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Canada

Title: Edward Said's Orientalism: Discourse of Power

Department: Institute of Islamic Studies

Degree: M.A.

Name: Judith Nechamkin

Date: November 15, 1993

ISBN 0-315-94378-5

Canada

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank a number of people for helping me complete this thesis. Foremost among these are my two advisors, Professor Andrew Rippin, of the University of Calgary, and Professor Donald P. Little of The Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. As a visiting professor at McGill, Professor Rippin was always willing to discuss this thesis and anything else. He helped me over and over again with his insight and helpful suggestions, even when he returned to Calgary. Upon Professor Rippin's departure, I relied more and more on Professor Little. His keen eye, sharp insight, and genuine interest helped me prepare a thesis of which I can be proud. I would also like to thank the Chair of the department, Professor A. Uner Turgay, whose warmth, never-failing encouragement and bright smile made all these months and re-writes easier. And, I could not forget to thank Violette Masse, who simply was always there to put things in perspective and make the paper work go smoother. And lastly, I would like to thank my husband.

But for all of my gratitude to these people for their help, I acknowledge that any mistakes or misunderstandings in the thesis are completely my fault and my responsibility.

Abstract

Title: Edward Said's Orientalism: Discourse of Power

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This thesis is a study of Edward Said's Orientalism. Its purpose is to explain Orientalism as a unique contribution to the debate on the merits and faults of Orientalism. It is written in order to explain the relevance of Orientalism to the discipline of Islamic studies. The point of this thesis is not to criticize or exonerate Orientalism, but to understand the its full implications. Orientalism is not the first work to address the topic of Orientalism, but it is unique in its approach and hypotheses. I have therefore focused only on those points which are unique, such as Said's use of Michel Foucault's theories and Joseph Conrad's imagery.

Résumé

Titre: L'Orientalisme de Edward Said: Un Discours de Pouvoir

Grade: M.A.

Département: L'Institut des Etudes Islamiques

Nom: Judith Nechamkin

Cette thèse est une étude de l'Orientalisme de Edward Said. Son objectif dans cet ouvrage est de présenter l'Orientalisme comme une contribution unique au débat tournant autour des vertus et des faiblesses de l'Orientalisme quant à la discipline des sciences Islamiques. La question essentielle que pose la thèse n'est pas de savoir si l'Orientalisme est une critique valide du champs d'étude, mais plutôt de savoir comment le livre doit être compris, et quelles sont ses implications. L'Orientalisme n'est pas le premier ouvrage à s'intéresser au sujet, mais il est unique dans son approche et dans ses hypothèses. Je me suis concentrrée donc uniquement sur les points qui en font un livre unique, soit l'usage que fait Said des théories de Michel Foucault et de Joseph Conrad.

Introduction

> "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested"
>
> -- Francis Bacon

Controversial books cannot simply be rebutted or accepted if anything substantial is to be made of them. They must not simply be confronted with opposing views, but thought out and assessed on the merits of their own hypotheses and underlying philosophies. This thesis, based as it is on the controversial Orientalism,[1] is not a thesis of conventional questions and answers. It is a thesis of ideas, predicated on the belief that by considering and investigating the ideas to which Said alludes, Orientalism will be better understood. In considering these ideas, this thesis will necessarily make use of many outside sources, some of which might not seem related to the study of Islam. But, indeed all of these ideas and sources are relevant and important. By fostering a better understanding of the

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[1]Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

underlying theses of Orientalism, the challenges that the book makes can be better assessed by students of the Orient and Islam.

The first group of external sources which will be examined are the works of Michel Foucault, to whom Said writes that he is "greatly indebted."[1] Foucault, the famous and controversial French scholar, has clearly impressed Said with his interpretation of discourse and his understandings of knowledge and history. Foucault described his ideas in many books, of which I have used three primary ones, The Archaeology of Knowledge,[2] Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,[3] and Language, Counter-Memory, Practice.[4] Because he writes in French, and my knowledge of French is inadequate, I have used translations of his works. Although translations might lose some of the original, intended meaning, I had no other recourse to the works. But, to correct any of the possible distortions resulting from translation, and to supplement my understanding of Foucault, I also used critical sources on Foucault.

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[1]Ibid., p. 23.

[2]Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1972 [Including Appendix, "The Discourse on Language", pp. 215-237]).

[3]Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison, Translated by Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane (Penguin Books), 1977).

[4]Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice Ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).

Among those which I found most useful were Michel Foucault: Social Theory and Transgression by Charles C. Lemart and Garth Gillan[1], Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Western Culture: Toward a New Science of History by Pamela Major-Poetzel,[2] Michel Foucault, by Barry Smart,[3] and Michel Foucault: the Will to Truth by Alan Sheridan.[4] The obvious emphasis I placed on understanding Foucault should indicate to the reader how important I think his works are to Said and, consequently, to Orientalism. I do not think that Orientalism can be understood without acknowledging Foucault's influence and the pervasiveness of his ideas throughout.

Similarly, I read Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness,[5] Secret Sharer,[6] and Youth[7] in order to better

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[1]Charles C. Lemart and Garth Gillan, Michel Foucault: Social Theory as Transgression (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1982).

[2]Pamela Major-Poetzl, Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Western Culture: Toward a New Science of History (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

[3]Barry Smart, Michel Foucault (London and N.Y.: Tavistock Publications, 1985).

[4]Alan Sheridan, Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth (London & N.Y.: Tavistock Publications, 1980).

[5]Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (Third Edition, ed. Robert Kimbrough. N.Y.: W.W. Norton & company, 1988).

[6]Joseph Conrad, The Portable Conrad. Ed. Morton Daumen Zabel (New York: Viking Press, 1947), 648-699.

[7]Joseph Conrad, Youth; The Concord Edition of the Workds of Joseph Conrad, a Narrative and two other stories (New York: Doubleday, 1903), pp. 1-42.

understand both Said's allusions to Conrad's imagery and, in the case of Culture and Imperialism,[1] Said's thesis of its relation with imperialism. I also used some supplementary sources to delve deeper into Conrad's imagery, both to explain Said's understandings of Self and Other, and to critique it. The sources which were most helpful to me were Benita Parry's Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers,[2] Ian Watt's Conrad in the Nineteenth Century,[3] Robert Wilson's Conrad's Mythology,[4] and Donald C. Yelton's Mimesis and Metaphor: an Inquiry into the Genesis and Scope of Conrad's Symbolic Imagery.[5]

Another important reference, and a personal choice of inclusion which I consider very interesting, and which at first might seem out of place in a thesis on Orientalism, is Toshihiko Izutsu's God and Man in the Koran.[6] However, this book is extremely suitable and relevant for a number of

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[1]Edward W. Said, Culture and Imperialism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).

[2]Benita Parry, Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers (London: MacMillan Press, 1983), 20-40.

[3]Ian Watt, Conrad in the Nineteenth Century (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

[4]Robert Wilson, Conrad's Mythology (Troy, N.Y.: The Whitson Publishing Co., 1987).

[5]Donald C. Yelton, Mimesis and Metaphor: An Inquiry into the Genesis and Scope of Conrad's Symbolic Imagery (The Hague: Mouton, 1967).

[6]Toshihiko Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran. (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964).

reasons. It is, first of all, one of the most impressive books I studied while doing my course work at The Institute of Islamic Studies (where Izutsu was a visiting Professor for a time) and his ideas and approach impressed me tremendously. Therefore, Izutsu's semantic approach, which I shall explain in the second chapter, seemed an appropriate method; it provided a structure, or grid, through which to filter Said's ideas in order to better understand them. Also, considering the concept of discourse and Said's contentions as to the power of Orientalism in shaping and funneling ideas, Izutsu's theories on the role of vocabulary in societal changes are indeed relevant and illuminating. Finally, using his approach to Qur'anic studies also seemed appropriate, given Said's own disregard for traditional disciplinary boundaries and given that Said is discussing Islam.

In like vein, I have included a minor reference to Stanley Fish. Fish's book, Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretative Communities,[1] was suggested to me while I was struggling to articulate the problems of discourse and discursive communities. Fish, like Izutsu, has proven to add another dimension to the implications of discourse. While both scholars look at different and unre-

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[1]Stanley Fish, Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretative Communities (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980).

lated scenarios, each discusses language and community, two things which are at the core of discourse and community.

Moreover, it should be made clear at the start that I have chosen sources and included them in the thesis side-by-side with Said in order both to juxtapose Said's views with others and to flesh out the implications of Said's thesis by looking at other authors. My point was not to purposely collect unrelated texts, and relate them, but to demonstrate the difficulties in Said's argument as well as their vast implications for all of society. It is therefore extremely relevant to examine these diverse sources, and, if anything, I regret that my limited knowledge and the scope of this thesis does not permit me to go even further, and relate this book to so many other sources.[1]

In the rest of the bibliography, Said himself accounts for a good number of the citations. And while it seems clear that any thesis on Said should account for his other writings, I have not only taken them into account, but have also actively used them throughout the thesis. For several reasons, I have implicitly dismissed the possibility that as different writings, written for different audiences for different purposes, they should be kept separate. First, and most important to me is that Said does not believe that other people's writings should be looked at separately, according to the discipline in which they fall,

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[1]For example, further study could be centered on Noam Chomsky.

and so clearly he does not intend this to be done to his own writings. Said seems to agree with Foucault's belief that disciplines are artificial structures, and respect for their limits is not a natural impulse but a choice which serves to reinforce society's discourse. This is clear in Orientalism as well as in The World, the Text and the Critic,[1] a book on literary theory, wherein, for example, Said crosses over disciplinary thresholds by including a chapter on Renan and Massignon (two Islamic scholars who will be discussed in the body of this thesis). As well, Said writes of the 'wordliness' of texts, of their existence as separate and distinct entities to be interpreted freely by the critic. In this way, he understands that readers interpret his texts as they will, regardless of his intent.

But the relation of Said's texts one to the other is far more than a result of my own subjective will, and Said's theoretical point, to see them as such. Truly none of what Said writes is completely independent. Certain themes, such as the justice of the Palestinian cause, and the West's anti-Eastern bias, underpin all of his writings, as do certain allegories, like the Other. These consistencies enable the reader to read so much of what he has written from his Ph.D dissertation on Joseph Conrad, to his most recent book within the same frame of analysis, without undue alterations.

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[1]Edward Said, The World, the Text and the Critic (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

Joseph Conrad's works, for example, are continuously alluded to, reminding the reader that Said is after all, a professor of English. Conrad's image of the Other, as it is enunciated in Heart of Darkness and especially in The Secret Sharer, although multi-faceted, is neither a very difficult nor inpenetrable concept. Consequently, since Said continuees to use Conrad's imagery to describe the Other, it is not surprising that Said's idea of the Other has not evolved in his writings. His texts need not therefore only be read in terms of their chronology, or stage of thought development.

As well, importantly, Said himself does not write that he has changed his attitudes. On the contrary, it seems implicit in his writings that the stability of his ideas lends them intrinsic justice. While this does not automatically mean that his ideas have not changed, since certainly they could have changed without his noticing, it does mean that he intends continuity. Thus he writes in Culture and Imperialism, which was published fifteen years after Orientalism, "my themes here are a sort of sequel to Orientalism."[1] And he writes in "Orientalism Reconsidered," in 1991, he believes he is dealing with "the intellectual and political territory covered both by Orientalism (the book) as well as the work I have done

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[1]Said, Culture and Imperialism, 54.

since,"[1] clearly denoting as well that his work in the thirteen years between book and article has centered on much the same ideas. This is not to say that he has not made adjustments in his method, or that other events have not affected his ideas, as he writes, for example, that the end of the Cold war had obviously affected him.[2] But, such changes, as aware as he is of them, do not seem to have altered his perspective of what he writes dramatically, or even minimally.

Yet, even as I assert the continuity of his works, it is epistemologically correct and useful to examine his works as they fall into categories. First, there are the three books intended as trilogy: Orientalism, The Question of Palestine,[3] and Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World.[4] These were meant to be read together, as a

> series of books in which I have attempted to treat the modern relationship between the world of Islam, the Arabs, and the Orient on the one hand, and on the other

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[1]Edward Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered", The Contemporary Study of the Arab World. Ed. Earl L. Sullivan and Jacqueline S. Ismael. Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 1991, p. 35.

[2]Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. xxiii.

[3]Edward Said, The Question of Palestine (New York: Vintage Books, first published 1979; 1992).

[4]Edward Said, Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

> the West, France, Britain, and in particular the United States.[1]

The three books look at a core of ideas from three different angles, as will be discussed in this thesis, in order to demonstrate the truth of the relationship which Said posits exists between East and West.

Secondly, I have included some of the articles, letters and responses which Said wrote in books and mainstream media such as The New York Times since they also center around these arguments. The argument's flow is unabated and interrelated in all of these sources. And while his articles in the more obscure and scholarly journals, such as Critical Inquiry and Diacritics, the third category, would seem to be unrelated, this is not the case. Indeed much of what I consider important background to this thesis was read in these pages. It was in an interview in Diacritics that Said discusses his own Otherness and the personal circumstances that make him "acutely appreciative of Conrad's Secret Sharer,"[2] a feeling that makes his reliance upon Conrad so understandable, and which is discussed below in Chapter five. And it is in Critical Inquiry, and not in any of his articles on Orientalism, that Said discusses the methodology which he uses in Orientalism. That he believes texts are a part of his personal war seems clear in

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[1]Said, Covering Islam, p. ix.

[2]Said, "An Interview with Edward Said," Diacritics, 6:3 (Fall 1976), p. 35.

Orientalism, but it is only in Critical Inquiry, a source which does not seem to be related to that book, in a separate discipline, that he discusses this attitude.[1] And it is in those pages that Said engages in debates over the Palestinians, which he discusses in other forums.[2] There can be no doubt that Said's ideas and opinions in Orientalism underpin much of what he has written elsewhere from the early 1970's until the present.

By using all of these different sources in addition to the requisite book reviews, I have produced what I hope will be a readable and interesting study of Orientalism, produced not in order to incriminate a book nor to validate an academic discipline. It would be difficult to meet someone in the fields related to Orientalism who does not have a strong opinion about Orientalism. Some feel that it is gospel and some feel that it is trash, and of course there are those who believe that it is somewhere in between these extremes. It is not the purpose of this thesis to prove or disprove any of these reactions, or even to propose an opinion on the work.

The challenge is not only about whose facts are right, but about much more fundamental issues. The

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[1]Said, "Response", Critical Inquiry 15 (Spring 1989), p. 646.

[2]See Griffin's "Ideology and Misrepresentation: A Response to Edward Said" and Daniel Boyarin and Jonathon Boyarin's "Toward a Dialogue with Edward Said", Criticial Inquiry 15 (Spring 1989), pp. 611-625; 627-633.

challenge is to get beyond right and wrong, and to answer the riddle Said poses when he writes at the beginning of his article, "Orientalism Reconsidered"; his purpose is not an "attempt to answer my critics", and as well:

> other observations -- like my exclusion of German Orientalism, which no one has given any reason for me to have *included* -- have frankly struck me as superficial, and there seems no point in responding to them.[1]

The riddle this thesis seeks to answer is why the critics' observations, especially about such an important topic as the exclusion of German Orientalists, are considered by Said to be superficial. What is it that so many critics missed which Said believes makes their valid criticism so superficial and irrelevant?

To begin to answer this question, the reviews of Orientalism must be considered and evaluated. But, this thesis is intentionally not a compendium of reviews or an amalgamation of other people's opinions. Such a thesis would have been just another heap of papers in the debate, and although it would be filled with facts, it would really do little to confront the book's challenge. Therefore, it is important now, in the Introduction, to ground this thesis in a general discussion of the reviews. In the body of the thesis, I have tried to include representative samplings of the different reviews and sources available in order to give the reader some idea of the spectrum of opinions and to fully test Said's hypotheses. But it is important to con-

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[1]Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered", p. 35.

sider here the broad spectrum from which I deliberately chose some and excluded others.

Orientalism was reviewed in a variety of periodicals. It was scrutinized in the Islamic and Middle Eastern journals such as Humaniora Islamica and International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, and in more localized journals such as Iranian Studies and Journal of Palestinian Studies; in mainstream newspapers such as The New York Times; in general journals of history such as History and Theory; and in university journals like the Yale Review. I have included here and in my bibliography English reviews only because, as I said I don't know other languages well enough to understand the arguments that these reviews contain.[1] But even as such, there is quite a broad field of ideas to read and analyze, and the choices of inclusion and exclusion which I have made merit explanation. I have not purposely excluded any important sources, especially any whose views would lead to different conclusions in my thesis. Rather, I have tried to use both those critics whose ideas are unique and those who represent a general trend in criticism in order to present to the reader the different approaches to Said which are taken. To ensure

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[1]By this exclusion alone, I acknowledge that I have left out many important reviews and ideas, some of which might have changed this thesis dramatically. The ideas contained in this thesis must therefore be understood only as reflecting reviews, books and studies in English.

that the reader has a general background in the response to Orientalism, I include here what is, I am afraid, necessarily a brief introduction to criticism of the book.

To begin with, there is a general belief that Said has excluded many important Orientalists in his study, and by so doing, he has de-legitimized his own work. Many of the academics who reviewed the book specifically criticized Said's exclusion of sources. These exclusions left Professor Donald Little, of the Institute of Islamic Studies (McGill University), for example, wondering whether Said simply ignored that which "he cannot conveniently cut to his pattern."[1] Scholars of Middle Eastern Studies like Albert Hourani, in his review in the mainstream New York Review of Books[2], Malcolm Kerr and Little, respectively in the academic journals International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies[3] and Muslim World, and Fedwa Malti-Douglas in the University periodical, Virginia Quarterly Review[4] all noted that Said did not justly describe their field. As well,

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[1]Donald P. Little, "Three Arab Critics of Orientalism," Muslim World, LXIX:2 (1979), p.121.

[2]Albert Hourani, "The Road to Morocco," The New York Review of Books, 26:27 (Mar. 8, 1979), pp. 27-30.

[3]Malcolm Kerr, "Review of Orientalism," International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 12 (1980), pp. 544-547.

[4]Fedwa Malti-Douglas, "Re-Orienting Orientalism," Review of Orientalism, Virginia Quarterly Review, 55 (Aug. 1979), pp. 724-733.

even Brian Turner, who is most empathetic with Said's point-of-view, also criticizes Said's exclusion of such important scholars as W. Montgomery Watt, Kenith Cragg, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, and others.[1] It is therefore my opinion that the reader who approaches Orientalism without any prior knowledge of the field should not expect it to be an anthology or even a complete critique of the field because it does not include some very important scholars. This feeling seems to be widespread and general.

The specific exclusion which galls many Orientalists is the exclusion of the German school of Orientalism. Said notes in his introduction that he excludes these Orientalists because Germany was not a colonial power, like Britain and France, whose Orientalists he does study, and because it was in France that the formative ideas developed.[2] But many critics do not consider this an adequate explanation. Peter Gran, in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, brings up the question of Germany's role in the Ottoman Empire,[3] which, specifically because it did not involve direct colonial control, should have been studied. On another point, Malti-Douglas stresses

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[1]Brian Turner, "Review of Orientalism," Iranian Studies, XIV:1-2 (Winter, Spring, 1981), p. 112. He reviewed the book while he was a Lecturer of Sociology.

[2]Said, Orientalism, pp. 17-19.

[3]Peter Gran, Review of Orientalism, Journal of the American Oriental Society, 100:3 (1980), p. 328.

that the "German imprint upon American Orientalism is at least as great as the British and certainly far greater than the French,"[1] and therefore merits at least some consideration. This exclusion will be studied in depth in chapter three because its ramifications are so far reaching.

The critics also posit that these exclusions enabled Said to create a simplistic composite, "an ideal type of 'Orientalist'"[2] to replace all the thousands of scholars. This feeling of being caricatured and of being misrepresented led many critics to charge that Said was doing to them exactly what he accused them of doing to the Orientals. C. Ernest Dawn writes from the University of Illinois in the American Historical Review, an academic journal which obviously does not specialize on the Middle East or Islam. But still, I valued his brief review because of his work on Arab nationalism which I had previously found to be astute while doing my Master's classwork. He summarizes Said's description of Orientalism as a "subjugation of the particular to the universal, the individual to the stereotype,"[3] and this synopsis describes the way many Orientalists feel that they have been treated by Said; although heterogeneous individuals, they have been reduced to stereotypes. J.S.F.

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[1]Malti-Douglas, p. 726.

[2]Hourani, p. 29.

[3]C. Ernest Dawn, "Review of Orientalism," American Historical Review, 84 (Dec. 1979), p. 1334.

Parker, in the specialist Gazette Review of Literature of the Middle East writes of "reductionism and caricature"[1] in Orientalism, because of which many scholars and critics of the Middle East identify neither themselves nor their field in the book. To them, Orientalism is a book of distortions. So too J.H. Plumb, a professor of History at the University of Cambridge who reviewed Orientalism for the New York Times Book Review, did not identify his field of study in the book, and instead chided that "history is not Said's forte"[2] and that there is "a great deal of historical naivete shown in this book."[3] Despite all of the sources that Said uses, or because of them, depending on one's perspective, his arguments lack solid historical legs. For many reviewers, the implication is clearly that Orientalism lacks a strong factual basis, and consequently its conclusions are less than convincing. As C.F. Beckingham writes, "an attack on scholarship carries no weight if it is itself so unscholarly."[4]

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[1]J.S.F. Parker, "From Aeschylus to Kissinger," Review of Orientalism, Gazelle Review of Literature of the Middle East, 7 (1980), p. 11.

[2]J.H. Plumb, "Looking East in Terror," Review of Orientalism, The New York Times Book Review, 18 Feb., 1979, p. 3.

[3]Ibid., p. 28.

[4]C.F. Beckingham, Review of Orientalism, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, LXII:3 (1979), p. 563.

