentation of non-Westerners in unfavourable light compared to Floyd on account of their incompetence in English Language reminds us of the scene in Bernard Shaw's play 'Pygmalion', where Higgins, the professor of Linguistics takes the lower-class cockney woman and transforms her into a high-class lady by teaching her to speak in a genteel lady-like accent. Not only does her ability to speak like a lady change the way people view her, but also it changes the job choices available for her, as she aspires to work at a flower shop instead of selling flowers on the street. Also, in Orwell's novel 'Nineteen Eighty-four' the ruling elites continually eliminate words from the national language which they call 'Newspeak' with the purpose of narrowing the citizen's scope of thought and making it difficult for them to formulate and discuss concepts, and thence render them easily controllable.

3. REINTEGRATION CHALLENGES

The implications of Western emigration to the East on Western traveler's mindset and general wellbeing is a recurring theme in many contemporary writings. Marlow, the protagonist and narrator of Conrad's novel 'Heart of Darkness' has to undergo a pre-employment checkup for the job of a steamboat captain in colonial Africa. To his astonishment the doctor asks for permission to take measurements of his skull. By measuring his subjects' skulls, the doctor tries to correlate the measurements of the skull with the mental impairments that the Europeans who venture into Africa are expected to develop, and he admits, regretfully, that the subjects whose skulls he measures do not come back to see him for they either die in Africa or if they return, they are psychologically and mentally changed.

This point summons the scene in Jewell's novel 'The Making of Us' where Tommy, the returned veteran, has just arrived in London after a four-year deployment in Afghanistan. The period he has been positioned in Afghanistan, it seems, has negatively affected his demeanor and attitude, and has created a schism between him and his social environment. By composing the character of a returned veteran, the author revives in the reader's mind the experience of the British troops sent to Afghanistan as part of a multi-national force to combat the Taliban Regime in the wake of the 11/9 attack on the USA, and later to protect the new Afghani government after the Taliban regime was ousted.

4. IN TOMMY'S FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE NOVEL, THE READER LEARNS THAT HE IS A RETURNED VETERAN AND A COUSIN OF DEAN

" Tommy was his cousin. He'd been in the army for the past four years and now he'd signed himself off and was back in London".

Tommy catches the reader's attention by his attempt to lighten the burden of his cousin's grief that ensues from losing his girlfriend to childbirth, by first offering him a drink and then a spliff. The drink and the spliff irritate and severely pain Dean's throat and nostrils, but they instantly numb his emotional pain. This offer of drink and spliff carries two possible implications; firstly, it signifies that Tommy may be an addict who seeks solace and comfort in drugs and wine and, secondly, the offering of the drink immediately followed by the spliff may render him an experienced drug user who probably knows that

taking the two substances together would intensify their overall effect.

Tommy's connection with alcoholism conforms to the point made by Shmulewitz et al. (2024); Teeters et. al (2017) and Virtanen, et al. (2024) that war veterans have higher risk of substance use among other social and health issues. Also, having just returned from Afghanistan addicted to alcohol brings to mind the universal reputation of Afghanistan as a major producer of opium. Steinberger (2003) proposes that Afghanistan's production of opium in the 1990s constituted 70% of worldwide opium production.

On the basis of the discussion above, it seems justifiable to make an affirmative conclusion that Jewell has consciously constructed the character of Tommy to embody unfavorable patterns of behavior prevalent in the East, turning a blind eye to the fact that Western industrial prosperity has always been dependent on the resources of the East, and that the West interferences in Eastern country's affairs to safeguard the interests of Israel, their traditional ally in the region.

In a slightly different framework, Tommy's possession of the wine and spliff suggests the failure of the campaign led by the British Prime Minister to destroy the opium cultivation and combat narcotics trade in the Post-Taliban reign to stop its flow in the UK as the Afghani heroin is considered the second important challenge to the UK after terrorism (Berry, 2017). Masomy (2025) puts forward some possible reasons why Afghanistan would not stop cultivating opium. Afghanistan, according to him, was traditionally an agricultural country but the agricultural sector has failed severely since the 1970s due to climatic factors resulting in droughts, as well as the detrimental influence of the Soviet invasion and occupation, which destroyed farmlands and pushed citizens to urban areas. To make up for the loss of a big portion of their viable land they turned to opium cultivation which is draught-resistant and much more financially rewarding than traditional agriculture products.

Also, after having the connection between the East and drugs established, Jewell's novel 'The Making of Us' pursues the idea further by shifting to a symbolic level. All the medical team members who have attended to Sky during delivery are identified by their medical titles, except the anesthesia specialist, whose nationality and gender seem to Jewell to be indelible parts of his identity. The designation 'Asian man' bears the demeaning status of belonging to a world outside the scope of Western civilization, thence, it renders its bearer incapable of integration in European culture.

"The anesthetist arrived, an Asian man with a goatee beard and trendy shoes". (Jewell, 2011: 73).

