

SUAD JOSEPH LAB: Media Project
Representing Muslims and Islam in *The New York Times*: 1851 – 2020.
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One Thousand and One Nights of *The New York Times*: In the 1920s the NYT Rationalized Iraq
With Allusion to the Arabian Nights

The 1920s *New York Times* portrayal of Iraq manages to unify two understandings of the country: one from fiction, the other from real experience. They are manifestations of the NYT's Orientalism that the Iraq of fantasy and the Iraq actually met with and reported on by the newspaper, together form one coherent, not cognitively dissonant conception of the country, and that they do so while the newspaper is indeed self-conscious of the disjunction of the two visions. Studies in Orientalism have thoroughly expounded on the subject. I try to apply the analysis in order to demonstrate Orientalism in operation and how it is possible to reconcile a fictive conception of a thing with its actual experience and perception. I take as an example the 1920s NYT portrayal of Iraq. During this period much of the imagining of modern-day Iraq, Mandate Iraq, is as the Mesopotamia from the orientalist lore around the Arabian Nights and I confine the fiction in question to this patently fictive Iraq. It is remarkable to what extent the NYT portrayal appears not just authentic but valid because of this fiction