Yet there are many who acknowledge Orientalism's faults and still consider it a worthwhile and even outstanding work. Reviewers praise the book basically as an original work for its understanding of imperialism, and for its isolation of the Western discourse. Its very arrival is applauded as signifying the continuation of an ongoing effort by formerly colonized people to free themselves from the past of their colonization:

> Orientalism is a controversial and important book. It has become a jingoistic by-word in the Third World; younger students in and of the Middle East are excited by it; and it has probably destroyed a once respectable if rather fusty academic word, *Orientalism*.[1]

Attacks on Orientalism have become a banner for many in the Middle East, and these people greet Orientalism with enthusiasm. The book is also applauded by those who naturally think in Marxist and neo-Marxist terms. Stuart Schaar, for example, writing in Race and Class, discusses Said's study both in terms of Foucault's notion of discourse and Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemonic culture.[2] It is felt that Orientalism would provoke additional forums for discussions of Orientalism from their points of view. The

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[1]Bayly Winder, Review of Orientalism, The Middle East Journal, XXXV:4 (1981), p. 615.

[2]Stuart Schaar, "Orientalism at the Service of Imperialism," Race and Class, XXI:1 (1979), pp. 67-80. Schaar describes Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony as "the ideas received by the ruling classes and transmitted through control of media, education, religious institutions, etc." (p. 66 footnote)

book's condemnation of imperialism also struck a chord with many intellectuals, many of them feeling that Said provided the voice for what was in their hearts. Said's view of an overwhelming discourse of Orientalism which feeds imperialism and colonialism, and is in turn embodied in the general culture has found favour among some of these scholars. Bryan Turner, who has written on Orientalism from a background in sociology and with a leftist bent, praises Said's usage of discourse, noting how the terms 'Arab', 'Islam', and 'Orient', for example, only have meaning within the Orientalist discourse.[1] Said's connection between Orientalism and Zionism is also applauded by some, including, not surprisingly, a review in the Journal of Palestine Studies.[2] In his review in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, Gran notes the continuation of the old Orientalist dogma *vis à vis* the Palestinian-Israeli conflict among students and scholars in American universities.[3]

Such scholars see Said's thesis as unique and important, and although some see flaws in the book, they do not view them as important enough to disqualify Said's argument. Turner writes of "a canvas so broad and diverse, there is

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[1]Turner, Review of Orientalism, p. 109.

[2]Bob Lebling, Review of Orientalism, Journal of Palestine Studies, 9:2 (1980), pp. 118-119.

[3]Gran, p. 328-341.

much with which to disagree and to question,"[1] but this should not discount the values of this "masterpiece of literary, social and political criticism."[2] Gran also considers Orientalism to be "entirely different from other critiques of Orientalism which have grown up within area studies and which often, therefore, concentrate more on details than on premises."[3] For Turner, much of the book's greatness stems from its uniqueness; its "combination of methodological insights from literary criticism, structuralist analysis, and sociology of knowledge."[4] Turner stresses much of what I think is important and unique in the book: Said's usage of the sociology of knowledge, that is, Said's reliance on Foucault.

Such a variety of reactions give credence to the viability of discussing Said both as a part of an already existing dialogue, and as an initiator of a new dialogue. It is important in this thesis to discuss those elements in Orientalism which are new and which reflect a different premise for argument. Orientalism therefore provided me with an opportunity to examine the discipline in which I have been working towards a Master's degree. It is in this

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[1]Turner, Review of Orientalism, p. 111.

[2]Ibid., p. 112.

[3]Gran, p. 330.

[4]Turner, Review of Orientalism, p. 110.

spirit that I write. I do not deceive myself that I am in ground-breaking territory, nor would I try to deceive the reader. Rather, it should be clear that a debate about Orientalism has been going on for more than thirty years, about twenty years before Orientalism was published. There is no need for me to reiterate what has already been written; instead I will give a brief background to the discussion of Orientalism in order to give some historical depth to discussions in Orientalism.

In 1959, Anouar Abdel-Malek noted, as Said would similarly note nineteen years later:

> the real impetus of Oriental studies in the two key sectors, that of the Arab world and the Far East, dates essentially from the period of colonial establishment, but, above all, from the domination of the 'forgotten continents' by the European imperialisms.[1]

Abdel-Malek then sets himself the task of explaining the Orientalist: "What are his motivations? What occupies him? What objectives does he set himself to attain?"[2] He also informs the reader that he is not the first to delve into such questions. There are many works, "disparate material, full of suggestions, rarely precise, on the history of

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[1]Anouar Abdel-Malek, "Orientalism in Crisis", Diogenes, XLIV (1963), p. 104.

[2]Ibid., p. 105.

traditional orientalism."[1] These previous works, such as A.J. Arberry's Oriental Esssays: Portrait of Seven Scholars,[2] are really not, however, of the same genre as Abdel-Malek's work. Arberry's accounts, as an example, while extremely useful, well written and factual are not meant to critique the very nature of the field, the effects of its study, and its underlying doctrine. The works which are cited by Abdel-Malek have a more critical perspective about the whole Orientalist enterprise; their work displays the attitudes of a new and revisionist era. They are written by authors like Jacques Berque, Clifford Geertz, Maxime Rodinson and others whose work Said praises together with Abdel-Malek's.[3] Abdel-Malek quotes Berque as describing "the optic of the Arab bureau" which "has been oriented from the start,"[4] as Abdel-Malek writes, to "penetrate the consciousness of the people in order to better assure its ens-

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[1]Ibid., p. 104. For a far fuller bibliography than I have included in my bibliography, see "*Mustashrikun*", The Encycloaedia of Islam, New Edition, vol. VII, Fascicules 125-126, 735-753 (Bibliography on p. 753) by Jacques Waardenburg.

[2]A. J. Arberry, Oriental Essays: Portraits of Seven Scholars. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1960.

[3]Said himself notes and praises Abdel-Malek, and Berque, as well as Clifford Geertz, Maxime Rodinson and others (Said, Orientalism, pp. 326-327).

[4]J. Berque, "Cent vingt-cinq ands de sociologie maghrébine," Annales, XI:3 (1956), pp. 299-321, as quoted in "Orientalism in Crisis".

lavement to the European powers."[1]

This point of view is taken up just one year after Abdel-Malek's article by A.L. Tibawi who published "On the Orientalists" (parts one and two).[2] Such articles should not be seen as solitary or idiosyncratic protests. Tibawi's article was responded to by Little[3], who compared his work with that of Abdel-Malek and Said in 1979, and Tibawi responded in turn in 1980.[4] This series of articles is certainly not unique; indeed it represents the extent of the internal, scholarly debate which has emerged in the last thirty years over Orientalism. It is an issue that no contemporary student of Islam or the Middle East can ignore since it deals with the very sources we use and the perspective we have. Entering this argument, I am attempting to discuss only one perspective. By looking at Said's individual method, and examining his interpretation of Orientalism, I hope to be able to contribute something unique to the debate.

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[1]Abdel-Malek, "Orientalism in Crisis", p. 107.

[2]Another important example is A.L. Tibawi, whose articles on "English Speaking Orientalists" appeared back in 1964 (Muslim World, VIII (1964), pp. 25-45; 73-88). Tibawi has stayed in the debate, publishing, for example, "On the Orientalists Again" (The Muslim World, LXX (1980), pp. 56-61) in response to Donald Little's article ("Three Arab Critics of Orientalism").

[3]Donald P. Little, "Three Arab Critics of Orientalism."

[4]A.L. Tibawi, "On the Orientalists Again."

To this end, I have prepared five chapters, each devoted to a different issue in Orientalism. The first chapter begins to look at Orientalism as a methodology, ideology and discourse. Foucault's ideas on discourse are examined in depth and compared to Said's and a few other sources, such as Izutsu, are considered as well. The chapter ends by dealing with the question of whether Islam should be considered a discourse, and why Said does not seem to consider it as such.

In the second chapter, consideration of Orientalism as a discourse will continue with a discussion of the connection between knowledge and power. This chapter will look at how power is distributed in society and how knowledge affects power and power affects knowledge. Foucault's ideas will again be contrasted with Said's since Said both expanded upon Foucault's ideas to form his thesis, and criticizes those ideas.

The third chapter will deal with Said's methodology and how he justifies his generalizations and exclusions. As was mentioned above, critics have taken exception to the broad brush Said uses and the Orientalists he has left out of his inquiry essentially because they believe them to be unfair. They also believe that these exclusions and generalizations jepordize Said's entire thesis and therefore their points must be looked at carefully. To do this, I will compare Said's method to Foucault's genealogy and archaeology, discussing the problems associated with

essentialization. Since Said believes that generalizations about cultures have led to an East-West dichotomy, and his own writings have been said to do the same, this chapter will finish with a discussion of dichotomy in Said's works.

In chapter four, Said's style will be discussed. Specific attention is paid to his frequent attacks on Bernard Lewis, and his own letters and responses in periodicals. These literary conversations do not diverge in style from Orientalism; they simply provide a wider forum for examining Said's view of literature as acts which have repercussions in the world. His radical writing style characteristically reflects his opinions on the proper role of the historian and the critic in knowing other peoples and cultures. In this chapter therefore I will look at Said's instructions for studying other cultures. I will examine Said's directives on knowing Muslims, paying specific attention to his feelings about Islam, comparing and contrasting his views with those of some other students of Islam.

To round off this thesis, I will conclude with a chapter that deals specifically with Conrad, his imagery of the Other, and how Said has used these images both in his own life and in his consideration of Orientalism. Such a study is critical to an appreciation of Orientalism because images of the Other, of darkness, and of Conrad's other imagery as well as allusions to Conrad's story lines fill the book. Since this thesis took so long to come to be I was able to take advantage of this book and another late

source, an article in which Said wrote about his first visit to Israel and the 'Occupied Territories'. The article added a substantial amount to the thesis since in it Said seems to be examining his own opinions about a place around which he centers most of his criticism. It also gave greater depth to an understanding of Said's concept of the Other, demonstrating again how so much of Said's work is interrelated and complementary.

Because each chapter looks at Orientalism from a different angle, and includes discussions on very different aspects of the book, each chapter is unique but still interrelated with the others. The composite whole will not provide a comprehensive review of the book Orientalism nor of the discipline of Orientalism. Instead, as an investigation of ideas and theories, this thesis will provide insight both into Orientalism and Orientalism. With all of this said, it remains for me to invite the reader to begin.

Chapter One

Orientalism Introduced: Method, Ideology and Discourse

Orientalism is not merely an academic discipline. Rather, it is described in Edward Said's book, Orientalism, as a discourse of power, an ideology and a methodology. As Said describes it, Orientalism indicates both the parameters within which truth may be discovered about the geographical Orient and a trove of accumulated wisdom about the region. And yet, Said asserts that it is a better tool for telling the West about itself than for revealing truths of the East. It is also better at maintaining and rationalizing the bipartition of the world and perpetuating a hierarchy of cultures than actually depicting the lives of Orientals.

Said asserts that the the Orientalist method was grounded in, and is still based on, philology. Orientalism, as an ideology, is likewise grounded in the intellectual milieu that fostered this quasi-science, that of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Hence, Orientalist ideology incorporates the imperialist ideals current in Western Europe at the time and upholds a view of the world based on

social Darwinism and a corresponding hierarchy of cultures and races. Orientalism combines this method and ideology as a discourse in which it is the authoritative interpretation of the "Orient" and everything Oriental.

Orientalist ideology has, according to Said, existed and advanced the same principles from before Socrates lived and died up until the twentieth century. Said alleges Orientalism's longevity and favored position within Western consciousness by declaring that Westerners belong to "a part of the earth with a definite involvement in the Orient almost since the time of Homer".[1] By stressing an ancient tradition of Occidental domination on the part of the heroes of the Western imagination, Said evinces that modern images of the Orient are deep-rooted in the collective history and imagination of the West. Modern Orientalism should therefore not be seen as a spontaneous creation of nineteenth century Europe, but as built upon the ancient dehumanization and exoticizing of the Orient. From that ancient time onwards, Said declares, the West has monopolized the creation and proliferation of the East's image.

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 11, and note also p. 57-58: "From at least the second century B.C. on, it was lost on no traveler or eastward-looking and ambitious Western potentate that Herodotus- historian, traveler, inexhaustibly curious chronicler- and Alexander- king warrior, scientific conqueror- had been in the Orient before. The Orient was therefore subdivided into realms previously known, visited, conquered, by Herodotus and Alexander as well as their epigones, and those realms not previously known, visited, conquered."

Exposing such ingrained attitudes and cultural consciousness is the first layer of Said's argument, as he asserts the hegemony of the Orientalist myth in modern times. He therefore proclaims that the "absolute demarcation between East and West, which Balfour and Cromer accept with such complacency", and which was an unconscious rationale for conquest, had "been years, even centuries, in the making".[1] Westerners believed that they created the Orient, philosophically, by exploration, because they "believed that places they had not 'discovered' could not be said, in any true sense of the verb, to exist".[2] But, according to Said, the Europeans were responsible only for creating an abstract entity called the 'Orient' that bore little or no connection to reality.[3] By interpreting these places and people to the West, and by creating their stories, they narrated the people into silence, complementing military imperialism with cultural imperialism. Said writes:

> As one critic has suggested, nations themselves are narrations. The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them.[4]

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 39.

[2]A.P. Thornton, Imperialism in the Twentieth Century (The MacMillan Press, 1978), p. 11.

[3]Said notes that "the Orient and the Occident are facts produced by human beings." ("Orientalism Reconsidered", p. 36.)

[4]Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. xiii.

Creation of an Orient and narration of its story together furthered and were furthered by the culture of imperialism and Orientalism. Said repeatedly criticizes this "Orientalizing the Orient"[1], this eighteenth and nineteenth century process of inventing and reifying a geographical area and its people as the 'Orient'. He stresses that the facts of both an 'Orient' and an 'Occident' were European inventions,[2] and therefore, reference to either entity is a reference to far more than a mundane geographical unit. In scholarly and popular imagination, the 'Orient' implies "something more than what was empirically known about it"[3], resulting in misunderstandings of the largest proportions. The term 'Orient' hence became a distancing device.

The roots of modern Orientalism, while stemming from centuries of conceived difference, are according to Said, grounded in the work and milieu of Silvestre de Sacy, Ernest Renan, and Edward Lane, nineteenth century scholars. While the concept of Orient was evolving, and the conquest proceeded, the study of the Orient was simultaneously being organized along contemporaneous scientific lines. According

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 328.

[2]Said writes in Orientalism, "the Orient was almost a European invention" (p. 1); "Orient and Occident are manmade" (p. 5); "The Orient is itself a constituted entity" (p. 322). According to Said, Islam is also an invented conglomeration, as will be discussed in chapter three.

[3]Said, Orientalism, p. 55.

to Said, it was de Sacy, Renan and Lane who began to study the 'Orient' in a social scientific way, and who initiated what can be called modern Orientalism. Ernest Renan was a distinguished nineteenth century philologist and academic, but his work has now largely been discredited. Silvester de Sacy was the first president of the Société Asiatique and a consultant for the French government, and Edward Lane is most famous for his ground-breaking, and still influential dictionary.[1]

The eighteenth century bequeathed to Orientalism a confident philosophy of expansionism. As Said writes:

> expansion, historical confrontation, sympathy, classification- are the currents in eighteenth century thoughts on whose presence the specific intellectual structures of modern Orientalism depend.[2]

Orientalism's underlying ideology is grounded in this era's expansionist doctrine based on the maxim that Europe is "powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and

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[1]These men have written so extensively and have been involved in so many activities that it is difficult to summarize their bibliography. Suffice it to say that the three were very different. De Sacy was active in the French government and its occupation of Algiers, often serving as a consultant, while Renan was more the academic scholar on the sidelines of actual occupation who produced tracts on the superiority of races. Lane, on the other hand compiled one of the most complete and respected Arabic-English dictionaries as well as a book on the Manners of Modern Egyptians, the only part of his work which seems to have caught Said's attention.

[2]Said, Orientalism, p. 120.

distant."[1] Orientalism should consequently be understood also as an ideology of European, white superiority. Its dogma is grounded in a view of the world based upon social Darwinism and the affiliated notions of *noblesse oblige* and the hierarchy of cultures and races.

After Darwin wrote his famous treatise, On The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life(1859), Herbert Spencer wrote First Principles (1862) wherein Darwin's ideas of evolution were applied to peoples and their cultures. Darwin himself discussed "'high' and 'low' races, and 'stronger' and 'weaker' nations."[2] Interestingly enough though, de Sacy and Lane both published before Darwin's book appeared, while Renan published after it. Darwin's ideas, while formative of an age of thought, cannot, of course, be seen as effecting two of the three whom Said designates as Orientalism's founders. But that Darwin influenced those who wrote after him, cannot be doubted considering the ways his ideas were translated into social theories. Following Darwin, Spencer asserted that 'Survival of the Fittest' was what validated the con-

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p.57. This understanding of Orientalism has become so well accepted that Waardenburg writes matter-of-factly in the Encyclopedia of Religion how Islamic studies "exhibited certain assumptions of European civilization of the time, notably the superiority of Western civilization and the excellence of its scholarship" (Waardenburg,"Mustashrikun," p. 458).

[2]Watt, p. 157.

temporaneous competititive, economic order. This term validated not only the contemporary economic hierarchy, but the cultural one as well:

> Merely by occupying or controlling most of the globe, the European nations had demonstrated that they were the fittest to survive; and the exportation of their various economic, political and religious institutions was therefore a necessary step towards a higher form of human organization in the rest of the world.[1]

Said writes:

> Race theory, ideas about primitive origins and primitive classifications, modern decadence, the progress of civilization, the destiny of the white (or Aryan) races, the need for colonial territories- all these were elements in the peculiar amalgam of science, politics, and culture whose drift, almost without exception, was always to raise Europe or a European race to dominion over non-European portions of mankind.[2]

The European imperialist dogma of which Said writes designates a system wherein not only does 'might make right,' but might designates right.[3] Said notes:

> The whole question of imperialism, as it was debated in the late nineteenth century by pro-imperialists and anti-imperialists alike, carried forward the binary typology of advanced and backward (or subject) races, cultures, and societies.[4]

And therefore, "attached to the arrogance of imperialism is the display of certainty that its culture is superior"[5]

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[1]Ibid., p. 156.

[2]Said, Orientalism, p. 232.

[3]Imperialism was a reflection of the optimistic spirit of the age: "Empire was the assumption of superiority and optimism made concrete." Thornton, p. 49.

[4]Said, Orientalism, p. 206.

[5]Thornton, p. 10.

which marked every aspect of nineteenth century Western Europe. This feeling of superiority reinforced the binary world view of 'them' and 'us', vivid examples of which appear in travelogues, Rana Kabbani points out. European travelers -- one of the links in maintaining the myth of Orientalism -- chronicled their experiences in the East writing of the depravity in Asia and Africa. By denigrating the natives, they reiterated their own superiority as "the culmination of excellence in the human species."[1] As lower species, the Orientals were perceived as closer to the animals from which man evolved, and therefore shared many animal traits. The Europeans consequently felt free to view non-Europeans as "lascivious and inherently violent"[2] without trying to understand them; they did not see it necessary to do other than impose the binary framework upon what they saw.

The consummate European conception of Orientals was, in this way, "a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment."[3] The hypothetical equation which seems to explain the nature of these representations and the dimensions of the framework is explained by Kabbani as follows:

> If it could be suggested that Eastern peoples were slothful, preoccupied with sex, violent, and incapable

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[1]Rana Kabbani, Europe's Myths of Orient (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 8.

[2]Ibid., p. 12.

[3]Said, Orientalism, p. 207.

> of self-government, then the imperialist would feel himself justified in stepping in and ruling.[1]

This rationale would explain why imperialist Europeans clung to the image of the Oriental as intrinsically different from the Westerners.[2] And, this rationalization enabled the East to continue to exist for the West as its 'Other': The East, which is "preoccupied with sex" and is "violent" must yield to the West, which is, by insinuation, moderate, rational and capable of self-government.

The *mission civilisatrice* upon which the Europeans embarked would, of course, be regarded not as exploitative, but as enlightening.[3] Yet the paradox of such a creed was that the racial theories behind the characterizations of Orientals could not allow for the non-Europeans ever to rise above their origins and reach the level of the Europeans. These theories

> asserted that there was no escape from origins and the types these origins enabled; it set the real boundaries between human beings... [4]

In this way, an "irreducible distance" between Europeans and their vanquished other is maintained through simple racial prejudice.

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[1]Kabbani, p. 6.

[2]Norman Daniel, Islam, Europe and Empire (Edinburgh: University Press, 1966), p. 53.

[3]Kabbani, p. 6.

[4]Said, Orientalism, p. 233.

According to Said, imperialist ideology continues to exist within Orientalism. To best understand this, imperialism should be understood as the acceptance of the myths of superiority and the accession to unequal power positions. As Benita Parry, in her study of Conrad puts it:

> Imperialist ideology can be taken to mean that constellation of values, beliefs and myths giving intellectual coherence and moral sanction to colonialism (the burden of a racial and national mission, service to a noble corporate cause, implementation of the laws of order an progress in the dark places of the earth), which foster in men and women a form of cognition whereby they come to identify themselves as members of a ruling race, identify with the conception of a great national destiny and *accede to the relationship of poser and dominance between the West and other continents*.[1] (italic mine)

Said criticizes the quasi-scientific writings of Ernest Renan for proliferating exactly these myths of racial dominance. Renan alleged that Semitic languages were primitive and simple compared to Aryan and other linguistic pedigrees. He argued that these linguistic traits reflected the primitive, incapable-of-developing character of the Semites. These Semites were thus destined to maintain their degenerate position, subordinate to Europeans, and other more developed peoples.[2] Said stresses that Orientalism's roots lie in such justifications of dominance and the actual reality of imperialism. Empire was therefore defended as a

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[1]Parry, p. 9.