The above quoted words carry a deeper meaning if looked at through the lens of Western Orientalist discourse in which, as Said (2003) points out, the Orient is intellectually subordinated. This subservience is subtly underlined in the scene when Sky has been admitted to hospital for childbirth. The assigning of the role of anesthetic specialist to the Asian evokes the stereotypical Western image of the Asian as a drug dealer due to the similarity between anesthesia and drugs in inducing unconsciousness. Secondly, referring to the anesthesia specialist as 'Asian' in a context where nationality and ethnicity are irrelevant definitely carries racist pejorative connotations. Thirdly, the depiction of the Asian as wearing a 'goatee' suggests an air of perceived otherness and queerness in his character; Jewell may have been conscious of Pinfold's (2007: 701) point that the goatee "in its present fashionable form it does speak of otherness, both individual and nonconformist". Furthermore, the contextually irrelevant reference to the Asian's beard may imply a derogatory connotation about Islam, which is the fundamental antithesis of European Christianity. From the Islamic point of view, growing a beard is an obligatory practice based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) According to Maspul (2025) the growing of a beard symbolizes religious commitment, devotion and cultural belonging (Maspul, 2025).

It is obvious that an initial judgment about a person is made based on physical appearance. Social cognition studies, according to Faegheh (2008), have proven that the labelling of others involves inferring personality traits from appearance coupled with previously held cultural stereotyping. She backs her position up by providing the example that in the 1970s the men who wore beards were more likely to be labelled as having liberal worldviews. Herrick (2015) pushes this point of cultural stereotyping further by claiming that although the beard makes men more masculine, women and feminists may find bearded men less attractive because to them (women and feminists) the beard may symbolize male domination and violence.

According to Said (2003:74), Islam constitutes a threat to the Christian West. In his words:" Orientalism carries within it the stamp of a problematic European attitude towards Islam". What seems to further consolidate the fact that the West is predominantly Christian is that Jewell's novels abound with reference to biblical concepts, like

Christ, Christmas, church, and other words of Christian allusion, which showcase her strong zeal for Christianity. Such reference to Christian culture suggests that in spite of modern Europe's shift to secularism and the clear decline in Church attendance, the West retains a rigorous Christian identity.

The stressors that a veteran may possibly experience in service include confronting eminent and inescapable death, the loss of friends, the inner conflict associated with killing an enemy or failing to save a life and the cries and sights of the injured (Friedman, 2006; Litz ,2014). Such horrible messages

By volunteering to narrate terror-inducing stories to noncombatant civilians, Tommy unconsciously becomes a medium of terrorist propaganda. He says:

"the bullets, the dirt, the nights under the stars wondering if he would live to see the sunrise. He used a lot of jargon when he talked: medevac, SCUD, sortie" (Jewell, 2011: 128).

The use of military jargon and terrorist vocabulary like evacuation, injury, death and most horribly the ruthless bombing of children, without regard to context label Tommy as lacking courtesy and respect to others. This point coincides with Buechner's (2020: 1) claims that:

"For nearly two decades, Military veterans of many nations have struggled while returning from wartime service in Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite best efforts to welcome these service members home and provide access to educational and health benefits, many of them report a difficulty in relating to fellow citizens and institutions upon their return"

This claim is backed up by evidence that 6% to 11% of the military personnel who have returned from Afghanistan have developed posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Westgard, 2009). She adds that many of those who have returned from Afghanistan lack easy access to the Department of Veteran Affairs services, and some avoid seeking health care services for fear of stigma

Arguably, Tommy may have relayed these horror stories out of a psychological need to share his personal experience with others as a coping strategy to handle stress and anxiety. Conversely, failure to express war's catastrophic consequences to relatives and friends has led to the exacerbation of Uncle Toby 's delusions in Sterne's novel 'The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman'. Uncle Toby, a war veteran who comes home bearing a secret wound in his loin keeps his injury a secret, and instead of talking to others about his experience at war, he tries to achieve emotional release by constructing a mock battlefield at home to re-enact the battles he imagines to be going on while he is in the safety of his home. According to Travis (2018), Toby seems to be celebrating war and mourning the bad physical and psychological injuries it leaves on him.

In spite of the fact that serving in the frontier has profoundly blurred Tommy's character, he seems not to have lost sight of his European cultural identity. For example, when he learns that Dean's girlfriend who has just died in childbirth is only nineteen years old, he puts into perspective the contrast of Western and Eastern mindsets as regards childbirth age. The matter-of-fact way in which he says "if a woman gets pregnant at this age in Afghanistan, it would be a normal thing", shows that, rather than being judgmental, his words represent a globalist point of view that tolerates cultural relativism.

