

The Wondrous Orientalism of Lord Dunsany: Traditional and Non-traditional Orientalist Narratives in The Book of Wonder and Tales of Wonder

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The Wondrous Orientalism of Lord Dunsany: Traditional and Non-traditional Orientalist Narratives in *The Book of Wonder* and *Tales of Wonder*

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Abstract

In this study of Lord Dunsany's "Oriental" fairy tales, House-Thomas divides Dunsany's technique and aims into "traditional" Oriental tales, of the sort Edward Said describes in his theories of Western Orientalist art and literature, and non-traditional, post-modern tales in which Orientalism is turned upside-down and the West is turned into the Other. This paper won the Alexei Kondratiev Student Paper Award at the 2012 Mythcon in Berkeley.

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Lord Dunsany used exactly the appropriate number of words in every case to paint his word pictures. Most of these tales are only four pages or so long, yet they are all perfect, or nearly so. Written in 1917 *The Book of Wonder* by Irish fantasy writer Baron Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett Dunsany. The Modern Library copy from 1918 that I have contains the following: PREFACE THE BRIDE OF THE MAN-HORSE DISTRESSING TALE OF THANGOBRIND THE JEWELLER THE HOUSE OF THE SPHINX PROBABLE ADVENTURE OF THE THREE LITERARY MEN THE INJUDICIOUS PRAYERS OF POMBO THE IDOLATER THE LOOT OF BOMBASHARNA MISS CUBBIDGE AND THE DRAGON OF ROMANCE THE QUEST OF THE QUEEN'S TEARS THE. *Wonder Tales* book. Read 34 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. Irish writer Edward J. M. D. Plunkett (1878–1957), the eighteenth Baro... Lord Dunsany used exactly the appropriate number of words in every case to paint his word pictures. Most of these tales are only four pages or so long, yet they are all perfect, or nearly so. Each story is a gem- an exquisite miniature. These manifestations of Orientalism in *The Book of Wonder* and *Tales of Wonder* I label non-traditional, and they are the ones I particularly wish to draw attention to in considering how Dunsany's Orientalist literary fantasies by turns lie in continuity with and transcend Western Orientalism, as that system of thought and discourse is commonly construed by the postmodern academy. Edward Said wrote the foundational work on the subject, describing the word "Orientalism" in his 1978 book of the same title as a multivalent term which has been used to designate the academic project of area studies on Africa, Asia, the Near East or Middle East, dealing with such aspects as language, mythology, and geopolitical relations; or, alternatively, a "style of thought based.