[2]Said, Orientalism. He writes: "Thus for Renan Semitic is a phenomenon of arrested development in comparison with the mature languages and cultures of the Indo-European group, and even with the other Semitic Oriental languages." (p. 145).

duty, as *Noblesse Oblige*, as well as a right of power and superiority. He explains:

> Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts like "inferior" or "subject races," "subordinate peoples,"dependency," "expansion," and "authority." Out of the imperial experiences, notions about culture were clarified, reinforced, criticized, or rejected.[1]

Orientalism reflects this condescending outlook because of its origins, and according to Said it has never detached itself from its origins nor severed its ideological connections from its roots. Said even asserts that "Orientalism has been successfully accommodated to the new imperialism, where its ruling paradigms do not contest, and even confirm, the continuing imperial design to dominate Asia."[2]

Westerners described Oriental lands as exotic and romantic, and irretrievably foreign. The people of these lands were considered intrinsically different; they were sensual, prone to violence, lazy, immoral, and in other ways depraved.[3]

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[1]Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. 9.

[2]Said, Orientalism, p. 322.

[3]Said believes that Westerners labeled the Orient as "aberrant, undeveloped, inferior" (N.Y. Times Book Review, Oct. 31, 1976), and he notes how according to Balfour and Cromer, for example, "the Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'" in Orientalism, p. 40.

As ideological roots of Orientalism come from the age of imperialism, so too does the methodology of Orientalism. Said traces the Orientalist method of systematic classification of peoples and beliefs to the philological and scientific principles prevelant and respected in the eighteenth century. Said therefore discerns two major traits in Orientalism:

> (1) a newly found scientific self-consciousness based on the linguistic importance of the Orient to Europe, and (2) a proclivity to divide, subdivide, and redivide its subject matter without ever changing its mind about the Orient as being always the same, unchanging, uniform, and radically peculiar object.[1]

In Said's thesis, Orientalism's characteristics as a methodology and as an ideology are intertwined because, over and above all, Orientalism is the primary discourse of the West.

This description of the accumulation of knowledge is familiar to followers of contemporary intellectual trends and readers of Foucault. It is Foucault's work which interests me because it seems to permeate so much of Said's work. In fact, I do not think that Said's work is truly comprehensible without a prior knowledge of Foucault's work. Foucualt discusses the amassment of systematic knowledge as it relates to the accumulation of the power which the state maintains over its citizens.

Said adapts Foucalt's notion of discourse[2] to support his assertion of Orientalism's all encompassing nature

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 98.

[2]Ibid., p. 3.

in its regulatory powers over what is seen, said, and written about the East. Foucault's concept of discourse has been well described as characterizing

> the unity of a group of statements above and beyond books, texts, authors, through time, and independently of the proximity of epistemological validity, scientificity, or truth. It reveals that within a discourse reference is being made to the same thing with the same conceptual field, at the same level.[1]

Reference to a discourse therefore simply implies a reference to a common body of statements, as a repertoire of ideas and understandings is accessed when discussing any matter which comes within the domain of the discourse.[2] Said describes this in reference to literary criticism which is a discourse of its own:

> A complex discourse, of which one example is what I have called literary scholarship, assumes consensus on a few fundamental points, as a matter of both economy and convenience... The threshold is implied, although rarely formulated... as a result of many factors: the consensus of experts in a field, the mass of previous writing, the administration of teaching and research, conventions about what an author or a text is, and so on.[3]

And in Foucault's words:

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[1]Barry Smart, Michel Foucault (London and N.Y.: Tavistock Publications, 1985), p. 40.

[2]There are, of course, many and "various systems of statements", or discourses, the bulk of which make up an archive. (Smart, p. 40.) Malti-Douglas, in Woman's Body, Woman's World: Gender and Discourse in Arab-Islamic Writing, p. 4, gives the example of the Arabo-Islamic discourse which is "the reflection of a civilizational reality in which religious values and ideals become embodied in the literary and cultural expressions of historical Middle Eastern societies."

[3]Edward Said, The World, the Text and the Critic, p. 180.

> all manifest discourse is secretly based on an 'already-said' is not merely a phase that has already been spoken, or a text that has already been written, but a 'never-said', an incorporeal discourse, a voice as silent as a breath, a writing that is merely the hollow of its own mark... The manifest discourse, therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this 'not-said' is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said.[1]

We must be aware that often what is not said is as important as what is said. A discovery of the history which is not recorded and the points of view not sanctioned would tell us much about our acknowledged history and contemporary discourses and religions.

But discourses should further be understood as all encompassing, acting minimally as Said has defined cultures, as "saturating hegemonic" systems.[2] Said explains that 'culture' has "internal constraints" which inhibit writers and thinkers and this acts as constrictively as a discourse.[3] It contains the rules of what is acceptable to say, think, and to write about the area defined as the Orient[4].

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[1]Foucault, Archaelogy of Knowledge, p. 25.

[2]Said, Orientalism, p. 14.

[3]Ibid., p. 14. He notes however, that cultures however do not "unilaterally" inhibit writers, since writers can sometimes create praiseworthy works even from within cultures.

[4]Ibid., p. 3. Said believes that "no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism."

Are then culture and discourse to be understood as the same systems? Said offers his answer in the following admonition that

> it is rank hypocrisy to suppress the cultural, political, ideological, and institutional contexts in which people write, think, and talk about the Orient, whether they are scholars or not.[1]

The implication here is that the "cultural, political, ideological and institutional contexts", mentioned above, all together can be equated with discourse, and are formed within a discourse. Culture, politics, ideologies, and institutions are more than just the frames through which people look at the world in general, and the Orient in specific. These contexts are also the tools with which, and the means through which, the Orient is known.

That movements and influential ideas control or manipulate the way in which people understand the world is not controversial. Religion is an oft-cited example of an idea which controls the way in which people see and understand the world. Said alleges that Western conceptions of Eastern reality are shaped by Orientalist ideas, much as

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[1]Said, New York Review of Books, April 12, 1982, p. 45. This is certainly not a new thought, and as a preliminary consideration is regarded as especially important among the more left-leaning historians, as Bryan Turner also stresses for example, that one must remember that "our contemporary views of other religions, such as Islam, are part of an established tradition of talking about alien cultures. We understand other cultures by slotting them into a pre-existing code or discourse..." (Turner, Accounting for the Orient [in Islam in the Modern World, ed. Denis MacEoin and Ahmed Al-Shahi (London: Croom Helm, 1983], p. 10).

conceptions of life are shaped by religious beliefs. He writes:

> To say of such ideas (the Orient) and their discourse (Orientalism) that they have something in common with religious discourse is to say that each serves an an agent of closure, shutting off human investigation, criticism, and effort in deference to the authority of the more-than-human, the supernatural, the other-worldly. Like culture, religion therefore furnishes us with systems of authority and with canons of order whose regular effect is either to compel subservience or to gain adherence.[1]

Here, Said clearly believes that religion, culture, and Orientalism, as an example of a discourse, act in similar ways. This is in line with Foucault, who writes:

> Doctrine links individuals to certain types of utterance while consequently barring them from all others. Doctrine effects a dual subjection, that of speaking subjects to discourse, and that of discourse to the group, at least virtually, of speakers.[2]

Not only do doctrines provide the contexts of thought which should not be ignored, but they organize the boundaries of thought according to internal rules.

Such is the case presented by Stanley Fish. Fish writes of a baseball player whose perception of life and of baseball was dramatically altered by a religious conversion. After his conversion, the ball player was no longer able to consider his success or failure in purely mundane terms, on what Fish describes as "a strictly baseball level"[3]. Such

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[1]Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic, p. 290.

[2]Foucault, Archaelogy of Knowledge, p. 226 (Appendix).

[3]Fish, p. 270.

a level no longer existed for him, since his conception of the 'natural' or the 'ordinary world' shifted dramatically to include continuous Divine intervention. Fish writes that the ball player and the secularist each see the world from within "*alternative*"[1] beliefs- each of which obliges a corresponding perception and understanding of the world. Fish is quick to note that the term, 'interpreted', is not quite accurate because it "suggests an imposition upon raw data of a meaning not inherent in them".[2]

The religious and the a-religious persons are not interpreting events, as might be believed from the outside, but seeing them from within alternative conceptions, or discourses. The alternative conceptions are each individual's perception: "these categories, rather than being added to perception, are its content".[3] As Foucault writes, reversing traditionally accepted ideas, pronouncing in this way that "the soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body."[4]

But when Said criticizes the Orientalists, he minimizes the importance religious systems has as a discourse in people's lives. He writes:

> The term 'Islam' as it is used today seems to mean one simple thing but in fact is part fiction, part

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[1]Ibid., p. 271.

[2]Ibid., p. 270.

[3]Ibid., p. 271.

[4]Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison, p. 30.

> ideological label, part minimal designation of a religion called Islam. In no really significant way is there a direct correspondence between the 'Islam' in common Western usage and the enormously varied life that goes on within the world of Islam, with its more than 800,000,000 people, its millions of square miles of territory principally in Africa and Asia, its dozens of societies, states,histories, geographies, cultures.[1]

He continues to ask:

> What connects Islam at the level of everyday life to Islam at the level of doctrine in the various Islamic societies? How really useful is 'Islam' as a concept for understanding Morocco *and* Saudi Arabia *and* Syria *and* Indonesia?[2]

He asks also in Orientalism, "Do cultural, religious, and racial differences matter more than socio-economic categories, or politico-historical ones?"[3] On the one hand, he seems to stress the importance and relevance of religion as a part of a discourse or as a type of discourse itself in order to construct a coherent thesis, and then, on the other hand, to disregard its significance. He ignores what Jacques Waardenburg, an unconventional Orientalist and critic of Orientalism, puts so succinctly and what most Orientalists would acknowledge. Waardenburg describes Islam basically as Said and Foucault describe discourse: "Islam as a religion, in the strict sense of the word, can probably best be called a network of signs."[4] And he specifies the

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[1]Edward Said, Covering Islam, p. x.

[2]Ibid., p. xv.

[3]Said, Orientalism, p. 325.

[4]Waardenburg, "*Mustashrikun*," p. 750.

pervasiveness of religion in cultures which are, as he calls, "religiously oriented":

> in a culture which is religiously oriented, it is the perception and resulting action of religious meanings that will be the basis, the dynamic force, the integrating element of such a culture[1]

This widespread belief compounds Said's own belief that discourse and religion act similarly, and yet, Said seems to heed neither his own or the overwhelming opinion.

Perhaps, however, Said is depicting instead a differentiation between the vocabulary of the discourse which describes Islam and the reality of Islam. The importance of vocabulary and conceptions in forming reality is illustrated dramatically and impressively by Toshiko Izutsu. He examines the transformation of perception of what is 'ordinary' or 'natural' which accompanied the rise of Islam by studying that era's mutating vocabulary.[2] Izutsu seeks to capture changes in a society's outlook as measured in its vocabulary. Asserting that a thought cannot exist for long without being expressed in language, Izutsu presents a model of language and societal changes. As thought is constantly developing, so is language, and therefore, the development of language acts as society's reflection. The vocabulary of

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[1]Waardenburg, Reflections on the Study of Religion (The Hague: Mouton, 1978), p. 11.

[2]In his book God and Man in the Koran (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964), Izutso explores how the changes in meaning of Arabic words after the Qur'an was received serves as documentation of the change in the Arabs' belief system was wrought by the coming of Islam.

an era, if properly evaluated, should therefore yield a picture of that era's world-view, or *Weltanschauung*.

Izutsu argues the viability of hypothetically slicing time, as though it were a tree trunk, in order to expose the vocabulary of a certain era. By examining the vocabulary semantically[1], an extrapolation of the *Weltanschauung* of the era would be revealed.

According to Izutsu, in each vocabulary, there is a key word. Everything in that society's thought relates to the key word and can be understood by its relation to the key word. There are, however also lesser key words which are surrounded, as though by satellites, by other words relating to them and further defining their meaning.

In the pre-Islamic *Weltanschauung*, Izutsu explains, 'nobility' could be seen as the key word of the society, since the Arabian way of life was geared towards the attainment and preservation of nobility. The shift in what was considered 'ordinary' or 'normal' after the advent of Islam is evidenced by the change of *Weltanschauung*, which was specifically reflected in the change of the central key word. In the new, Islamic *Weltanschauung*, 'Allah' (God), was the central key word. Everything in the world was to be

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[1]According to Izutso, semantics is the study of meaning. He makes these ideas clear specifically in the first two chapters of the book, "Semantics and the Koran" and "Koranic Key-Terms in History", illustrating them with examples and illustrations (pp. 9-40).

seen in terms of its relationship to God, and not any characteristic of man.

The answer which Izutso provides is in the comparison of the age of the dawn of Islam and modernity. Can one single word be said to be the key word in any society which is neither completely religious or completely secular? In a world where Marxism and socialism blend with Islam and where there is political affiliations have relegated the concept of *ummah* to the modern conception of what religion is? As Said notes:

> If we come to realize that, as many scholars have recently noted, Islamic doctrine can be seen as justifying capitalism as well as socialism, militancy as well as fatalism, ecumenism as well as exclusivism, we begin to sense the tremendous lag between academic descriptions of Islam (that are inevitably caricatured in the media) and the particular realities to be found within the Islamic world.[1]

Islam can no longer be affiliated with one vocabulary. The experience of the Muslim, Said seems to be saying, may indeed be dominated by one single experience[2] of what Islam is, but rather by the political, social, and economic forces which shape the Islamic experience for Muslims. Stressing this gap, Said begins to discuss "modern Islam", but immediately notes that "to be more precise... societies, people, and institutions within the Islamic world since the

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[1]Said, Covering Islam, p. xv.

[2]Or even two experiences, based on the historical religious division between *Shi'i* and *Sunni*.

eighteenth century"[1] cannot be considered homogeneous. In his criticism of the way that Orientalists study Islam, Said points out that "it is not the thesis of this book (Orientalism) to suggest that there is such a thing as a real or true Orient (Islam, or whatever)..."[2] Said thereby seems to be following the course of Clifford Geertz, one of the modern students of Islam whom Said praises.[3] In the same way that Clifford Geertz mocks the notion of "a supposedly single creed, Islam"[4], Said specifically tries not to suggest an alternative definitive version of Islam for that of those he criticizes.

Perhaps another part of the answer as to why Islam should not be treated as a discourse throughout the Islamic world, and therefore used as a means of understanding Muslims the world over is in the difference between an actual living reality and the term 'Islam'. In a quote mentioned to above, Said makes specific reference to "'Islam' as it is used today".[5] By specifying this distinction, Said does

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[1]Said, Covering Islam, p. 17.

[2]Said, Orientalism, p. 322.

[3]Said describes Greetz as an anthropologist "whose interest in Islam is discrete and concrete enough to be animated by the specific societies and problems he studies and not by the rituals, preconceptions, and doctrines of Orientalism" (Orientalism, p. 326).

[4]Geertz, Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. ix.

[5]Said, Covering Islam, p. x.

not rule out the role of Islam, rather he criticizes the way the West has perceived, and perhaps created a different 'Islam'. It is, as Waardenburg wrote, "the distance between *l'image de l'Islam and la réalité musulmane*"[1] which must be discerned.

Said criticizes this notion of 'Islam' as being a stagnant label, noting that "always it is supposed that the 'Islam' being talked about is some real and stable object out there".[2] This reflects some of the concern Wilfred Cantwell Smith expressed about the term 'Islam' much earlier, and from a different philosophical outlook. Smith started the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill and seriously believed in inter-religious dialogue. He studied Islam and contributed many thoughtful and scholarly works to the field. When considering the viability of 'Islam' as a name to describe the beliefs and piety of Muslims, Smith hesitates. While initially approving the nomenclature on the grounds that the Qur'an itself includes it[3], he later decried its use. He writes that 'Islam', and indeed all names of religions are not natural, but are both the result of and the cause of reification of the faith at a certain

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[1]Waardenburg, Reflections, p. 14.

[2]Said, Covering Islam, p. xi.

[3]Smith cites the Qur'an 5:3: "This day I have perfected your religion for you, and completed my favour unto you; and have chosen for you as a religion *Islam*." The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious traditions of Mankind (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1963), p. 81.

point of development.[1] He asserts that the term 'Islam' was actually adapted by Muslims in the nineteenth century, not in order to define themselves better to themselves, but to define themselves to the Europeans,[2] and 'Islam' therefore carries the burden of nineteenth century Muslim apologetics.

Said also notes that the term 'Islam' has come to include many connotations and ideas that are not intrinsically within its scope. 'Islam' is, "not a natural fact but a composite structure created to a certain extent by Muslims and the West"[3]. First, it is not used to depict simply the religion of the Muslims. Secondly, just as the 'Orient' does not designate merely the geographical region termed the Orient, so too does the term 'Islam' not merely designate the religion and culture as Muslims would describe. 'Islam' as part of the vocabulary of the Orientalist discourse directly denotes and connotes much more than a factual reality. Said also implies, thirdly, that Muslims themselves have used the term 'Islam' for that which is not

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[1]Ibid., p. 194.

[2]Ibid., pp. 80-115. As one of his proofs, Smith points out that the term *Iman* (faith) was used far more frequently than *Islam* was before that time.

[3]Said, Covering Islam, p. 136.

intrinsically Islamic, they have used it as "a political cover for much that is not at all religious."[1]

Said's concern for the inadequacy of the term 'Islam' to reflect the living reality of Muslims finds further outlet in his criticism of the texts and doctrines which are used by Orientalists to understand that living reality. He writes in the closing of Orientalism:

> to *all* the authors Islam is a remote, tensionless thing, without much to teach us about the complexities of today's Muslims. Hanging over the whole disjointed enterprise which is *The Cambridge History of Islam* is the old Orientalist truism that Islam is about texts, not about people.[2]

It seems that Islam means the texts, the stuff of religion and doctrine, and not the way that that religion is lived by the people. There are those who would not appreciate such a difference being pointed out. These critics uphold the unity of Islam over and above geographical, social, economic and political divisions. They also believe that the texts of Islam represent the actual Islam and the only Islam worth considering.

But Said clearly does not agree with this kind of thought. The reality, and not the theory behind that reality, especially if it belies what is prescribed in books is what he believes is worth considering. He therefore does not see the world of Islam as one coherent entity. And, if

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[1]Ibid., p. 53. For example, can Saddam Hussein's co-opting of the term *jihad* from the religious vocabulary really be seen as a legitimate expansion of Islamic terms?

[2]Orientalism, p. 305.

Islam should not be viewed as a hegemonic system of thought without distinction across the Muslim world, than it should not be considered the primary discourse of all Muslims. Said believes that other theories and beliefs divide Muslims, and it is according to these systems that they should be known because it is through these individual disparate systems that society is controlled. Accordingly, these different systems, and not belief in Islam control the power in Muslims societies. This connection of power to discourse is vital to Said's thesis because he uses it to describe the spread of Orientalism and its power over Western society, and it is specifically his point to insist on just the opposite about Islam in Muslim societies[1]. It is Said's point therefore to disparage the unity of Islam while building up the conformity and power of Orientalism as a discourse.

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[1]And Said believes that Orientalists have erred specifically in endowing Islam with just such hegemony.

Chapter Two

Orientalism: Nexus of Knowledge and Power?

Said presents an image of Orientalism as an all encompassing discourse, writing:

> Without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage-- and even produce-- the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. Moreover, so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism.[1]

In support of this position, he asks rhetorically:

> How did philology, lexicography, history, biology, political and economic theory, novel-writing, and lyric poetry come to the service of Orientalism's broadly imperialist view of the world?[2]

The answer is rhetorically clear: Orientalism is powerful and its influence permeates society. As Said writes elsewhere, Orientalism must correctly be "perceived as a discourse of power."[3] All of these seemingly disparate arts

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 3.

[2]Ibid., p. 15.

[3]Said, N.Y. Review of Books, April 12, 1982, p.45.

and sciences are therefore properly understood as supplementing and promoting the Orientalist discourse. This is an explosive and seemingly paranoid charge.

Said's underlying point in making such a charge is that Orientalism is more than an academic discipline and Orientalists are not only professors and their students. To do this, he alters the understanding of 'Orientalism' from its conventional, academic usage[1] and freely includes in his grouping

> a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators.[2]

Said believes that all of these diverse professionals were responsible, in their own spheres, for creating, and maintaining the discourse of Orientalism. Consequently, all of them are in effect Orientalists. Readers must ask if this is a legitimate construct. Can such people, with different goals, different motives, and different training be considered together in one group?

There is, first off, the possibility that scholars and entertainers use the same words with different intents:

> It might also be pointed out that in any complex society the various levels Said identifies could be at odds with each other; that poet, scholar, and politician could be talking different languages or (utilizing similar words) could mean altogether different things.[3]

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[1]Hourani, "The Road to Morocco," p. 28-29. Said describes it as a simple act of demarcation: "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'" Said, Orientalism, p. 2.

[2]Said, Orientalism, p. 2.

[3]Victor Brombert, "Orientalism and the Scandals of Scholarship," American Scholar (1978-79), p. 533.

Even people who seem to be talking about the same thing or developing the same beliefs could have completely different meanings. It is also understood that scholars and artists look at affairs in a very different light, using different sources for different purposes. It is "uncommon," therefore "to read Shakespeare as an historian of Rome."[1] Another point is that lay people do not understand the terms that they use, and consequently use them apart from their 'scientific' connotation.[2] Traditionally, and often sub-consciously, people believe that scientists and scholars have different insights than regular people and have reached different levels of knowledge. Although the same words and concepts are used, it is certainly feasible that they mean different things. To this end, Clifford, who supports much of Said's argument, writes in his critique of Orientalism:

> One cannot combine within the same analytic totality both personal statements and discursive statements, even though they may be lexically identical. Said's experiment seems to show, to this reader at least, that when the analysis of authors and traditions is intermixed with the analysis of discursive formations the effect is a mutual weakening.[3]

Other critics likewise question the varieties of sources which Said cites to establish his point of the pervasiveness of the discourse. They wonder if it really makes sense to

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[1]Winder, p. 617.