" Tommy nodded. 'Nineteen,' said Dean. 'Shit.' Tommy squeezed air through pursed lips and grimaced. 'Christ. You know, that kind of thing happens all the time out there,' he gestured with his arm, to a place that Dean assumed was Afghanistan and not south east London, 'you expect it. But here ... You know, modern day and age"(Jewell, 2011: 126)

Jewell has presented the element of adolescent pregnancy to her readers through the words of Tommy about Sky's childbirth and death. She makes the point that adolescent pregnancy, which happens only unintentionally in London, happens with a high frequency in Afghanistan. Her point is definitely valid, however, there are two pieces of evidence that debunk this claim of a civilized London society implied in her words. The first evidence is the poor accessibility to medical service in Sky's delivery scene; firstly, Sky has to walk for half an hour to get to the nearest hospital while in labor, "Within half an hour of walking into A&E Sky and Dean were told that not only was Sky in early labor, but that her placenta was lying dangerously low and she was losing a worrying amount of blood " (Jewell,2011: 71). Secondly, she has to wait so long for the anesthesiologist to arrive before surgery starts "They're getting surgery ready for you now. And the anaesthetist's on his way" (Jewell,2011: 72) . Thirdly, when she has hemorrhage, which has resulted from the long walk and the delayed diagnosis, they fail to determine her blood type and consequently to give her blood and save her life.

Another evidence that discredits the narrative of a civilized London society is that Dean's lack of true love which seems to devastate all aspects of his life, and the lives of those around him, is rooted in Western values of individualism and lack of family bond. He is born of artificial insemination by a sperm donor father who he sees only on his deathbed, and

his mother, though very generous to him, is incapable of showing affection and offering true care to him.

"She liked her life the way it was. She was independent and hadn't really had to think about anyone apart from Dean for her whole adult life. She was not geared up for life with a baby" (Jewell, 2011: 127)

This lack of family love, which Dean has probably internalized, has distorted Dean's self-image and renders him incapable of giving or receiving love.

"He was a fraud. He hadn't really loved Sky. He hadn't even cried yet. And as for their baby girl ... he still hadn't been back to the hospital."(Jewell, 2011: 97)

Not only does he fail to be there when his girlfriend goes through the incredibly difficult experience of childbirth; when his family is being formed, but he neither weeps for the loss of his girlfriend nor steps in as a father figure to his newborn daughter.

Lisa Jewell also makes the point that the addicted traumatized returned veterans cause harm to those around them. In the scene where Tommy and Dean go to the bar and get drunk, Tommy opens up to a woman and while sincerely praising her beauty and grace, he suddenly throws up on her. The disgusted girl reports her bad luck with Tommy to Dean the next morning:

"'Really?' she said. 'Your friend was sick on my shoes. You helped me clean them up.' Dean laughed. 'You mean Tommy?' 'Yeah. The squaddie guy" (Jewell, 2011: 133)

Jewell presents the character of Tommy in a way to reflect unfavorable social patterns of behavior developed during his years of contact with the East. She introduces him as a substance user, as a totally disagreeable person who thoughtlessly forces terrorist narratives on peaceful civilians, and as a disgusting person who offends the general taste. Not only that, but Jewell seems to underplay his military career by giving the rank of squaddie, the lowest rank in the British military. Probably she wants to say that a person of such poor quality deserves nothing more.

The Western stereotypical view of the Middle East as alien and mysterious is present in Jewell's novel "Then, She Was Gone". Ruby, the aging, sickly mother has never seen or heard from her son who has been stationed in Dubai since she was admitted to homecare suffering from stroke, poor eyesight, and shattered memory.

" She sees a question pass across her mother's eyes and she moves the conversation along quickly, asks after her health, her appetite, if she's heard anything from her hopeless brother, who moved to Dubai the same day Ruby moved into the home" (Jewell, 2018: 171)

The old woman also has a daughter, Laurel Mack, who, in spite of being rigorously consumed in the quest for her lost daughter which has caused the breakdown of her marriage, and a chasm between her and her daughters, she never misses a week without visiting her old mother. The author's choice of Dubai as the place of emigration for the son who fails to visit his dying mother carries the negative connotations of detachment and disconnection traditionally associated with the desert which is presumably the abode of Arabs.

" Ruby died a week later. Laurel's hopeless brother is not here either. He'd flown back from Dubai for Ruby's funeral in January and said he couldn't make two trips in one year. And, of course, Ellie is not here."(Jewell, 2018: 286)

The fact that Jewell gives the son's mother and sister names and only refers to him as 'the brother' points to the generalness of the failure of sons to take on their responsibility towards their aging parents.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study set out to examine the contribution of selected Lisa Jewell's novels to the Orientalist image of the East by accepting and propagating the assumption of Western cultural superiority over the East. Firstly, the origin and the geographical scope of Orientalism are briefly established. Secondly, the literary manifestations of the Western Orientalist stereotypes in Lisa Jewell's novels are discussed and critiqued, particularly (1) the social construct of the Orient as the stigmatized, inferior counterpart of the Occident, and (2) the reintegration challenges that may face Western emigrants to Eastern countries upon their return to their home countries.

Evidence has been established in the study that, in her literary works, Lisa Jewell employs an Orientalist perspective that identifies the West as civilized and cultured and the East as chaotic and backward. She highlights the universal reputation of Afghanistan as a principal producer of opium, which is considered a major challenge to the UK pointing to the futile efforts made by the British government in the post-Taliban reign to prevent its trafficking to the UK. She also tends, like many Western writers, to present Islam as threat to the Christian West. More importantly, she repeatedly underlines the fact that in spite of perceived differences, the East and the West could always co-exist and cooperate through mutual agreement based on their reciprocal need to

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