

THE ORIENT ON A BICYCLE

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ABSTRACT

The first cyclist around the world, Thomas Stevens encouraged himself to undertake a perilous journey to pedal thousands of miles to see the world. The scope of his adventures cover a huge landscape beyond imagination in the late nineteenth century. In this very long journey, especially Stevens's representation of the Orient and Oriental people along with their culture, lifestyle and manners provide an invaluable insight into the thinking of a Western person – a cyclist, in this case – and the cultural interaction between the East and the West. Referring to the main concepts of Orientalism, this paper aims to discuss Stevens's version of the Orient and points out that the Orient is made up of various versions that deviate from each other depending on the approach of the gazer in line with the theoretical conceptualization of the Orient and its discourse in the pre-established notions. Focusing on Stevens's non-fictional work, the study reveals that there is still much more to say on the conflict between the East and the West in view of the contemporary conditions.

Keywords: Edward Said; culture; interaction; Oriental representation; Thomas Stevens.