[2]For instance, although lay people use the term 'calorie' it has become far removed from its scientific meaning which denotes energy.

[3]James Clifford, History and Theory (XIX:1, Jan. 1980), p. 217.

juxtapose work done seriously, and often scrupulously, with the phases and fads of popular culture. By noting the particular example which Said gives of a class reunion costume, a critic sums up the general tenor of argument:

> The work of Gibb and Von Grunebaum should, one might think, be discussed in a somewhat different perspective from the exotic costume of a class reunion, peevish student comments in a course critique, film clichés of camel-driving natives or gas pump terrorists, and cartoons of hook-nosed venal leaders.[1]

These quotes point out the different aspects of the criticism. The critics point to what is traditionally seen as a logical differentiation between popular and scholarly culture, and then again, between levels of popular culture. This criticism clearly also questions the validity of comparing works produced for entertainment and those for enlightenment.

But all these protests and their like are exactly why Said stresses popular cultures and novels in Orientalism: he is trying to convince Orientalists of the relevance of their work for common culture and vice versa. He writes that

> the hardest thing to get most academic experts on Islam to admit is that what they say and do as scholars is set in a profoundly and in some ways an offensively political context.[2]

Whether this is sheer hyperbole or not, the point is that Said feels this is an incredibly important fact which is not

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[1]Brombert, p. 538.

[2]Said, Covering Islam, p. xvii.

truly realized. Said clearly does not believe that culture is removed from history and academia. As Clement Dodd recalls in his review, everything other than production is superstructure; "ideas, ideologies, culture, institutions, religion, are mere super-structures."[1] From a Marxist point of view then, there is no reason to separate culture from history or religion or institutions. All are interconnected, and all are subordinate to economic or material factors. But, Said is not an old-school Marxist. Rather, his understanding is akin to Gramsci's notion of hegemonic culture as Schaar relates:

> for Gramsci there was a dynamic relationship between culture, politics and mass organization, and he believed that to overcome bourgeois cultural hegemony, the left had to create mass political institutions which would generate their own ideas and analysis.[2]

Schaar laments only that Said does not follow through on Gramsci's idea of the need for the the left to create alternative cultural institutions.[3] It seems clear that Said also sees a dynamic relationship between culture and politics. In Said's theory, culture is by no means unimportant; his whole point is to demonstrate the importance of culture and discourse, that is, the importance of

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[1]Clement Dodd, Review of Orientalism, British Society for Middle Easter Studies Bulletin, 6:2 (1979), p.93.

[2]Schaar, p. 72.

[3]Ibid.

the superstructure, in effecting the material, the substructure.

Culture both reflects and shapes the reality of the substructure. Therefore, forms of culture, like the arts or novels must be studied together with 'pure history'. Said writes:

> The idea of culture itself, as (Matthew) Arnold refined it, is designed to elevate practice to the level of theory, to liberate ideological coercion against rebellious elements- at home and abroad- from the mundane and historical to the abstract and general.[1]

Likewise, Foucault's methodology, as in Archaelogy of Knowledge, which has been adapted by Said, cuts "right across the science/non-science distinction."[2] Archaeology, as a means of understanding reality and history, must extend to literary and philosophical texts as well as scientific texts precisely because "the sciences are thoroughly imbued with ideology,"[3] as the other disciplines have been described as being. Moreover, according to Foucault, disciplines are simply a further means of extending a discourse.

> Disciplines constitute a system of control in the production of discourse, fixing its limits through the action of an identity taking the form of a permanent reactivation of the rules.[4]

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[1]Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. 131.

[2]Sheridan, p. 110.

[3]Ibid., p. 110.

[4]Foucault, Archaelogy of Knowledge (Appendix), p. 224.

To respect the barriers between disciplines is therefore to respect the discourse, and this Said will not do. Conventionally, of course, it is thought that creators are being paid for different things and they operate on different axes. The scholar is supposed to produce learning. But the entertainer works to elicit tension, excitement and other reactive emotions on the part of the reader. Said's consideration of the two together should therefore be understood as an assertion that scholars do indeed work within the same parameters of creating fear and excitement.

Malti-Douglas, in her critical book review of Orientalism, tables another argument against comparing the effect of professional scholars' and imaginative writers' works on the general public. She writes that evidence taken from Chateaubriand and the others "cannot be used to impugn scholars whose prejudices were often better hidden."[1] In other words, because the prejudices of the Orientalists were not expressed as transparently as those of the novelists, whatever points of view one or the other had cannot necessarily be impugned against the other.

Critics also criticize Said's inclusion of all elements of society by a single standard, and considering Orientalism as undeveloping, changing only externally. The unwitting effect of suggesting such an all-inclusive movement is that, since it is so "unrelieved", it becomes a

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[1]Malti-Douglas, "Re-Orienting Orientalism," p. 729.

"victim of overkill".[1] The sheer breadth of the "unrelieved" generalizations compels the critics to ask primarily, "is this true, to anything like the degree alleged?"[2] In this spirit, Kerr questions the strength of Said's generalizations:

> The book contains many excellent sections and scores many telling points, but it is spoiled by overzealous prosecutorial argument in which Professor Said, in his eagerness to spin too large a web, leaps at conclusions and tries to throw everything but the kitchen sink into a preconceived frame of analysis.[3]

It appears as though Orientalism was a conspiracy, a description which Said rejects along with Orientalism.

Foucault addresses his readers with similar questions and objections. He challenges the reader, demanding to know if any traditional field of study could be held separate from others and from the arts:

> Can one accept, as such, the distinction between the major types of discourse, or that between such forms or genres as science, literature, philosophy, religion, history, fiction, etc., and which tend to create certain great historical individualities?... In any case, these divisions- whether our own, or those contemporary with the discourse under examination- are always themselves reflexive categories, principles of classification, normative rules, institutionalized types: they, in turn, are facts of discourse that deserve to be analysed beside others; of course, they also have complex relations with each other, but they are not intrinsic,

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[1]Antonio Gaultieri, "Hermeneutics of the Old and New Orientalism", The Contemporary Study of the Arab World, ed. Earl L. Sullivan and Jacquelline S. Ismael (Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 1991), p. 54.

[2]Parker, p. 8.

[3]Kerr, p. 544.

> autochthonous, and universally recognizable characteristics.[1]

Foucault's analysis of the traditional division of disciplines clearly underlies Said's approach. As Said writes:

> A radical falsification has become established in this separation. Culture is exonerated of any entanglements with power, representations are considered only as apolitical images to be parsed and construed as so many grammars of exchange, and the divorce of the present from the past is a neutral or accidental choice, its real meaning is as an act of complicity, the humanist's choice of a disguised, denuded, systematically purged textual model over a more embattled model, whose principal features would inevitably coalesce around the continuing struggle over the question of empire itself.[2]

Any division of society which excludes parts of itself from the creation and distribution of discourse must be seen as artificial and untenable. Likewise, all of society is dominated by this discourse. Once it has been established that the Orientalist discourse infiltrates all aspects of society, Said's examination of the connections between knowledge and power can be examined.

Said begins Covering Islam by declaring that the "underlying theme" of Orientalism is "the affiliation of knowledge and power."[3] Foucault's analysis of this same problem carries an eerie denunciation of modern civilization. He writes of the procedures that "constitute the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and

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[1]Foucault, Archaelogy of Knowledge, p. 22.

[2]Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. 57.

[3]Said, Covering Islam, p. ix.

object of knowledge."[1] The amassment of records and data functions as power over the people contained, literally, and figuratively, in the records.

> This subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence or ideology; it can also be direct, physical, pitting force against force, bearing on material elements, and yet without involving violence, it may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use neither of weapons nor of terror and yet remain a physical order. That is to say, there may be a 'knowledge' of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them: this knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of the body.[2]

According to Foucault, power, as described by one of his critics, is not possessed, but exercised. It is "exercised through and by the dominated."[3] Turner notes that because, according to Foucault, knowledge is not necessarily liberating, his argument

> differs radically from a conventionally liberal perspective in which the evolution of knowledge out of ignorance requires a similar political evolution of freedom out of oppression.[4]

Truth does not equal freedom; truth is only another myth which exerts its power by controlling discourse. As Said writes, one of the purposes of Orientalism is to ask how

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[1]Foucault, Discipline and Punish, p. 192.

[2]Ibid., p. 26.

[3]Sheridan, p. 139.

[4]Turner, "Accounting for the Orient," p. 17.

ideas "acquire authority, 'normality', and even the status of 'natural' truth?"[1]

Since knowledge is produced and propagated within a discourse, power must be explicitly bound to discourse as well as knowledge. Said believes, clarifying Foucault's thought, that there is no "hard-and-fast rule about the relationship between knowledge and politics,"[2] understanding politics, I believe, as the method of obtaining and keeping power. So, while Foucault believes that power is bound to knowledge- and by extension to discourse- Said proffers that the relationship between knowledge and obtaining power is not hard-and-fast.

Either way, understanding the relationship between power and knowledge means understanding how power is actualized in society. Power exists as "an infinitely complex network of 'micro-powers', of power relations that permeate every aspect of social life".[3] That is, it should be discerned by understanding the

> relays through which it [power] operates and the extent of its influence on the often insignificant aspects of the hierarchy and the forms of control...[4]

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 326.

[2]Ibid., p. 15. He argues instead that "each humanistic investigation must formulate the nature of that connection in the specific context of the study, the subject matter and its historical circumstances."

[3]Sheridan, p. 139.

[4]Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, p. 213.

With this explanation, one can visualize the flow of power through discourse. Power operates in this way, functioning like a chain in society, connecting all aspects and people, and the individual becomes "both an effect of power and the element of its articulation".[1] Power is, in this function, tantamount to the spread of discourse.

Discourse is therefore so powerful that Foucault maintains that "our own societies are maintained not by army, police, and a centralized, visible state apparatus, but precisely by those techniques of dressage, discipline, and diffuse power at work in 'carceral' institutions"[2]. But Foucault was initially tentative about this very connection. He seems to criticize his own Archaeology of Knowledge, as one critic notes:

> If the operation of power is so fundamental to the production of discourse, then it was there- in a work specifically devoted to the elaboration of discursive theory- that its presence should have been most clearly apparent.[3]

And Foucault acknowledges this in an interview, noting:

> I am struck by the difficulty I had formulating it [the relation of discourse to power]. When I think about it now I ask myself what I could have been thinking about, in Histoire de la Folie, for example, or Naissance de la Clinique, if not power? Yet I am perfectly well aware

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[1]Smart, p. 79.

[2]Sheridan, p. 136.

[3]Ibid., p. 116. See also, Foucault, Language Counter-memory, Practice (p. 213), where Foucault states point blank: "The question of power remains a total enigma. Who exercises power? And in what sphere? We now know with reasonable certainty who exploits others...But as for power..."

> that I practically never used the word and did not have that field of analysis at my disposal. This inability was certainly bound up with the political situation in which we found ourselves.[1]

Upon reflection, Foucault clearly believes that the establishment and implementation of power is considered to be "directly correlated with the production and circulation of true discourse."[2] Power is unquestionably a function of discourse. A society's true discourse, be it shaped, for example, by religion or democratic ideals, is tantamount to the rationale for the right of the governing to govern.

De facto acceptance of a discourse used to maintain power occurs by the failure to acknowledge and then resist it, and this is what permits the status quo power relationships to continue. Thus the superstructure is maintained, and the dominated do not even realize their position. Said repeatedly maintains that this is the case of, or which must be understood as, an "old-boy corporation-government-university network"[3]. He writes:

> there is of course a Middle East studies establishment, a pool of interests, "old boy" or "expert" networks linking corporate business, the foundations, the oil companies, the missions, the military, the foreign serv-

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[1]Sheridan, p. 115, he quotes Foucault from "Les Intellectuels et le Pouvoir", L'Arc, no. 49 (1972).

[2]Smart, p. 78.

[3]Said, Covering Islam, p. 144.

> ice, the intelligence community together with the academic world.[1]

In the discourse of Orientalism, the relays of power, the network, includes all levels of power in society, linking the schools, academia, and their literature inextricably with the government. This criticism of the relationship between government and scholars is clear from the beginning of Orientalism, and again it follows Foucault's thought. Foucault explains that intellectuals are "themselves agents of this system of power".[2] Said sets the tone of the book by quoting from a speech Balfour made to the House of Commons defending England's duty and interests in Egypt[3]. The point which Said makes is described aptly by one critic as "the deep connivance, in the Western establishment, between scholars, politicians, and colonial administrators".[4]

Said seeks to prove this connection in modern times by using Bernard Lewis as a gross example of the interaction between Orientalists and the government. Lewis is demeaned in Said's writings as unable to escape the discourse of Orientalism and he is criticized both for what he has written and what he has done.

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 302. It is of course ironic that Said himself has been called upon as an "expert" by the major news networks for his opinions and advice about major Middle-Eastern conflicts.

[2]Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, p. 207.

[3]Said, Orientalism, pp. 31-35.

[4]Brombert, p. 532.

Said first seeks to discredit Lewis by interpreting his work as motivated by hatred and the need to prove superiority as shown above. He then further ties him to the powerful, to the government, the nexus of the Orientalist discourse. Said therefore describes Lewis as "a frequent visitor to Washington where his testimony... mixes standard Cold War bellicosity with fervent recommendations to give Israel more, and still more arms..."[1]

This example of a prolific and well known professor from the prestigious Princeton Institute of Advanced Studies is clearly a lynch pin between a theory and the reality. Said stresses Bernard Lewis almost to the point of obsession, and tries so hard to reduce Lewis' works to simple Orientalist dogma solely in order to prove his core argument that "the core of Orientalist dogma persists"[2] through a network of awards and grants.[3] Lewis, as he is portrayed by Said, therefore serves as a caricature of those traits which Said disdains and a proof positive of the interconnectedness of government and education. All of this

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[1]Said, New York Review of Books, Aug.12, 1982, p. 45.

[2]Said, Orientalism, p. 302. Although he notes an analysis of Middle East studies as saying "not that the field is 'monolithic,' but that it is complex, that it contains old-style Orientalists, deliberately marginal specialists, counterinsurgency specialists, policymakers, as well as 'a small minority... of academic power brokers.'"

[3]Ibid., p. 302. Said writes that this "network" legitimizes "basically unchanging ideas about Islam, the Orient, and the Arabs."

would prove the truth of Foucault's philosophy and keep Said's argument in line with it. Foucault admonishes, "every educational system is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and powers it carries with it."[1] Consequently, distribution of the discourse, is, as Foucault wrote, "reliant upon institutional support and distribution".[2] By reliance upon Foucault's philosophy, Said does not deem it necessary to prove that behind Orientalists lies staggering power beyond presenting the example of Lewis. Instead, "he merely assumes it."[3] Little, writing as a scholar whose work on Mamluk historiography was partially funded by the U.S. government, asserts:

> it cannot be reasonably argued, much less proved, that every, or even any, scholar who has accepted government funds has sold himself to U.S. government policy in the Middle East; in fact, it might well be argued that some have used that support to try to change that policy... Furthermore, while it is true that the United States has made vast sums available to encourage the study of the Middle East for the national interest and that students and scholars have been quick to accept these funds, the program has been administered in a spirit of benign neglect, and very little control has been exerted over the way that scholars have used public money to further their own academic interests.[4]

Whether Little's insistence of the separation between state and study is naive, his assertion that benign neglect was

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[1]Foucault, Archaeology of Knowledge (appendix), p. 227.

[2]Ibid., p. 219.

[3]Kerr, p. 545.

[4]Little, p. 126.

exercised over students is important. Sivan, in his consideration of Arab critics of Orientalism, quotes al-Bitar. Al-Bitar also criticizes the reality, and not the theory of this connection between knowledge and power:

> ...What was, for instance, the aim of all those who studied Ibn Khaldun (the fourteenth-century North African philosopher of history) and anointed him the founder of modern sociology?[1]

According to Kerr as well, a careful study, and not mere superficial generalizations, would reveal that in the works of those scholars who did receive government or foundation grants there is actually "a consistent *resistance* to the themes of denigration and caricaturization of Eastern peoples of which Said complains."[2] Sivan himself asserts in his narration that scholars employed directly or indirectly by imperialists should not have their points of view invalidated de facto because of their employ. On the contrary, would they not have more of an interest in presenting as accurate a picture as possible for more pragmatic demands than were scholarly speculation?[3]

While Said does not refute many of these points, he continuously analyzes the connections that he has alleged exist between knowledge and power in his trilogy. He goes even further than Foucault, criticizing him for not extend-

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[1]Emanuel Sivan, Interpretations of Islam: Past and Present (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1985), p. 137.

[2]Kerr, p. 546.

[3]Sivan, p. 144.

ing his own ideas of the knowledge-power relationship between cultures. He writes:

> To a great extent, Foucault's flawed attitude to power derives from his insufficiently developed attention to the problem of historical change. Though he is right in believing that history cannot be studied exclusively as a series of violent discountinuities (produced by wars, revolutions, great men), he surely underestimates such motive forces in history as profit, ambition, ideas, the sheer love of power, and he does not seem interested in the fact that history is not a homogenous French-speaking territory but a complex interaction between uneven economies, societies, and ideologies. Much of what he has studied in his work makes greatest sense not as an ethnocentric model of how power is exercised in modern society, but as part of a much larger picture involving, for example, the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. He seems unaware of the extent to which the ideas of discourse and discipline are assertively European and how, along with the use of discipline to employ masses of detail (and human beings), discipline was used also to administer, study, and reconstruct- then subsequently to occupy, rule, and exploit- almost the whole of the non-European world.[1]

This is Said's thesis in brief. He has taken Foucault's basic understanding of the method and mechanics of discourse, power and knowledge, and extended it from intra-societal workings to inter-societal workings. Said condemns Foucault for his inability to perceive the world and power structures away from his Franco-centric vision.

Said reflects that Western knowledge of the Orient both created power over the Orient and was the method of ruling the Orient. He writes that

> To say simply that Orientalism was a rationalization of colonial rule is to ignore the extent to which colonial

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[1]Said, The World, the Text, the Critic, p. 222.

> rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact.[1]

And it was explicitly the Orientalists' texts and amassing of knowledge that in effect created the reality which could be conquered: texts "purporting to contain knowledge about something actual... can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe."[2]

Said maintains that knowledge of the Orient allowed its conquest and continued domination and that this is an ongoing process in the Middle East, and his trilogy, Orientalism, The Question of Palestine and Covering Islam, was constructed in order to study both the theoretical and actual implications of this idea. The three books examine different aspects of the knowledge, power, discourse axis from different angles. By designating the Zionists as Orientalists and Westerners in The Question of Palestine, he portrays a case study of a conflict between the East and West. The Zionists treated the indigenous Arab, mostly Muslim population of Palestine, in the same imperialist manner as every other 'native' people conquered by Western powers were treated.

> ...The discourse of Orientalism, over and above the Orient's powerlessness to do anything about them [the Orientalists], suffused their [Napolean's and de Lesseps'] activity with meaning, intelligibility, and reality. The discourse of Orientalism and what made it possible- in Napoleon's case, a West far more powerful militarily than the Orient- gave them Orientals who

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 39.

[2]Ibid., p. 94.

> could be described in such works as the *Description de l'Égypte* and an Orient that could be cut across as de Lesseps cut across Suez.[1]

Said is asserting that as a tool of power, Orientalism is a force. And since force necessitates that upon which it can act, Orientalism requires an 'Other'. As Foucault writes, power "is always exerted in a particular direction, with some people on one side and some on the other."[2] Power is used to both create and empower a group. The unempowered, the others, are those upon whom power is exerted, the actors are those the discourse empowers, the Orientalists, while the acted upon are the Orientals. According to Said, this relationship is typically imperialist: Israel is labeled a "White-European-democracy"[3] for ignoring any basic rights of the subjugated (non-white) people. The subjected people, according to Said are deprived of their right to exist by Israeli laws which "legislate us {Palestinians} out of existence politically."[4]

In The Question of Palestine, the theme of 'knowledge and power' is thus explored through an actual conquest that rested ideologically upon the foundations of a school

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[1]Ibid., p. 95. See also Covering Islam, p. 24.

[2]Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, p. 213.

[3]Edward Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered", p. 44.

[4]Edward Said, "Response", Critical Inquiry 15, No. 3 (Spring, 1989), p. 645.

of knowledge. A book about Palestine is an apt inclusion in the trilogy both because of the centrality of Palestine in Said's thoughts and because Palestine is an example of his theory: "the loss that is Palestine is the witness to everything he says about the effectiveness of Western domination."[1] Said's thesis in The Question of Palestine is that the Zionists used Orientalist tenets to create their own identity, while continuing to use the Orientalist dogma in order to justify their actions.[2] Said cites an Israeli commentator who remarked that practically as well, the

> Israeli occupation of the West bank and Gaza, the destruction of Palestinian society and the sustained Zionist assault upon Palestinian nationalism have quite literally been led and staffed by Orientalists.[3]

Orientalism, according to Said, therefore legitimizes the perpetrators of the crimes against the Palestinians, as well as the crimes themselves, in Western eyes.[4]

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[1]Basim Musallam, "Power and Knowledge", Review of Orientalism, M.E.R.I.P. Reports, 79 (1979), p. 22.

[2]The example of the Zionists is complex. Both modern, secular Zionism and Orientalism arose in Europe in the nineteenth centuty, clearly basing their emerging ideas on similar scholarly trends and ideas. The Zionist ideology, on one level, was therefore formed by Orientalist ideas. And, according to Said, they continued to make use of Orientalist doctrine to defend their actions, way in to the twentieth century. (Orientalism, p. 306.)

[3]Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered", pp. 43-44. Said cites Israeli commentator, Dani Rubenstein, here.

[4]Said states that "pro-Israeli interpretations of history are part of the process by which Israel has achieved domination over the land of Palestine." Said, Critical Inquiry, (Spring 1989), p. 639.

Covering Islam, the third book in the trilogy, explores Western perceptions of the Muslim world. In short, it chronicles an example of how preconceived notions shape perception- how the Orientalist discourse affects the way Westerners see the East. The fundamental inequality of the relationship between 'actor' and 'acted upon' is explored and implicated as a factor in the misunderstandings and consequent conflicts between the two cultures.

The book serves as a revealing illustration of the Orientalist phenomenon which Said describes as "white-man-as-expert to the modern Orient."[1] The 'white man' is the one positioned to understand and diagnose the problems in the East since the East is "incapable of defining itself."[2] The East is silent, while the West speaks for it: Islam "is not an interlocutor"[3] and Muslims "cannot represent themselves, they must therefore be represented by others who know more about Islam than Islam knows about itself."[4] The irony in such beliefs is revealed in the double entendre of the title. While the Western media "cover" Islam in the sense of media coverage, they also cover it in the sense of concealing it. What Said believes is true for Massignon and Renan is also true for the Western media, as he laments that

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 235.

[2]Edward Said, "Arabs, Islam and the Dogma of the West", N.Y. Times Book Review, Oct. 31, 1976, p. 4.

[3]Said, Covering Islam, p. 142.

[4]Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered", p. 42.

"...exactly where they (Renan and Massignon) grasp Islam, they also lose it... (because) Orientalism perceives and is blinded by what it perceives".[1]

This is a tremendous accusation. These two Orientalists were so different that one would traditionally only contrast their styles and conclusions. Renan was a methodical racist who unashamedly belittled non-Aryans, while Massignon seems to have shed his European biases and lived as a mystic with Muslim mystics for a time. By considering these two Orientalists together, Said is implicitly asserting Orientalism's homogeneity. And this underlying assumption has mystified and angered many Orientalists who resent being grouped together indiscriminately with each other and posthumously with Renan. Is not Said doing to the Orientalists what he criticizes them for doing to Muslims?

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[1]Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic, p. 276.

Chapter Three

Said's Generalizations and Exclusions

Said writes in his introduction to Orientalism that the book is not intended as a cataloguing of Orientalists' efforts, and so, necessarily, it must be based upon limited examples and generalizations. He defends the legitimacy of the generalizations he makes:

> In short, the relationship between Islamic or Arab Orientalism and modern European culture can be studied without at the same time describing every Orientalist who ever lived, every Orientalist tradition, or everything written by Orientalists.[1]

While not including many prominent Orientalists in his study, and hence, seeming not to have considered their work, Said includes so many other characters and events. He has constructed an argument based on a massive survey, but which is grounded in exclusions and generalizations.

Perhaps the best understanding of Said's self justification in undertaking such a huge project is his analysis of Auerbach's Mimesis. Auerbach, a Jewish refugee from Nazi

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[1]Said, New York Review of Books, Aug. 12, 1982, p. 44.

Europe, wrote a famed tome on Western literature as an exile in Istanbul, physically far from the home of the literature he was discussing, and, of course, according to Said, metaphysically exiled across the great divide of cultures, as a European stranded in Turkey. Said believes that Auerbach risked two things:

> What he had risked was not only the possibility of appearing in his writing to be superficial, out of date, wrong, and ridiculously ambitious (who in his right mind would take on as a project so vast a subject as Western literature in its entirety?). He had also risked, on the other hand, the possibility of *not* writing and thus falling victim to the concrete dangers of exile.[1]

This analysis also parallels Said's self-defined circumstances and provides possible explanations for Said's choice of studies.

First, Said's question about Western literature could easily be about Orientalism: 'Who in his right mind would take on as a project so vast a subject as Orientalism in its entirety?' The rhetorical answer would be that if Auerbach could be so successful in his treatment of literature, then Said can be successful in his survey of Orientalism. This confidence, of course, should also be seen as based upon Foucault's methodology in discussing the development of Western culture. Secondly, what is Said risking by not writing this tome? For Said, 'the concrete dangers of exile' are those of acceding to the discourse of

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[1]Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic, p. 6.

power. He is speaking out against the powerful, and attempting to protect his legacy as an outsider.

But critics still deplore his method. They attack Said's generalizations about Orientalists and the West as a whole, by juxtaposing the alleged generalizations of the Orientalist with those that Said himself makes. Said is described as generalizing "sweepingly and categorically about 'the Orientalist' and 'Orientalism.' (Indeed, his critical manner sometimes appears to mimic the essentializing discourse it attacks.)"[1] Little expresses the skepticism Said's style evokes among Orientalists:

> it is unclear, when he accuses Orientalism of dogmatism, for example, whether he has merely failed to read as widely in Orientalist scholarship as he should or whether he has simply chosen to ignore the vast body of literature which he cannot conveniently cut to his pattern.[2]

It is clear to the Orientalist scholar that Said has left out much of the history and complexity of Orientalism, reducing it to a single thread of thought. Malcolm Kerr likewise writes:

> In charging the entire tradition of European and American Oriental studies with the sins of reductionism and caricature, he commits precisely the same error.[3]

Said is effectively "guilty of generalizations as absurd as those he condemns."[4]

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[1]Clifford, p. 210.

[2]Little, p. 121.

[3]Kerr, p. 544.

[4]Beckingham, p. 562.

Hourani makes a similar point[1] and analyzes Said's concept of an Orientalist:

> What Mr. Said has done is to construct an ideal type of "the Orientalist," made up of a number of elements logically connected with each other, and free from extraneous and accidental elements. But as every social scientist knows, such ideal types must be used with care and caution in order to explain particular events or human beings. No person fully exemplifies one type: each must be seen in the light of several types.[2]

Hourani seems to be advising Said that each Orientalist must be considered as a conglomeration of other 'types' of being as well; Orientalists should not be isolated from their contemporaries since they are the result of many types.

The absence of consideration of many Arab scholars within Said's arguably artificial construct of Orientalism leads the informed reader to question the viability of the dichotomy created by Said between Oriental and Orientalist. Are they Orientals who have become 'non-Orientals' by virtue of their being Orientalists?[3]

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[1]Hourani, New York Review of Books, 26:27 (March 8, 1979), p. 29: "But can it be that he {Said} himself has faller into the trap which he has exposed, and has sunk human differences in an abstract concept called "Orientalism"? What is the status of this concept? What kind of validity can he claim for the general statements he makes..."

[2]Ibid., p. 29. It seems to me that Hourani is also mocking Said by pointing out that he, an Orientalist, is familiar with social scientist's works. He is, as well, stressing the importance of looking at human beings as such, and not as stereotypes, echoing Kerr's criticism above.

[3]Malti-Douglas, "Re-Orienting Orientalism," p. 730. She lists such scholars as Fazlur Rahman, G.C. Anawati, George Makdisi, and others.

Is the reason for such a seeming paradox viable because "Muslim attitudes are less harmonious than those of Westerners"[1] as one praising critic has asserted, or is there another, less condescending explanation? Sivan quotes Al-Bitar:

> What all this boils down to is to bring through the back door that very myth about the essentialist, innate properties that Said wants to demolish with regard to the presumed nature of the Orient. He does to [Western] Orientalism what he accuse the latter of doing to the Orient. He dichotomizes it and essentializes it. East is East and West is West and each has its own intrinsic and permanent nature.[2]

Said replicates the very divisions which he criticizes Orientalists for creating between East and West by not including any Eastern scholars in his study of Orientalism, and disregarding the roles that they have played in Orientalism.

Perhaps the reason for such simplification is that Said portrays the world according to a framework of dichotomy. In his writings, Said differentiates between things by imposing upon them a structure of dichotomy. By placing notions, people, or actions on either side of this dichotomy, Said associates them with the positive or negative side. By imposing the artificial construct that if a thing is different from that which is situated within the sphere of good, it must be bad, Said misses the fine dis-

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[1]Francis Robinson, "As Others See Us: Islam and the West," History Today, 6 (May, 1986), p. 10.

[2]Sivan, p. 136.

tinctions and nuances which are inherent in human deeds. Said's political conscience, and consequently, his historical interpretations depend upon maintaining this dichotomy.

He describes the problems in the Middle East as arising substantially from the stark differences between the East and the West:

> Much of the problem comes from the stark reality that Palestinian politics are essentially Arab politics, whereas the U.S. and Western Europe inhabit a totally different world, in which for example, the media, the academy, and the research institutes, churches, professional associations, and labor unions of civil society play almost as important a role as the central government in political society.[1]

Said preserves the dichotomy which he criticizes the Orientalists of creating by continuously repeating the dictum that "two parallel worlds"[2] exist.

These binary oppositions also exemplify the external structure, theory, or "pre-conceived frame of analysis"[3], imposed by Said upon history. The dichotomy is essentially between East and West:

> Colonizer vs. Colonized
> we vs. they
> active vs. passive
> superior vs. inferior
> masculine vs. feminine[4]

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[1]Said, The Question of Palestine, p. xxvii.

[2]Ibid., p. xxiv.

[3]Kerr, p. 544.

[4]Malti-Douglas, "Re-Orienting the Orient," p. 729.

An example of the possible distortions which such a binary vision creates is that if the West has a plethora of an object or virtue, then de facto, the East has a dearth of such object or virtue. An example of this is Said's lamentation about the "lack of a single decent library in the entire region."[1] Malti-Douglas counters:

> Those of us who have had the good fortune of working in the library of the Arab Academy in Damascus or in that of the Institut Dominicain in Cairo, to mention merely two, can only be surprised at such a remark.[2]

By exaggerating the differences in quality and depth to the extent of reducing the importance of Eastern resources as compared to the West's, Said's arguments themselves serve "to reinforce the *inferior, passive* segments of the binarism."[3] This superimposition of this binary structure clearly elides the subtleties of relationships. Polarizing the relationship between East and West and between the Orientalists and Orientals in such a simple way is an over-simplification of the central problem of Orientalism.[4]

However, this complete dichotomy most probably does not seem at all artificial to Said. This is clear in his

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 323.

[2]Malti-Douglas, "Re-Orienting the Orient," p. 730, and (p.731): Malti-Douglas also criticizes the supposed dearth of scholarly journals addressed. While Said claims that "no Arab or Islamic scholar can afford to ignore what goes on in scholarly journals, institutes, and universities in the United States and Europe; the converse is not true."

[3]Ibid., p. 732.

[4]Thomas M. Greene, Yale Review 68 (Summer 1979), p. 579.

interpretation of a character's dead silence when asked a question on the slave trade in Jane Austen's Mansfield Park. He interpreted the silence that rejoins the question "as to suggest that one world could not be connected with the other since there simply is no common language for both. That is true."[1] There is no way for one side of the dichotomy to be translated across the great divide.

Said's binary view of the world should also be seen as a result of Said's proclivity to generalize, or as a result of his generalizations because of

> its tendency to *dichotomize* the human continuum into we/they contrasts and to *essentialize* the resultant "other"-- to speak of the Oriental mind, for example, or even to generalize about 'Islam' or 'the Arabs'.[2]

The dichotomies and the frozen, essentialized, and polarized relationships which they entail force the creation of generalizations because the dichotomies exist only if the generalizations exist. Whether his belief in dichotomies forced him to speak in terms of generalizations, or whether his generalizations allowed him to view the world in terms of a dichotomy is a moot point.

The issue of the existence of an Arab people is a good example. He differentiates, repeating and rationalizing the validity of his generalizations and the baseless nature of his opponents' generalizations:

> ...the "Arabs" are neither as unified nor as coherent a mass as anti-Arab writing, which is legitimated by Orientalist stereotypes of the Arabs, would have one believe... there is very little chance, given the ideological screens of both Orientalism and Zionism,

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[1]Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. 96.

[2]Clifford, p. 207.

> that the human values represented by the Arabs-- by at least some Arabs, that is-- can get through.[1]

And he describes Arab Nationalism as one of those "romantic myths" like Orientalism and Zionism.[2] But yet, he also describes Palestine in 1516 as being "no less Arab or Islamic,"[3] signifying that the term 'Arab' has some meaning as a qualifying adjective. And somehow there is some transcendental identity to the Arab people that there are lands which are theirs, and not simply the country which rules them.

An interesting idea develops then in the following comparison which Said makes in the Epilogue: "...the United States refused to allow any connection to be made between Iraq's lawless occupation of Kuwait and Israel's 24-year-old equally lawless occupation of Arab lands."[4] Lands are somehow intrinsically 'Arab' which means, I would suppose, that they should be ruled by Arabs and, presumably, inhabited by Arabs. But the incident with Iraq and Kuwait demonstrates that 'Arab' is a pretty much useless term insofar as designating territorial rights. What mattered there were the rights of 'nations' (the difference here might be seen as that between *wataniyah* and *qawmiyah* except

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[1]Said, "Arabs, Islam and the Dogmas of the West," p. 36.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Said, The Question of Palestine, p. 11.

[4]Ibid., "Epilogue" of the 1992 version, p. 239.

that Said does not believe in the existence of the Arabs as a *qawm*). So why use it, unless Said wants to stress the existence of a difference between what can be described as Arab and what cannot.

A similar ambivelance is apparent in Said's treatment of the concept of an 'Orient':

> Frequently he is led to argue that a text or tradition distorts..., or ignores some real or authentic feature of the Orient. Elsewhere, however, he denies the existence of any 'real Orient', and in this he is more rigorously faithful to Foucault and the other radical critics of representation that he cites.[1]

Greene also notes this contradiction. He refers to the "inherent irony in his [Said's] use of allegedly Orientalist categories."[2] He notes Said's usage of "Islam" and the "East" "on the rare occasions when he alludes to supposed historical facts as distinct from distortions."[3]

It seems that while he criticizes others' use of generalizations, he allows himself to generalize. He asserts, for example, that "there are no divisions in the Palestinian population of four million. We all support the PLO,"[4] and that the PLO is recognized "of course by *all* Palestinians as the sole legitimate representative of the

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[1]Clifford, p. 208.

[2]Greene, p. 579.

[3]Ibid., p. 579.

[4]Edward Alexander quotes a remark made by Said in 1980 in the second half of his article. As the title makes clear, this is an article written to discredit Said, citing examples of what Alexander terms "Said's longstanding habit of confidently reciting the most preposterous falshoods"(p. 49) in "Professor of Terror", Commentary, 88 (August 1989), p. 50.

Palestinian people".[1] Such statements necessarily assume beforehand the ability to generalize about the Palestinians because the truth is that not all Palestinians do what Said says they do. Said himself acknowledges this in his discussion of the killing of Palestinian collaborators: "if every single Palestinian Arab belongs to a monolithic body with one will, acting and thinking in perfect unison, who are these 'collaborators'...?"[2]

Perhaps the difference between the generalizations which Said makes and those that he criticizes lies in the type of generalizing. Does the generalizing illuminate the situation, or does it cloud the situation by obscuring the real issues? This is the difference between "*covering* and *covering up*"[3], and the verbal paradox upon which Said bases his book Covering Islam. He writes that the essential problem which eventuates the 'covering up' of Islam is

> the general problem of knowing and living in a world that has become far too complex and various for easy and instant generalizations.[4]

Said criticizes the "instant generalizations" and not all generalizations or classifications. Said distinguishes between good and bad generalizations, in general criticizing the generalizations which the Orientalists used. The confu-

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[1]Said, The Question of Palestine, p. 25.

[2]Alexander again quotes Said, p. 50.

[3]Said, Covering Islam, p. xii.

[4]Ibid.

sion rests in his usage, at times, of those same generalizations which he criticizes. And the criticism rests in his implicit acceptance of his own generalizations and essentializations and his explicit rejection of other scholars' generalizations and essentializations.

Generalizations obviously entail exclusions, and Said clearly excludes some very important Orientalists in his effort to portray Orientalism as homogeneous. Even accepting the need to select Orientalists from the bulk, the choices he makes severely discredit his thesis for many critical readers. The exclusion of Wilfred Cantwell Smith and Marshall Hodgson, for example, in the face of the inclusion, and perhaps aggrandizement of other Orientalists diminishes his thesis's viability. Kerr writes that "whatever the merits of these scholars (whom Said selects)- and some are much better than Said allows- they are not a particularly representative sample."[1] While simultaneously enlarging the importance of some other scholars, Said "prejudices the contemporary period by citing as an authority Levi-Strauss, whom some consider to be very much a product of colonialism."[2]

For many readers who have studied what Said discusses, these generalizations and corresponding selections practically invalidate his thesis. In a letter to the

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[1]Kerr, p. 546.

[2]Gran, p. 330.

Editor in response to one of Said's more vitriolic articles, Morroe Berger writes that in order "to sustain his critique, Professor Said has to select and exaggerate."[1] And even when establishing the very antiquity of Orientalism, Said seems to flaunt his knowledge of antiquity and familiarity with ancient literature to implicate the Iliad as a source of Orientalism.

In fact, the Iliad has been noted by one reader to confirm exactly the opposite. This critic quotes an analysis which describes the Trojans as "quite without distinguishing characteristics. They are as Greek and as heroic as their opponents in every respect."[2] The Iliad makes exactly the opposite point that Said wants to make. The ancient Mediterranean world did not differentiate between itself on the lines of Occidental and Oriental, and therefore the roots of the Orientalist attitude cannot be read so far back.

The problems of inclusion and exclusion haunt Said and threaten the validity of his thesis. Beckingham, a reviewer who is critical of much of Said's method, even writes:

> It is partly because Said distorts his account of orientalism by omitting German scholarship that he is

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[1]Morroe Berger, "Letters to the Editor", New York Times Book Review, Dec. 12, 1976, p. 36.

[2]Parker, p. 9. Quoting from M. I. Finley, The Trojans, Penguin, p. 50.

> able to make such a claim as he does with any show of plausibility.[1]

Said's most glaring exclusion, that of the German Orientalists, was a more important choice than that of his inclusion of the Iliad, since the choice to exclude the Germans from serious analysis could compromise Said's entire theory of the origins and evolution of Orientalism. Malti-Douglas even writes that "contributions of German Orientalism are such that no serious student of the field would allow himself the luxury of ignoring them."[2]

Excluding consideration of the influence of Germans who immigrated to the United States could have caused Said to garner a false impression of modern Orientalism. The direct influences of immigrant German professors was "perhaps the most influential"[3] component in the formation of American Orientalism. The importance of the Germans in developing Orientalism is expressed in the paradox a student of Medieval Islam expressed, which is paraphrased as: "German is the first Semitic language."[4]

Said's reasoning is disputed by the critics. He writes in explanation that the German school "can best be regarded as extending the essential Weltanschauung adum-

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[1]Beckingham, p. 562.

[2]Malti-Douglas, "Re-Orienting the Orient," p. 725.

[3]Ibid., p. 727.

[4]Ibid., p. 725.

brated by its French and British predecessors."[1] He writes as well that the Germans mainly worked on what the French and British procured. This, according to Malti-Douglas, is "neither correct nor wholly relevant."[2]

The Germans were a different type of imperialist power than the British and French were, but they did maintain an imperial presence in the Middle East.[3] They were even involved, together with the British and the French in the internal politics of the Ottoman Empire. This involvement, so integral to the unfolding of events in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would seem to make the German Orientalist community an apt model for Said's study. Yet while they were involved in the Middle East, they did not create colonies there or invade lands that did not rest on their borders. Therefore, the German example would serve as a provocative example of a different type of Western Orientalism, perhaps enabling a radically different image of Orientalism to emerge.

At the beginning of "Orientalism Reconsidered", Said protests his critics' attempts to read and criticize Orientalism as though it were a traditional historical

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[1]Said, New York Review of Books, Aug.12, 1982, p. 44. Here again we note the amount of personal interpretation of which Said must be aware, and inserts into his explanation. He writes, "can best be regarded," implying his understanding that it can be regarded otherwise, but that he feels that this is the best understanding.

[2]Malti-Douglas, "Re-Orienting the Orient," p. 726.

[3]Ibid.

anthology. It is most certainly not traditional, conventionally argued, or strictly historical. Critics who have criticized the exclusion of German Orientalists, according to Said, have not understood the book's underlying thesis.

> Other observations -- like my exclusion of German Orientalism, which no one has given any reason for me to have *included* -- have frankly struck me as superficial, and there seems no point in responding to them.[1]

German Orientalism, according to Said, is simply an example which, while different, and even exceptional, does not de facto break the rule he has constructed. Hence, the exclusion does not, in and of itself delegitimize the generalizations he makes about Orientalism.

Certainly most critics mentioned the absence of the Germans, and many of them did give reasons as to why they should be included. We can surmise therefore that either Said did not read all the reviews, or he considered them "superficial."[2] If we presume the former, then we cannot attempt to understand his position. If however, we consider the latter, then his position seems to be that the inclusion

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[1]Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered," p. 35. He expresses a similar protest also in The New York Review of Books (Aug.12, 1982), p. 45: "Certainly I omitted German scholars, although I would have thought Lewis would have been able to understand my reason for doing so, which (to repeat) is that since I was not talking about everything Orientalists did, and since I was interested principally in the relationship between Orientalism and the two major imperialist powers in the Orient, the German school -- despite its prodigious output -- can best be regarded as elaborating and extending the essential *Weltanschauung* adumbrated by its French and British predecessors".

[2]Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered", p. 35.

or exclusion of German Orientalists would not prove or disprove his point; therefore, why should he include them?

Clifford explains Said's choice to exclude the Germans as being based upon the Germans being an *exception* to the general rule. German Orientalism was: "too disinterested and thus untypical of a genealogy which *defines* the discourse as essentially colonialist."[1] But this justification, which is the lynch pin of Said's case, only invites more of the same questions: If we establish that the German Orientalists were important in the foundations of the modern Orientalist movement, and were very influential in its evolution, then their atypicalness is not an exception to the rule, but a cause to re-think the rule.

The role of the Germans even deserves further study because of the intellectual position the German Orientalists hold in Said's story of Orientalism. German Orientalists treated Islam as a "classical-- i.e., dead but valuable-- civilization, to be handled with the same philological care and positivist attention to fact-gathering lavished by German classicisists on Ancient Greece and Rome."[2] Yet it was the British and the French who had to deal with Islam as a "living civilization" since they ruled Muslims and had to deal with the problems of the day. They were forced to encounter the living reality of these societies-- regardless

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[1]Clifford, p. 216.

[2]Sivan, p. 140.

of what Orientalist scholars back home told them that they were seeing. Hence, the Germans would have been the more likely to have considered Islam a dead, stagnant and backward society. The reality "is thus more complex and more ironical than Said makes it to be."[1] It is interesting, ironic, and perhaps paradoxical to Said's thesis that those who directly dealt with the 'Oriental' peoples are said to have considered them in much the same way as those who did not have direct day-to-day contact with them.

Recalling Said's indebtedness to Foucault, Said's method can be understood as a conscious act of not proving his ideas, and purposely disdaining the necessity of proving a directly causative relationship between people, events, and knowledge. Said's style throughout the book can be compared to those methods which Foucault labels archaeology and genealogy. Said uses a literary and historical type of archaeology, attempting to show Orientalism's strata, layer by layer. This way, charges of ahistoricity become irrelevant to the methodology.[2]

Said's style should also be seen as a "genealogical" study of history. "Genealogical" is a rich term use by Foucault, and clearly influencing Said. But its roots are in Nietzsche's work, as is clear in Foucault's frequent

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered," p. 35. Critics of his lack of historicity include Greene (p. 580); Lewis ("The Question of Orientalism", The New York Review of Books XXIX:11 (June 24, 1982)); and many others.

allusions to the philosopher in The Birth of the Clinic and other books, as well as his essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History". In that essay, Foucault explains genealogy as follows:

> Genealogy is gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments... Genealogy, consequently, requires patience and a knowledge of details and it depends on a vast accumulation of source material... Genealogy does not oppose itself to history as the lofty and profound gaze of the philosopher might compare to the molelike perspective of the scholar; on the contrary, it rejects the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies. It opposes itself to the search for "origins".[1]

Foucault's ideas diverge from Nietzsche's, and in this last quote, it is clear that Foucault is distancing himself from Nietzsche. The genealogical method, according to Foucault, is no longer a study of origins, as its name would imply, but a "disclosure of differences".[2] Clifford explains the development of the process of "genealogical" historical investigation, surmising:

> Genealogy, like all historical description and analysis, is constructive. It makes sense in the present by making sense selectively *out of* the past. Its inclusions and exclusions, its narrative continuities, its judgments of core and periphery are finally legitimated either by convention or by authority granted to, or arrogated by, the genealogist. Genealogy is perhaps the most political of historical modes. But it cannot, to be effective, appear too openly tendentious and Said's genealogy suffers on this score. To his credit,

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[1]Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, pp. 139-140.

[2]Major-Poetzl, p. 36.

> however, he makes no secret of the restrictive choices he has made.[1]

But some critics criticize this method as used by Said as simply the discarded nineteenth century historical ideas. As such, Sivan counters:

> Or, is it, one wonders, that instead of Foucault's structuralism we have here an example of the old-time and now justifiably discredited *Ideengeschichte*, with its vague impressionism and concentration upon a few landmark authors (in this case, a couple of dozen Orientalists) supposed to be somehow representative of the totality of this intellectual endeavor, nay even of the *Zeitgeist*, with their biographies (including their often well-substantiated relationships with colonialism) serving to highlight their work?[2]

In this he represents much of the doubt felt by readers who are uncomfortable with Said's adaptation of Foucault's methodology. Sivan argues that the essentialism for which Said criticizes Orientalism has little to do with imperialism and more to do with the "predominant idealism of nineteenth-century Germany".[3] In nineteenth century Germany therefore the "essence of Islam" (*Wesen des Islams*) was accepted and studied, as though such an essence could be extracted from the whole reality of Islam. Said criticizes such essentialism. But here, by reducing Orientalism to generalizations, Sivan and others wonder whether he is similarly creating an artificial essence of Orientalism. Parker, in his review of Orientalism, writes similarly that "Said's

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[1]Clifford, p. 215.

[2]Sivan, p. 135.

[3]Ibid, p. 140.

representation of Orientalism is quite as 'essentialist' and immutable as the Orient he accuses it of having imagined, constructed, and dominated."[1] Is Said simply reducing Orientalism to a caricature of itself in order to criticize it? Such an understanding of Said's method is certainly legitimate.

But perhaps, by contrasting Foucault's method, which we assume Said is adapting to traditional historical inquiry, we can better grip Said's motives and hence understand his methods better. Traditional history itself of course is no longer believed to be an idealistic attempt to tell the world's story factually or, in Foucault's words, it has "long since abandoned its attempts to understand events in terms of cause and effect."[2] But the difference between this traditional method and Foucault's, and Said's method is that of the point of the historical investigation. As Foucault continues:

> It (history) did not do this in order to seek out structures anterior to, alien or hostile to the event. It was rather in order to establish those diverse, converging, and sometimes divergent, but never autonomous series that enable us to circumscribe the 'locus' of an event, the limits of its fluidity and the conditions of its emergence.[3]

Traditional historians look not to uncover the non-history, what we referred to in terms of discourse as the 'never-

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[1]Parker, p. 11.

[2]Foucault, Archaeology of Knowledge, p. 230.

[3]Ibid.

said', but that which fits. New-style historians, or re-interpretors of history like Said attempt to do the opposite. A critic of Foucault's described Foucault's idea of history as no longer a "critical remembrance of the past but a dangerous countermemory that threatens the present."[1] This theory would suggest that by tracing back liberation movements or anti-Western sentiments through layers of history, archaelogically or genealogically Said will discover the 'never-said' histories of both the Orient and the Occident. He clearly wants to write as one of those contemporary scholars who choose to look for the unorthodox and often unaccepted versions of history whom he praises at the end of Covering Islam.[2]

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[1]Major-Poetzl, p. 36.

[2]Said, Covering Islam, pp. 149-153; Orientalism, p. 326.

Chapter Four

Language and Knowing Others

Said's chosen course becomes clearer if we understand that he is part of the general movement of non-Westerners "writing back" against the West and against accepted history. His work should not be seen simply "in terms of a simple anti-imperialism but rather as symptomatic of the uncertainties generated by the new global situation"[1]. He considers himself, and others like him such as Salamon Rushdie, as writing against the coterie of the powerful.

> Whereas we write and speak as a small minority of marginal voices, our journalistic and academic critics belong to a wealthy system of interlocking informational and academic resources with newspapers, television networks, journals of opinion, and institutes at its disposal. Most of them have now taken up a strident chorus of rightward-tending damnation, in which they separate what is non-white, non-Western, and non-Judeo-Christian from the acceptable and designated Western ethos, then herd it all together under various demanding rubrics such as terrorist, marginal, second-rate or unimportant. To attack what is contained in these categories is to defend the Western spirit.[2]

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[1]Clifford, p. 205.

[2]Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. 28.

He is writing against the old-boys' network which he feels delegitimizes his voice by various means, including considering him an attacker of the Western ethos or spirit.

Said writes that he tried for a long time to live within that Western culture while simultaneously retaining his tie to his genealogical culture. He writes that he tries to "live on both sides (Arab/Western and Western) and to try to mediate between them."[1] But this attempt has often been interpreted as "the personal protest of a Palestinian"[2] against the West.

These pleas underlie Said's criticism of Orientalism. Together with Tibawi and others it should be understood that

> their commitment underlies their attack against scholars in the West, who, they believe, have contributed to, or acquiesced in, the betrayal of the Palestinian homeland.[3]

This betrayal, as described in Orientalism and the rest of the trilogy, is intricately tied to Orientalism and its hold over twentieth century Westerners. Orientalism explains how "Palestinians continue to elude their political destiny because the epistemological habits of the French and the British have been inherited by the Israelis and the

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[1]Ibid., p. xxiii.

[2]Clifford, p.205.

[3]Little, p. 122.

Americans."[1] The Israelis and Americans according to this understanding inherited the mantle of imperialism and Orientalist doctrine.

In a letter to the editors of Critical Inquiry, a reader criticizes Said for making just such an attack:

> Edward Said replies to criticism of his essay with an indignant attack on the young scholar who disputes his point of view. He in effect reads him out of existence by disparaging remarks about the quality of his eighteenth-century scholarship, as well as about his name, which is punned into absurd collective or invented status.[2]

It seems that Said does this because he believes texts are not only shaped by the world, but indeed, shape the world. He argues that texts are worldly in the full meaning of the word since, "texts are worldly, to some degree they are events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted."[3] As one critic notes he believes "the ways they [texts] are made and the ways they are read and understood both reflect and create our world".[4]

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[1]Leon Wieseltier, "Review of Orientalism," The New Republic, 180:27 (Apr 1979), p. 29.

[2]Geoffrey Hartman, "Editorial Notes," Critical Inquiry, 16:1 (Aug., 1989), p. 199.

[3]Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic, p. 4.

[4]Reed Way Dasenbrock, "World-World Relations: The Work of Charles Altieri and Edward Said", New Orleans Review, 12 (1985), p. 93.

Said himself makes use of military imagery in defense of his attacks on a letter writer, Robert Griffin, who defends Israel's actions in response to an earlier article by Said.[1] Said writes:

> There is a war on. Griffin identifies himself with a side in that war-- and an ugly, discredited side at that-- and clumsily prosecutes his case accordingly. To this reality and to the war of ideas into which Griffin voluntarily entered with his febrile propaganda Hartman advances his own unevenhandedness as a touchstone of behaviour.[2]

There is no actual war going on, rather, Said is alluding both to the general state of Arab-Israeli conflict and to the general struggle of those he terms colonizers and natives. Said likewise criticizes a quote from Bernard Lewis in which, he writes, "we find not history, not scholarship, but direct political violence substituting for reasoned judgment".[3]

Said demonstrates this attitude in some of his other criticism of Lewis, like that of the meaning of *thawra*. For Said, words and arguments are weapons; they are the extensions of power. Lewis's consideration of the word *thawra* and his etymological study of its roots are criticized by Said not only for relying upon and furthering the cliché of

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[1]Griffin's letter "Ideology and Misrepresentation: A Response to Edward Said," appeared in Critical Inquiry, 15 (Spring, 1989), 611-625.

[2]Said, Critical Inquiry, Aug., 1989 (16), no. 1, p.200.

[3]Said, The New York Review of Books, Aug. 12, 1984, p. 46.

tracing Arabic words to their desert origins,[1] origins which, in Said's opinion, are clearly irrelevant to the current usage of the word: he also criticizes Lewis for what he perceives as the alleged sexual undertones of his analysis. This technique patently reduces Lewis' (and others') arguments to absurdity since "the sexual connotations of words undercut the denotative sense in which their author thinks he is using them."[2]

Part of Said's justification for such exegesis can be found in his explanation of his usage of the title "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community," writing that:

> My use of 'constituency,' 'audience,' 'opponents,' and 'community' serves as a reminder that no one writes simply for oneself. There is always an Other; and this Other willy-nilly turns interpretation into a social activity, albeit with unforeseen consequences, audiences, constituencies, and so on.[3]

Said, writing as an English professor declares the seemingly obvious, that what is written is read. But his point within the intricate controversy of literary criticism is that what is written is meant to be read and therefore interpreted. The document exists as an independent object to be interpreted by the reader. With this declaration, Said lets it be known that he considers any other scholar's work free

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[1]Said, New York Review of Books, Aug. 12, 1982.

[2]Little, p. 119.

[3]Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community," p. 3.

ground for that 'Other's'[1] interpretation, as that other person chooses to interpret it within his or her community. He also frees the critic to examine his own work from whatever interpretation that 'Other' comes from.

It seems that Said's intention is to mock Lewis and thereby discredit his respectability, and thereby discredit his argument. To do so, Said associates Lewis with the enemy of free investigation of the East, the government. His attack is the textual equivalent of military sabatoge; no direct hit is scored, but enough collateral is secured so as to discredit the argument in the attempt to render it powerless. In this way, he does not prove Lewis's etymology incorrect. But that is no concern of his because he is not working within the Orientalist framework in which acceptable proof would be disproven by counter-claim. He is fighting against Lewis politically: Lewis' work is "politically unacceptable"[2], according to Said's politics.

Lewis points out the difficulty inherent in defending oneself or one's opinion from such onslaughts. Lewis writes, in response to Said's critique of some books he had edited, in "Arabs, Islam and the Dogmas of the West":

> It is, in general, pointless to reply to review which deal not in facts but in personal abuse and in what, by courtesy, might be called opinion... I must register a protest on behalf of the many distinguished contributors

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[1]Note here that Said uses the term 'Other' quite freely, and with different connotations within different contexts.

[2]Weisentaler, p. 28.

> to these volumes, who will be surprised, if they should chance to read your columns, to find their view misrepresented, their characters maligned, and even, in some cases, their names misspelt. [1]

It seems to me that Said's strident and often polemical tone in Orientalism and other works should convey to the reader his belief that knowledge is powerful and that texts convey power. In this way, his style carries the same message as his words. He writes:

> One doesn't just write: one writes against, or in opposition to, or in some dialectical relationship with other relationship with other writers and writing, or other activity, or in some dialectical relationship with other writers and writing, or other activity, or other objects.[2]

Said seems to see his satire and literary violence as "beside the point"; it is as if he does not feel that his style is worth discussing. He writes in response to three letters, each of which criticizes Said's 'tactics', that "none of these letters... attempts to deny my main point: that Orientalism deals with the Orient...."[3] He thereby dismisses any criticism of his style. Perhaps he means to say that if the critics understood his point, they would understand his style.

Said's style should be considered as an extension of his argument. His style is a rebellion against 'The Offi-

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[1]Bernard Lewis, "Letters to the Editor", The New York Times Review of Books, Dec. 12, 1976, p. 36.

[2]Said, Diacritics, (Fall, 1976), p. 35.

[3]Said, "Response", The New York Times Book Review, Dec. 12, 1976, p. 37.

cial Style' of the United States which distills every passion and every conviction out of writing and language. This style has been characterized by Richard Lanham in his book, Revising Prose as follows:

> The main rule is clear. Don't make an assertion you can get tagged with later. It may come back to haunt you. So never write 'I think' or 'I did'. Keep the verbs passive and impersonal: 'It was concluded that' or 'appropriate action was initiated on the basis of systematic discussion indicating that'. Often, as with politicians being interviewed on TV, The Official Style aims deliberately at saying nothing at all, but saying it in the required way...[1]

Clearly Said does not approve of The Official Style. His writing is the opposite of passive and is filled with powerful assertions. His style argues as much as his words do to fight against the forms and concepts imposed upon the modern generation. Orientalism is even presented in conversational tones, as though Said were rambling freely so that it is clear that stylistically, he fights the Official line.

Yet, Said is full of paradoxes, even regarding the writing style he uses in Orientalism. While Said criticizes the elitism of the Orientalists, he too is elitist. Although he fights against The Official Style associated with the educated elite,[2] his elitism is revealed in his difficult language and constructions as well as his obscure quotes. Parker writes that "weighted phraseology, such as

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[1]Richard A. Lanham, Revising Prose. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979. p.60.

[2]Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community," p.4

'imperial power over recalcitrant phenomena' (p.145), may help condition the reader's mind for the semantic slide."[1] "It almost seems," as one reviewer notes, "as if the author [Said] wished to avenge on their language the wrongs, real and alleged, done to the Arabs by the English and Americans."[2] His style is "drenched in jargon,"[3] and full of references to many obscure writers and sophisticated intellectual ideas, lessening the possibility for the non-acculturated to understand, let alone criticize him. He selects and exaggerates, especially in regard to Lewis' works in the mainstream New York Times, producing the effect of also "misleading the non-specialist reader of a general review of books."[4]

Is Said an intellectual élitist criticizing the intellectual élite? Does he use mainstream forums to advance his views radically? Is he a university professor criticizing the University system that nurtured and, in effect, created him, and in which he still earns a living? The answer to both these questions is undeniably yes. But, to Said, this is not an example of hypocrisy, but actually an example of the proper role of the intellectual.

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[1]Parker, p. 8.

[2]Beckingham, p. 563.

[3]Plumb, p. 28.

[4]Berger, p. 36.

Although Orientalism is ostensibly not about alternatives to Orientalism, Said makes it clear there and elsewhere, explicitly and implicitly, that the intellectual must create for herself and himself the choice of whether to struggle against power and its discourse or to accede to it. Said asks, echoing Foucault's concern about the position of the intellectual in society, "What is the role of the intellectual? Is he there to validate the culture and state of which he is a part?"[1] The criticism of Orientalists is implicit: they validate their culture without creating for themselves true critical consciousness.

Said vilifies the Orientalist discourse, but does not juxtapose it directly with a more equitable discourse. It is left to the reader to deduce that there cannot be a society without discourse, and therefore a new discourse must always emerge to replace the old. Instead, Said suggests a methodology of constant external criticism which in turn would be governed by a new human discourse. This discourse's guiding lines would be a paradox: it must be "most unlike itself at the moment it starts turning into organized dogma."[2] The new discourse must be discourse which refuses to be stabilized; it must be criticism. The force and constant struggle of criticism are to be a unabated revolution, continuously struggling against the established order, as

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p.326.

[2]Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic, p.29.

well as against itself, in fear of itself becoming the established order. Said argues that "criticism modified in advance by labels like 'Marxism' or 'liberalism' is, in my view, an oxymoron,"[1] and he writes accordingly:

> Were I to use one word consistently along with *criticism* (not as a modification but as an emphatic) it would be *oppositional*.[2]

Oppositional criticism would forever challenge those who hold power, enabling a continued re-distribution of power in society. Scholars, according to Said, should be the gadflies of society. Their writings should be the "oppositional critical consciousness"[3] of society, and they should "quite consciously consider themselves to be writing in opposition to the prevailing orthodoxy"[4]. This follows Foucault's thought. Foucault writes:

> The intellectual's role is no longer to place himself 'somewhat ahead and to the side' in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of 'knowledge,' 'truth,' 'consciousness,' and 'discourse.'[5]

The intellectual has an active role to play in the fight over what is true and what role knowledge has in society in

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[1]Ibid., p. 28.

[2]Ibid., p. 29.

[3]Said, Orientalism, p. 326.

[4]Said, Covering Islam, p. 149.

[5]Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, pp. 207-8.

order to work against an accepted discourse. In this way, Said praises those scholars for whom

> knowledge is essentially an actively sought out and contested thing, not merely a passive recitation of facts and 'accepted' views.[1]

Traditional Orientalists, on the other hand, according to Said, do not even seem to be aware of what their role should be. They do not seek an alternative discourse. By accepting a relationship intertwined with the state[2] (as was discussed in regards to Bernard Lewis above) they have even furthered the perpetuation of the discourse. This accommodation is directly opposed to the critical consciousness which Said believes an intellectual should have as a protection against the perils of conformity to discourse. He writes:

> Criticism must think of itself as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse; its social goals are noncoercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom.[3]

Said writes as a plea, and as a warning, that the scholar must take care with his or her work because of the power of that work in shaping the world. According to Said (and Foucault), knowledge is a tool, or at least a vehicle for the extension of power in society, and it therefore must be developed or discovered with the forethought of its future usage. Said writes:

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[1]Said, Covering Islam, p. 152.

[2]Said, Orientalism, p. 326.

[3]Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic, p. 29.

> Perhaps if we remember that the study of human experience usually has an ethical, to say nothing of a political, consequence in either the best or worst sense, we will not be indifferent to what we do as scholars.[1]

The failure to change and to resist the possibility of creating a better world community is asserted in Said's threat:

> Until knowledge is understood in human and political terms as something to be won to the service of coexistence and community, not of particular races, nations, classes, or religions, the future augurs badly.[2]

To this end, the scholar must work against the conventional tide, in opposition to traditional history. The scholar's role is to discover the 'never-said' history, the history which diverges from the dominating discourse and the traditional story-line of history, to create a counter-history. This history should be devoid of the powerful discourse which Said and Foucault believe run through traditional histories of Western cultures.

To accomplish this task, the scholar must fight against his or her natural inclinations. By birth, nationality, profession, and other ties, Said believes that a person is bound filiatively to a culture, that is, to a discourse. But, Said also believes that "by social and political conviction, economic and historical circumstances, voluntary effort and willed deliberation"[3] one can acquire

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 327.

[2]Said, Covering Islam, p. 153.

[3]Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic, p.25.

"affiliativity". Affiliativity is a new "method or a system"[1] through whose parameters the conscientious person who has forsaken the ingrained biases of his or her filiation can understand the world. When describing the dual concepts of filiation and affiliation, Said is addressing himself to the paradox of the intellectual's ability to have "a critical consciousness" while still having filial associations.[2]

This directive, to move from filiation to affiliation, seems to answer some of the ambivalence apparent in Orientalism. Said writes both about the impossibility of "detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life,"[3] and yet that still "there is a scholarship that is not as corrupt, or at least as blind to human reality, as the kind I have been mainly depicting."[4] This ability to move from filiation to affiliation is what redeems the scholarly pursuits. Knowing that people can go beyond their background and ingrained ideals allows for their eventual ability to pursue the type of knowledge which Said supports. Said

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid., p. 24.

[3]Said, Orientalism, p. 10.

[4]Ibid,. p. 326. Gaultieri, in his criticism of Orientalism, picks up this apparent ambivalence ("Hermeneutics of the Old and New Orientalism," The Contemporary Study of the Arab World. Ed. Earl L. Sullivan and Jacqueline S. Ismael. Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 1991, p. 54).

therefore praises an author's attempt to shift "attention away from the individual creator to the communal restraints upon personal initiative,"[1] stressing again the difficulty of attaining freedom of initiative. It is this initiative which is most important for the scholar to gain in order for them to fulfill his or her optimum function.

As we mentioned above, Foucault writes that the intellectual can acquiesce in the status quo power relationship by being the instrument of power and its object in "the domains of knowledge, consciousness, truth and discourse."[2] But by rejecting the source of power in such domains, the intellectual can also reject such a role. For Said, new scholars can then allow that which they study to emerge for itself unencumbered by the constraints of Orientalist discourse. This new type of study must include the interaction of Muslims, and not just be about them. Those who were discussed by the Orientalists must be allowed to be the central voice in the discussion about them. This change can be dramatized by using the methodology with which Izutsu considers Islam.

Since Orientalism is a study of the Orient, the 'Orient' would seem to be the natural key word of the Orientalist vocabulary. Instead, it is the 'Occident' which is the central key word of the vocabulary. This is because,

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[1]Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community", p. 7.

[2]Lemart, p. 87.

according to Said, although it is the Orient which is being studied, and hence is central to the study, the Orient is studied in relation to the Occident; it is the 'Occident' which determines the way in which the Orient is understood. Everything known about the Orient in some way to the Occident. Said writes that Orientalists considered the Orient to be "an area to the east of Europe whose principal worth was uniformly defined in terms of Europe"[1]. The Occident thereby preserves its centrality in all discussions of the Orient.

This centrality further accentuates Said's belief that Orientalism considers itself the mouthpiece of the Orient; the Orient cannot speak for itself. Therefore, the Orient only exists for the outside world through the intercession of the Orientalists. This relationship is vividly portrayed by the irony of the 'Occident' being the key word in the vocabulary system of studying the Orient.[2] The acceptance of the existence of this irony is pivotal in Said's argument that Orientalism is really more about the

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 221.

[2]Said writes of a "Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged" (Orientalism, p. 8). And, describing the role of the West in creating the Orient, he notes that for "Orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the West than on the Orient" (p. ©2); the Orient only makes sense in its relationship to the Occident. Therefore, Said writes: "I myself believe that Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is a veridic discourse about the Orient"(p. 6). Orientalism, according to Said, is more of an accumulation of Western ideas than knowledge of the East.

Occident and the Orientalists, than about the Orient. According to this understanding of Orientalism, the study of the Orient clearly defines the Occident more than it illuminates the Orient.

Said clearly believes that this is the case of Oriental studies. The point of creating a new type of studying is to put Muslims and 'Orientals' at the center of the study, that is to return it to its rightful centrality. By allowing them their due position, the scholar begins to respect the culture, permitting the possibility of egalitarian knowledge emerging. Such knowledge further needs and implies

> uncoercive contact with an alien culture through real exchange, and self-consciousness about the interpretative project itself.[1]

Although liberal studies, including Oriental studies are supposed to be based on similar principles, Said asserts that they are not:

> such programs must always have a liberal veneer, and usually this is left to scholars, men of good will, enthusiasts to attend to. The idea encouraged is that in studying Orientals, Muslims, or Arabs 'we' can get to know another people, their way of life and thought, and so on. To this end it is always better to let them speak for themselves, to represent themselves (even though underlying this fiction stands Marx's phrase- with which Lasswell is in agreement- for Louis Napoleon: 'They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented').[2]

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[1]Said, Covering Islam, p. 142.

[2]Said, Orientalism, p. 293.

Said is not really criticizing liberal values, he is simply criticizing the failure to live up to them. Here he is attacking Orientalism from a "familiar set of values"[1], that is, humanism.

> The privilege of standing above cultural particularism, of aspiring to the universalist power which speaks for Humanity, for the universal experiences of love, work, death, and so on, is a privilege invented by a totalizing Western liberalism.[2]

To a certain extent then, Said's advocacy of this humanist, Western-based method of study and knowing is itself an extension of Western hegemony over the East.

Said does not seem to realize or admit that he is potentially contradicting himself, as is clear in his rebuke of Orientalists who worked

> within an agreed-upon framework for research formed according to notions decidedly *not* set in the Islamic world. This fact, in all its complexity and variety, cannot be overestimated.[3]

Said emphasizes that the Orientalists' imposition of external standards and principles disqualified much of their work in the Islamic world. But he does not acknowledge that his urging of the Orientalist to look for other frames of reference, to other fields for a better understanding of Islam, could be construed similarly. And as was explored previously, Said's imposition of a dichotomy is also an external imposition or shaping of reality. Said writes that

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[1]Clifford, p. 210.

[2]Ibid., p. 211.

[3]Said, Covering Islam, p. 17.

scholars should not segregate themselves strictly by discipline since they would then be secluded from advances in other fields which could help them. Orientalists were so unsuccessful in understanding Muslims, Said believes, in large part because they completely ignored the advances being made in other fields. They "blithely ignore every major advance in interpretative theory since Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud."[1] While criticizing the imposition of 'notions decidedly not set in the Islamic world', Said urges using Marxism and other theories to interpret that world. This self contradiction could be understood simply as pointing out that if one must use a method, and indeed one must, one must try to find the best method through investigations. But one cannot denounce methods because they are external methods and then suggest similarly external methods.

Said clearly is not on sure footing when he begins to examine Muslim society. It seems that Said has a similar difficulty in understanding the Muslim world or those people who consider themselves Muslims as he criticizes Renan for having had. Said criticizes Renan in the following manner:

> Renan never really dealt with the secular fact of the enduring presence of religions like Islam, religions that could still exist and be powerful even in an age that culturally could prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that religion was a thing of the past.[2]

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[1]Ibid., p. 140.

[2]Said, The World, the Text, the Critic, p. 281.

Perhaps because of his own a-religiosity or perhaps because as a born-Christian (and therefore a minority in his homeland) Said is unwilling to see the extent which Islam is still alive culturally and religiously in the Middle East. This is wishful thinking according to many. Sivan, in his review of Arab reviewers of Orientalism writes:

> Unlike Said, Arab liberal and leftist intellectuals face up to realities, do not indulge in wishful thinking, and do not strike out the influence of the Islamic past in verbal *legerdemain*. They know the hold it has on Arab society.[1]

And al-'Azm writes in his review:

> Isn't it true, on the whole, that the inhabitants of Damascus and Cairo today feel the presence of the transcendental in their lives more palpably and more actively than Parisians and Londoners? Isn't it true that religion means everything to the contemporary Moroccan, Algerian and Iranian peasant in a manner it cannot mean for the American farmer or the member of a Russian *kolkhoz*?[2]

Said is unable, or perhaps unwilling, to understand Muslims simply as Believers, and instead must impose his own categories upon them in order to understand and explain them, demonstrating how out of touch he is with their reality. And by refusing to know Muslims as they want to be known, and instead knowing them through Western, secular, concepts, he is also extending Western power over them, creating them as he would want them to be known.

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[1]Sivan, p. 152.

[2]S.J. al-'Azm, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse", Khamsin, in Sivan, p. 144.

Said is unable to really understand Islam as pious Muslims would explain it to him because he seems unable to cross the chasm of skepticism. To really understand Islam, Gordon Pruett who, like Said, is critical of Orientalists, also advanced alternatives and an ideal means of studying Islam. But since he acknowledges the importance of Islam to Muslims, he proposes dramatically different steps, among them:

> I wish to argue (1) that unless the Orientalist accepts the truth of the assertion that the history of Islam is indeed the history of attempts to submit to Allah, he will both misunderstand that history and, as a matter of course, fail to contribute anything worthwhile to the ongoing task of the Muslim, (2) that the concern for 'objectivity' as the Orientalist defines it is a misguided goal... and (3) that it is indeed possible to adopt a perspective from which to view Muslim history as Muslims view it, by accepting the truth of the transcendent orientation of the tradition and not merely the 'truth' that Muslims believe this. All observations, research and conclusions that follow from this acceptance will be useful, even 'right' in the eyes both of those within the Ummah and those without it.[1]

This is a very different position from Said's. The important credential for a study is that Muslims can accept it as truthful, and the method for such a study is actually accepting the truth of what Muslims are saying. This is very much in line with Cantwell Smith's ideas, and the contrast is quite obvious in Said's criticism of Louis Massignon.

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[1]Gordon E. Pruett, "'Islam' and Orientalism", Orientalism, Islam, and Islamists. Ed. Asaf Hussain, Robert Olson, & Jamil Qureshi. Amana Books, 1984, p. 45.

Massignon was an intellectual genius. He was a French Catholic who, in Said's purposely sexual and violent terminology, "believed that the world of Islam could be penetrated".[1] His most famous literary achievement was a biography of Al Hallaj, but his most famous action or ability was his submersion within Islamic mysticism and acceptance by his fellow *sufis*. Moreover, in his later years, Massignon became a vocal critic of French colonialism in North Africa[2]. But yet Said dwells on Massignon's Orientalism. He stresses that Massignon wrote from within the Orientalist ideology and methodology:

> And yet his intellectual world was a clearly defined one. It had a definite structure, intact from the beginning to the end of his career, and it was laced up, despite its almost unparalleled richness of scope and reference, in a set of basically unchanging ideas.[3]

The definition of Massignon's Orientalism included two phrases, "Nos méthodes de recherches" and "les traditions vécues d'antiques civilizations."[4]

This stress on his 'traditional' Orientalism seems unnecessarily heavy. Massignon was quite clearly an extraordinary scholar quite capable of crossing traditional borders, desiring to know Islam from within, and presenting Islam to non-Muslims from within. Said acknowledges that

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 267.

[2]Schaar, p. 71.

[3]Ibid., pp. 267-8.

[4]Ibid., p. 269.

Massignon did not share the hostility of other Orientalists and that he "was willing to cross disciplinary and traditional boundaries"[1]; so why does he still group him with the others he criticizes? While he castigates Massignon's reliance on categories such as Aryan and Semitic, there seem to be other reasons why Massignon is not fully acceptable. Can Said not really understand the religious point of view? Does he not see an investigation of Islam as a significantly modern study? It seems that Said does not consider a study of Islam and Islamic mysticism as a religion and culture a viable option for knowing or understanding Muslims.

Cantwell Smith, a believer in the viability of religions including Islam who wrote about, among other issues on religion, the difficulties of understanding other's religions, put forth the following directive to understanding Islam.[2] Smith writes about understanding the symbolism of other religions:

> To understand a symbol, I am contending, one must both know it objectively and in addition must know what it

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[1]Ibid., p. 267.

[2]It is, I believe, appropriate to quote Wilfred Cantwell Smith and juxtapose his views with those of Said's for two reasons. Firstly, Smith founded the Institute of Islamic Studies. It therefore seems appropriate to include his views in a thesis prepared for that department. It is also appropriate to include him because he is one of those Orientalists whose exclusion most stunned Orientalists, as Gaultieri writes: "In fact, it strikes me as so strange as to almost approach dishonesty that he [Said] would publish in 1978 a book sweepingly indicting western scholarship about the Muslim world without so much as mentioning in a footnote the work of Wilfred Cantwell Smith"(p. 54).

> means, has meant, in the lives and consciousness (including the subconsciousness) of persons.[1]

There is a need to somehow penetrate the society and the religion in order to look at it from within. Waardenburg writes philosophically that "there is a dialectical movement, a coming and going between the scholar's interpretation, and the permanent residue of the object or subject matter..."[2]

If some such giving is not forthcoming then, as Smith says:

> It is possible to know a great deal about what are called the various religious systems, and still not to understand the people whose life they involve.[3]

This is exactly what Said is trying to avoid doing. But it seems that while he advocates listening and stressing the equality of all people he cannot accept Islam's role being other than a religious system. He writes that the term 'Islam' "part fiction, part ideological label, part minimal designation of a religion called Islam"[4] implying that the only rightful understanding of Islam is as a religion in the Protestant, North American sense of the word.

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[1]Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Religious Diversity: Essays by Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Ed. Willard Oxtoby (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers,1976), p. 168.

[2]Waardenburg, Reflections, p. 14.

[3]Smith, The Faith of Other Men (N.Y.: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972), p. 17.

[4]Said, Covering Islam, p. x, as was quoted above.

As was quoted above, Said disapproves of 'Islam' having "become a political cover for much that is not at all religious".[1] He begins an article in which he criticizes H.A.R. Gibb by sarcastically restating Gibb's belief that "unlike any other religion *Islam is or means everything*"[2], intimating his scorn that Islam should be treated differently than any other religion because he believes that it is 'only' a 'religion'. Clearly he has a Western secular view that religion should be separate from culture or politics, and it seems that he is unable to go beyond this belief. But such an understanding denies the reality of what Islam is for so many Muslims.

This failure is, I believe, also responsible for the difficulty Said has with acknowledging that there can be differences between cultures and peoples while maintaining the need to work from a stand of equality and aim towards worldly equality. Perhaps because he cannot come to terms with the differences between the West and the East and the possibility of a an Islam that does mean everything, he considers the relationship metaphorically. He conceives of the relationship between the two as a simultaneous repulsion and attraction of Otherness which, like the Orient itself, is based upon the West's needs and shapes the West's self-image. These ideas flow throughout Orientalism and much of

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[1]Ibid., p. 53.

[2]Said, Orientalism, p. 279.

Said's other writings and find an expression throughout with Joseph Conrad's imagery.

Chapter Five

The Self and the Other: Conrad and Said

According to Said, the complex relationship between East and West which combines elements of Otherness and hatred finds a voice in the West's literature. He writes in his introduction to Culture and Imperialism that novels

> were immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experiences. I do not mean that only the novel was important, but that I consider it *the* aesthetic object whose connection to the expanding societies of Britain and France is particularly interesting to study.[1]

The challenges of creating, and then confronting one's 'Other' were an integral part of the imperialist experience. Conrad's stories are replete with vivid imagery of the tensions, created by imperialism, between and within societies. Conrad himself is in many ways a mirror of the dichotomies produced by these tensions, as his writing is replete with the exotic imagery for which Said criticizes the Orientalists. But at the same time, as an intellectual, Conrad is most aptly able to "articulate the truth of his-

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[1]Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. xii.

tory that is lived only unconsciously by the proletariat,"[1] and therefore able to tell of the horrors of imperialism which his society had not yet confronted. Conrad was a writer

> who discerned and gave novelistic life to those binary oppositions constituting the phylogenetic inheritance of the species and defining its existential condition.[2]

He was thus able to give expression to the paradox of empire building[3] at the time of a "philosophical revolution."[4] Conrad's writing depicts the faults inherent in imperialism while simultaneously depicting the East in typical imperialist, biased terms. In Youth, Conrad describes the East as "the consummate figure of the other":[5]

> perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave... so old, so mysterious, resplendent and sombre, living and unchanged, full of danger and promise.[6]

In short, the East is described in a string of negatives, as "inscrutable, immovable, unchanging and old but without a past."[7] Said explains that this contrast is due to Conrad's

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[1]Lemert, p.87.

[2]Parry, p. 3.

[3]In the back of the imperialist's mind, there is said to have lain the understanding that, as Lord Durham discussed in his Report on British North America in 1839, "the business of a people is best managed by that people themselves." Thornton, p. 51.

[4]Parry, p. 2.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Conrad, Youth, pp. 38, 41. CHECK

[7]Parry, p. 3.

participation in society's discourse and his filiative culture. Conrad, Said stresses,

> writes as a man whose *Western* view of the non-Western world is so ingrained as to blind him to other histories, other cultures, other aspirations. All Conrad can see is a world totally dominated by the Atlantic West, in which every opposition to the West only confirms the West's wicked power. What Conrad cannot see is an alternative to this cruel tautology.[1]

And Said continues:

> It is no paradox, therefore, that Conrad was both anti-imperialist and imperialist, progressive when it came to rendering fearlessly and pessimistically the self-confirming, self-deluding corruption of overseas domination, deeply reactionary when it came to conceding that Africa or South America could ever have had an independent history or culture, which the imperialists violently disturbed but by which they were ultimately defeated.[2]

Conrad's descriptions of exoticisms serve not to enlighten the reader with the objective reality of what the East is like, but to further ingrain attitudes about the East. These clichés do not convey knowledge, they are simply vehicles of bias, forever enlarging the chasm between the Western reader and the East contributing to the Orientalist myth. Said writes likewise that

> every statement made by Orientalists or White Men (who were usually interchangeable) conveyed the irreducible distance separating white from colored or Occidental from Oriental.[3]

These statements perpetuated the myth of difference, maintaining the distance between cultures which, paradoxically,

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[1]Said, Culture and Imperialism, xviii.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Said, Orientalism, p. 228.

knowledge should eradicate. Conrad's novels often depict the tension and problems when this "irreducible distance", so integral to imperialist thought and clearly noticeable in his own thought, is threatened by physical proximity.

The novel Heart of Darkness conveys this tension. Marlow, the teller of the tale, is a sea captain who gets a job working for a company which exports ivory from the Congo, which is described as "a place of darkness."[1] Marlow is advised that his mission is to rescue Mr. Kurtz, "a first-class agent,"[2] a rising star in the company who is rumoured to be sick. After two months, Marlow describes the last leg of the journey, as he sees on-shore impenetrable forests and vegetation, as "like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world."[3] He has entered the very heart of darkness, the depths of the jungle. Encased in fog, close to the outpost, screams sever the darkness, ominously suggesting attack by natives.

It is commonplace in criticism of Heart of Darkness that Marlow's encounter with Kurtz implies an encounter with his 'self'. Marlow feels the effect of this confrontation as an illumination of his being.[4] Prior to their meeting,

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[1]Conrad, Heart of Darkness, p. 34.

[2]Conrad, Heart of Darkness, p. 22.

[3]Ibid., p. 35.

[4]Yelton, p. 273. Yelton quotes Conrad, describing Marlow's reactions: "In that encounter a light has been thrown 'on everything about me -- and into my thoughts.'"

Marlow's morality appears to be secure. But when his "moral orbit" is pierced by a "wandering star", in the form of Kurtz, there are "disturbing consequences".[1] Because of the way the White Man's self-declared "differentness" and superiority are destroyed in Heart of Darkness, Kurtz's self-destruction betrays the superficiality and fallacy of the Darwinian, racist basis of imperialism. Conrad's Heart of Darkness is thus described as "the most powerful literary indictment of imperialism."[2] And Said believes that "the imperial attitude... is beautifully captured in the complicated and rich narrative"[3] of this novella.

The paradoxes of imperialism are played out when Marlow, who represents Conrad's "wish to endorse the standard values of the Victorian élite," encounters Kurtz, who reflects Conrad's forebodings about the effects of "scientific, political, and spiritual view of the world."[4] The confrontation between the two serves as a metaphor for

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[1]Ibid., p. 279.

[2]Watt, p. 161. Yet, other critics still believe that Conrad supported Europe's general effort to shoulder its self-proclaimed 'White Man's Burden,' even if he disagreed on the methods. See Ted E. Boyle, Symbol and Meaning in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad. The Hague: Mouton, 1965; Robert F. Lee, Conrad's Colonialism. The Hague: Mouton, 1969; and Bruce McLure, M.A. thesis, McGill University, "The White Man's Burden Theme in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad", 1970.

[3]Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. 22.

[4]Watt, p. 148.

the European world to look inward by examining its 'Self', the part of itself usually hidden beyond a veil of darkness.

The Orientalists furthered the image of the East as different; the Orientalists strengthened the imperialist character of their discourse. According to Said, one of the primary reasons that imperialism differed from early conquests was the stark and "absolute demarcation" posited in imperialist doctrine between East and West. Said acknowledges that peoples have always demarcated themselves from each other. The difference in the imperialist age was that the demarcation by the West was consistently done from a position of power, and by a continued effort to study the other while maintaining the 'Otherness', the distance, of the other.[1] In such a way, Said stresses what has been labeled an "obsessive motif" in Conrad's writings,[2] "light and dark." In Conrad's texts, the usages of light and dark act as the

> dramatizations of the cultural differences, moral antagonisms and metaphysical antinomies apprehended by the western imagination as structural to the colonial situation. It is a commonplace that in western thought the contrast between black and white has for centuries stood for the good, true, pure and beautiful as opposed to the evil, ignorant, corrupt and atrocious.[3]

And in the era of Imperialism

> the existing accretions of dark and black were thickened and extended to establish an equivelance between 'primi-

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[1]Said, Orientalism, p. 39-40.

[2]Parry, p. 5.

[3]Ibid.

> tive,' 'barbaric' or 'savage' societies and moral perversity... and a condition of aboriginal depravity.[1]

As can be understood from Conrad's ambivalence, in his usage of the black/white imagery, Conrad again both conforms to the "authorized image,"[2] and subverts it. Just as white objects are symbolic of truth and reason and all that is good, so too are they the objects of imperialism, and therefore symbolic of imperialism.[3]

Said also relates the theme of light/dark to imperialism, describing, for example, the kinship between Marlow and Kurtz as "sustained on a metaphysical level as a kinship between darkness and light."[4] But he also extends the black/white imagery away from the clichés and into the realm of metaphysical searching. He notes that Conrad wrote that when one ceases to think,

> everything disappears and one is left only with the truth, which is a dark, sinister and fugitive shadow with no image.[5]

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Parry writes that the "antinomian categories are subjected to a radical rearrangement subverting Europe's customary imagery, so that instead of denoting purity, virtue, clarity and veracity, white and light - which can be lurid as well as tranquil - come to signify corruption, evil, confusion and lies"(p. 22).

[4]Edward Said, Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 147.

[5]Said, Conrad, p. 137.

It is within this depth of darkness, a person's own heart of darkness, that ceasing to differentiate intellectually any rational forms of human hope or regret, a person is indifferent to the outside. There is only oneself within this great depth. And one develops one's "egoistic image," in order to protect oneself from the "impinging confusions of the world."[1] "Thought" is then the designation for "the process whereby a human self-image is elevated into an idea of truth that inevitably seeks perpetuation."[2]

As soon as a person begins to think, to use his intellect,

> he asserts his ego and becomes objectified will. The highest form of objectified will is civilized man; the most typical faculty of his mind is the power of intellectual differentiation (the *principium*); and the highest level of differentiation is the ability to say "*the world is my idea*."(italics mine)[3]

The individual believes so strongly that he/she holds the truth, that he believes that he is serving the truth by imposing his ideas on others. Of course, according to Said this is an "obvious injustice," since it is an enactment of an "imperialism of ideas."[4] This view seems to be an adaptation of other scholars' thoughts. Specifically, it comes

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[1]Ibid., p. 138.

[2]Ibid., p. 139.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p.140.

from Nietzsche's conception of Truth,[1] which Gaultieri describes and compares to Said's. Gaultieri writes in terms of perspectivism, and perspectives which "function to enhance the will to power of the observers and creators."[2] This, perspectivism, or imperialism of ideas, which is the reflection of a militant egoism, easily converts into the "imperialism of nations."[3]

Said's explanation of the connection between thought and truth is reconcilable with Foucault's exploration of truth. A vision of truth evolves into the power by which a society is governed. Truth becomes discourse, blocking out, as Conrad describes it, any other truth, and its realization becomes tantamount to militant egoism: Once the truth of Orientalism was recognized as truth by the European community, the European community objectified its will and sought to realize/actualize the truth it had discovered.

Throughout his works, Said asserts and then confronts the fact that his understanding of the world is based upon the dichotomies which he perceives, and of which he feels himself a part. He describes himself as a living symbol of the dichotomies, writing that, "until fairly recently I led two quite separate lives, which has always made me

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[1]"Truths are illusions which one has forgotten that this is what they are." Gaultieri, p. 53.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Said, Conrad, p. 140.

acutely appreciative of Conrad's The Secret Sharer..."[1]. The Secret Sharer is a tale by Joseph Conrad about a respectable captain on his maiden voyage with an unfamiliar ship and an unfamiliar crew. At night, alone on deck, while attempting to stow a ladder, he discovers a mysterious man (Leggatt) hanging on for his life to the bottom of the ladder. Leggatt tells the captain how he had killed a crewman on his own ship during a furious storm, and had jumped ship to escape punishment. The Captain is intrigued and drawn into the story and lets Leggatt onto the ship.

He remarks at first, "it was, in the night, as though I had been faced by my own reflection in the depths of a somber and immense mirror."[2] Said understands this to mean that "Leggatt is a direct reflection of the narrator; he is a person in whom the young narrator can see himself, clearly and directly."[3] But yet, the captain writes that "He was not a bit like me, really; yet as we stood leaning over my bed-place, whispering side by side," anyone entering the cabin would have had the "uncanny sight of a double captain busy talking in whispers with his other self."[4] While the captain sees him intuitively as his double, Leggett is not his twin or brother, since the two look nothing alike,

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[1]Said, "An interview with Edward W. Said", p. 35.

[2]Conrad, The Secret Sharer, p. 658.

[3]Said, Conrad, p. 128.

[4]Conrad, The Secret Sharer, p. 662.

but an image of the captain. Said writes that, "while Leggatt is a real person, he is also an image according to which the young narrator can see himself in an extreme intellectual and moral perspective."[1] The captain shelters this man, or image-- the novella can be interpreted such that Leggatt only exists in the Captain's imagination-- in his cabin, dressing the stranger in his own clothes, and feeding him of his own food. The imagery of the fugitive, the Other as the shadow of the captain in the dark waters evokes the darker side of the captain's benign personality.

The Captain captures the duality of otherness and the reflexiveness of confronting one's other when he writes, "I was constantly watching myself, my secret self, as dependent on my own actions as my own personality."[2] Said writes, describing the encounter between the Captain and his double, "he (the captain) too, like Conrad, feel the effects of the imposture."[3] Said interprets the encounter as the Captain being forced to confront his identity, and acknowledge the masks he wears. Said also admits to having felt the imposture.

Said appreciates this novella as a reflection of his own life. He has recognized his own 'Other', and has felt it necessary to hide him from the world. He notes that he

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[1]Said, Conrad, p. 127.

[2]Conrad, The Secret Sharer, p. 670.

[3]Said, Conrad, p. 129.

used to keep his career as a literary figure and professor separate from his background and political involvement in the Middle East. He describes "a kind of acrobatics which people who know me can manage, with my helping them along"[1] in order for his literary friends not to have to confront his other self, his secret sharer.

He tells of having begun to bridge the chasm in his identity by forging his personal dichotomy. He writes in 1976, "there are links between the two worlds which I for one am beginning to exploit in my own work."[2] His work has consequently delved deeper and deeper into his other, previously sidelined interests. As he writes in the introduction to Orientalism:

> Much of the personal investment in this study derives from my awareness of being an 'Oriental' as a child growing up in two British colonies. All of my education, in those colonies (Palestine and Egypt) and in the United States, has been Western, and yet that deep early awareness has persisted. In many ways my study of Orientalism has been an attempt to inventory the traces upon me, the Oriental subject, of the culture whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Orientals.[3]

This certainly reads like a gallant and straightforward attempt to inform the reader of possible biases and underlying currents. Orientalism is presented as a bridge between the two worlds which he feels himself a part. But is such a

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[1]Said, Diacritics, p. 35.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Said, Orientalism, p. 25.

move positive, constructive or even in line with the rest of Said's theories?

There is a "dubiousness"[1] at the heart of the premise that "a unity of one's critical-intellectual and political identity is possible and desirable".[2] Such a crossover to open advocacy would seem to violate Said's own praise of filiation, of removal of one's self from one's native concerns. For him to move from such a call to an open affiliation with the Palestinians is an implicit rejection of his aforementioned belief in the ability and desirability of a critic's permanent state of metaphysical exile. He also seems to be rejecting his belief that a critic should continuously re-evaluate their opinions to keep them from reifying into meaningless re-statements.

> One of the things that characterizes the critic's political affiliations, then, is their instability, their constant activity of self-negation. However, there is another, even more fundamental reason for the illegibility of the critic as a political signifier: Said defines him as constitutionally incapable *qua critic* of having a political interest of his own. Hence, although criticism supposedly impels him toward Politics, it cannot, it seems, impel him toward any *particular* politics. Said can neither fully admit nor deny this fact, for to do either would be to call the automatically progressive role of exiled worldliness into question... He assumes that their stake would align them with social forces larger than their own professional group.[3]

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[1]Catherine Gallagher, "Politics, the Profession, and the Critic", Diacritics, 15 (Summer 1985), p. 37.

[2]Ibid., pp. 37-8.

[3]Ibid., p. 39.

Said seems to assume that his political values are the only legitimate values, and that by following his directives, all critics will arrive at the same conclusions that he does. Thus although critics cannot ally themselves with any specific politics, they will ally themselves with Politics which would be tantamount to the political ideas Said advocates in his book. In Said's Politics, imperialism, as practiced specifically by Western Europeans is irredeemable; Israel is the aggressor; and religion is separate from rational society.

Said usually justifies his support of the Palestinian cause not in terms of his own identity as a Palestinian, but because its cause is just. But Said's fervor often destroys the force of his argument for some:

> Perhaps a degree of partisan refraction is allowable to any polemicist who feels the weight of opinion against him. But if the partisanship becomes too obtrusive, the polemic loses force.[1]

Said constantly reminds his readers that Palestinians are the victims of Western imperialism. As he describes the Balfour Declaration[2]:

> What is important about the declaration, is, first, that it has long formed the juridical basis of Zionist claims to Palestine and, second, and more crucial for our pur-

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[1]Greene, p. 580.

[2]A letter from Lord Balfour (representing the British government) in 1917 to Lord Rothschild (representing the Zionists) which stated that the British government "view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." It is considered to be an extremely important document in the history of Palestine/Israel.

> poses here, that it was a statement whose positional force can only be appreciated when the demographic or human realities of Palestine are kept clearly in mind. That is, the declaration was made (a) by a European power, (b) about a non-European territory, (c) in a flat disregard of both the presence and the wishes of the native majority resident in that territory, and (d) it took the form of a promise about this same territory to another foreign group, so that this foreign group might, quite literally, *make* this territory a national home for the Jewish people.[1]

For Said there seems to be no need to question his own politics. Although he ostensibly examines the Israeli point-of-view, he is clearly not looking to understand them or vindicate any of their views. Said's understanding of the Middle East situation is the Politics which he feels critics should advocate.

Said's acknowledgement of his own Other mocks his own advocacy of filiation and philosophical exile. But his description of the relationship between 'Self' and 'Other' in regard to the Orientalists provides a provocative level of insight into the East-West relationship. Clearly Said feels attuned to the connotations of Conrad's imagery, both in his own life, and in the lives of nations, as he uses Conrad's conception of 'Self' and 'Other' to illustrate the relationship between Orientalist and Oriental. He even introduces his study of the Orientalists through the establishment of this relationship. Said begins Orientalism writing that the Orient is (among other things) the West's

> cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient

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[1]Said, The Question of Palestine, pp. 15-16.

> has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience.[1]

This Otherness stresses the Orient's role in defining the Occident (this is why the Occident remains the key word in Orientalism). To this end, Said writes that

> the dialectic of self-fortification and self-confirmation by which culture achieves its hegemony over society and the State is based on a constantly practiced differentiation of itself from what it believes to be not itself.[2]

Yet, according to Said, the 'Self' vs. 'Other' relationship entails even more than a culture, or discourse of power, securing its hegemony via self created opposition to an 'Other'. Said also writes:

> In an important sense, we are dealing with the formation of cultural identities understood not as essentializations (although part of their enduring appeal is that they seem and are considered to be like essentializations) but as contrapuntal ensembles, for it is the case that no identity can ever exist by itself and without an array of opposites, negatives, oppositions: Greeks always require barbarians, and Europeans Africans, Orientals, etc.[3]

Waardenburg claims as well that "with Muslims more than with other peoples of Asia and Africa, Westerners felt themselves put into question".[4] But Westerners use the Muslims to confirm their self-image. They use Muslims as

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[1]Said, Orientalism, pp. 1-2.

[2]Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic, p. 12.

[3]Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. 52.

[4]Jacques Waardenburg, "Changes of Perspective in Islamic Studies Over the Last Decade", Humaniora Islamica, 1 (1973), p. 256.

> a foil against which western identity might be explored and as a yardstick against which western superiority might be measured.[1]

From this perspective, Said describes the East as a "cultural contestant," indicating his belief that as the West's 'Other', the East challenges the West's identity and values while at the same time enabling the West to identify and define itself by juxtaposition with the East.

The creation of the East as the West's 'Other' should be seen as the creation of a caricature of the East which would represent all that the West was not. The Orientalists' stress on the importance of Islam in Muslim societies is a good example of all of these feelings. By considering Islam as one of the most important factors in society, the Orientalists, subconsciously perhaps, juxtapose the Eastern society to their own. While Western culture is rational, enlightened, and based on secular ideals, the East is backwards and still in an age dominated by religion.

In the light of this cultural contest, Orientalists are categorized, by Said, as despising what they are not. That the Orientalists are contemptuous of the East is a constant theme of Said's, and he refers to the "fact that many professional scholars of Islam spend their lives studying and still find it an impossible religion and culture to like, much less admire".[2] Said explains that the reason

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[1]Rodinson, "As Others See Us", p. 9

[2]Said, N.Y. Review of Books, p. 46.

why they study something for which they have no love or true appreciation is cultural responsibility:

> Scholars- more than, say, doctors- study what they like and what interests them; only an exaggerated sense of cultural duty drives a scholar to the study of what he does not think well of. Yet it is just such a sense of duty Orientalism has fostered...[1]

The appreciation which Orientalist scholars feel for the beauty of poetry, the grandeur of architecture or the words of the people he studies, must, according to Said be tempered by this thought. This assertions explains the continuity of a field which should have died off from hostility or lack of interest.

Said henceforth takes this belief for granted when discussing Orientalists. When discussing H.A.R. Gibb, Said asks rhetorically, why must modern Islam be "regarded with so implacable a hostility as Gibb's?"[2] Interestingly, Gibb censored Tibawi for similar accusations against Guillaume, writing: "On the point of Guillaume's performance you are on the whole just, but hardly just on the point of his intentions."[3] Certainly Gibb believed the same about his own intentions.

But Said is assuredly not alone in this criticism. Tibawi cites Professor Nabih Faris as criticizing von

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[1]Said, Orientalism, pp. 289-290.

[2]Ibid., p. 106.

[3]Tibawi, "On the Orientalists Again," p. 58.

Grunebaum for a "subtle hostility to everything Muslim."[1] This hostility, as Said discerns it, is tied into the power relationship of Foucault as well as the "medieval vestiges" which he perceives in Orientalism today.[2] This dislike is a significant characteristic of the imperialist power relationship, representing the antagonistic aspect of the relationship. But Said also means that Islamicists, with their hostility towards Muslims, carry forward the fear of Islam as a political and ideological force that was first felt in the middle ages.

With this charge, Said is explicitly linking modern Orientalism with its medieval forbearers to include among its ranks all whose prejudices are now acknowledged. Implicitly Said is making the point that these prejudices, while disavowed, still exist. Vestiges, he points out, even from Medieval times can still be perceived in Orientalism. Certainly then, Orientalists should acknowledge that vestiges from more recent times, from the imperialist, racist nineteenth century still frame Orientalist thought. The image of the Other that Conrad so eerily describes in his novels still haunt Orientalist writings, and Said advises that there will be no end to the distortions that such beliefs cause until this is acknowledged. As Said acknowledged the Other in his own life, so too he seems to

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[1]Ibid., p. 59.

[2]Said, N.Y. Review of Books, p.45.

recommend Orientalism recognize the Other that it has created out of the Orient.

Conclusion

Edward Said challenges his readers with the question of whether there is such a thing as a societal discourse and whether or not Orientalism is a discourse of power. The reader must ask whether or not Orientalism controls how Westerners see non-Westerners, as well as what relation Orientalism, or knowledge in general, has to do with power: Is society's knowledge of other people controlled by an élite? The reader must also assess whether, if such a system exists, it must necessarily be condescending to those studied, and distort the truth. Such questions, however, may continue down the path towards nihilism, for the reader must ask if there is such a thing as truth, and can we really know others. Problems of differentness are compounded when differences in culture and other factors are added. A good example of this is one of the requisite questions which emerges from this thesis: can a non-Muslim appreciate the reality or the truth of a pious Muslim's existence?

Said does not grapple with such questions, however, and his resort to simplistic discussions of a positive knowledge of people, as were described above, is certainly

one of the weakest parts of the book. Even a kinder, gentler knowledge cannot remove the inequities of an inherent power relationship, of knower and known, although it might alleviate some of its symptoms. Said's description of a discourse which ceases to be as soon as it becomes discourse seems similarly naive. Can such a notion ever actually be?

Said's understanding of discourse is flawed not only because he proposes unrealistic solutions, since proposing answers is not the explicit point of the book, but because he dismisses religious discourse. His belittlement of Islam's importance recalls a strict Marxian dismissal of the importance of superstructure. Yet, his acceptance of the importance of secular discourse recalls Gramsci's interpretation of cultures and philosophy's place in the material world. Is it valid to recognize the existence of secular culture and discourse and not religious discourse? How can Said spend an entire book attempting to prove that an academic discipline is actually a discourse of power and absolutely ignore the logical reality of Islam as a discourse? Said's difficulty in accepting an Islamic reality plagues his understanding of Muslims; an element of falseness therefore permeates his admonitions to the readers that they allow Easterners to speak for themselves and know them as they wish to be known.

Similar difficulties plague Said's unquestioning acceptance of the relation between knowledge and power, as was discussed in chapter two. While Said convincingly advances Foucault's theory on the connection between knowl-

edge and power to inter-cultural situations, his ideas remain purely theoretical and hypothetical. But yet they are compelling. Foucault's ideas, and Said's adaptation of them, seem true at least partly because they are the familiar modern nightmare apparent in the struggle between individuality and society. The individual's perceived lack of control in a society controlled by others is fueled by such theories as Foucault's and Said's. Said's connection of knowledge with power capitalizes on such fears by enhancing them with theories of manipulations. He proposes generalizations which are immediately palatable because they are so general, and because they offer an easy explanation, but he never fully probes the implications and ramifications of his argument. The theory of discourse creates an easy target for people who believe that their lives and their histories are beyond their control, and Orientalism obligingly assigns blame for this predicament; the Orientalists are at fault for the conquest of the Near East and the degradations of the Oriental in Western literature and culture.

Orientalism, for all of its attacks and analysis, often lacks insight. Said never really goes beyond Foucault's discussion of discourse, aside from applying it to inter-cultural relations. For all of the examples he gives, Said never really deals with what he set out to do; that Orientalism is a discourse is too easy an answer for all of the questions concerning the relationship between knowledge and power. The notion of Orientalism as discourse

quickly and easily becomes a trite and empty response as when it is blithely associated with the clichéd notion of an 'old-boys-network'.

Another theme in Orientalism which Said asserts but does not challenge, nor fully substantiate, is the division and resultant dichotomy between East and West, criticism of which is central to his thesis. It therefore seems trite and lackadaisically constructed. While criticizing the dichotomy, Said never dismisses the differences between cultures and instead seems to accept, and even aggrandize, the differences in his own writings. Critics of generalizations should certainly critique their own generalizations. Said does not do this; he does not question the overall homogeneity of two centuries of Orientalists. Nor does Said question his own exclusion of the German Orientalists. If anything, in "Orientalism Reconsidered", he is arrogant about his decision not consider the Germans and other non-British, French, or American Orientalists. Exclusion of the Germans appears to have been an intellectual short-cut that substantially delegitimizes Orientalism for many Orientalists.

Said's rhetorical question of whether any critic had given him a reason to include the Germans at first made me think that all his critics had somehow missed the point and that Said had a profound reason for excluding them. So I explored the possible reasons. Would the Germans be just another example of the Orientalist prototype that Said had

composed? To a certain degree they did follow the pattern. But Germany had such a different role in world affairs, and German philosophies of race and culture clearly diverged from other Western culture that, following Said's understanding of Orientalism as a societal discourse, German Orientalism was surely unique as well. And, according to Said's own theories, if only because the Orientalists consider the German scholars to have been a major influence, Said should have at least considered the Germans.

Said's exhortation to know from a point of equality likewise seems not to have been fully considered. It appears to be very much a re-statement of liberal humanism and it does not, moreover, solve the problem of knowledge's connection with power. Said has not considered the difference between amassing knowledge through observation, or by listening to natives, as they affect differently the power relationship. And Said's own disregard for the continuing presence of Islam in people's lives again seems like another intellectual short cut to bypass a difficult problem, making me wonder how well Said understands those people whom he had been criticizing others for misrepresenting.

Exploring Said's own association with the categories of Self and Other as well as Conrad's other imagery in the last chapter, enabled me to continue looking at Orientalism from Said's perspective, exploring the literary and allegorical issues. This last chapter is testament to Said's expansive usage of Conrad throughout his works and

his seeming dependency on Conrad's imagery to explain or format both Western culture and his own life.

This chapter also testifies to how important Said's personal life is to his academic life, as he writes, for example, of how he stopped drawing boundaries between his public and private lives. But, out of all the articles and books by Said that I have read about the Middle East or literature, or his interview with Diacritics, that one Harper's article seemed the most real, the one most free from hyperbole or embittered combative condemnation. It was also the most ironic. In that article, Said seems to be acknowledging that he too has been writing about and criticizing people and countries as an outsider, like the Orientalists. He has been depicting the struggle between Palestinians and Israelis in clear-cut, partisan dialectical terms as acted upon and actor, David and Goliath, et al. But he had not actually been there for years, and had been writing about a theoretical reality which did not necessarily echo the feelings of those about whom he wrote.

Yet he still feels that he is David fighting against the giant of Western culture. Establishing differentness between cultures is the primary, integral step to Said's point of writing back, or writing against the mainstream; by establishing a dichotomy, there exists that against which Said can write. Are there legitimate differences and contrasts? Said does not even attempt to grapple with such problem of differentness and sameness in the human com-

munity, a problem which he thereby cannot possibly overcome. A dichotomy preserves otherness and targets for self-proclaimed underdogs, of which Said clearly feels himself one. But here is another irony. This man who wants so much to challenge U.S. culture and to have himself perceived as an upstart, a rebel, has been so clearly accepted by that culture. Not only is he a professor at Columbia University, but he appears regularly on the News as an expert. The culture and the sources of discourse seem to be refusing to allow Said to be the rebel he wants to be.

But Said continues in his chosen role of critic. And as a critic, according to his own directives, he must constantly stand outside society and criticize it, preventing stagnation and spurring change for the better. It is as the product of such a voice that Orientalism should be considered. It is valuable because it is imperfect; it is just one voice of criticism, it is not the final say. Because of its faults, and not despite its faults, it is valuable. If it is clear whether a book is right or wrong, then there is no need to chew before digesting or rejecting it. But if, as in the case of Orientalism, it is not at all clear what is being said, and whether this is valid or invalid, then it is certainly worth studying. Orientalism challenges the reader, first, to understand its criticisms, as this thesis has done, and then to evaluate these criticisms, and finally, to study their part in the labyrinth. Orientalism is an important argument in and of itself, and as a part of

the ongoing debate in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies as to what Orientalism has been, is, and what it should be.

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