

“HOW ABOUT RECONSTRUCTING ORIENTALISM?”: A SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW OF EDWARD SAID’S SATURATED CRITICISM

Nevio CRISTANTE*

Abstract

Edward Said is viewed as the creator of the academic development of post-colonialism, largely with his transmission of the concept “Orientalism.” *Orientalism* is considered his *magnum opus*. He is a forerunner in the deconstruction of the so-called ‘Western’ forms of hegemony that not only subverts the traditional understandings of ‘Occident’ and ‘Orient’, but also the “East-West,” as being simplistic, binary oppositional platforms, divorced from the necessary divergent ontological framework for understanding the reality of the current-day. Yet, these false and simplified platforms are continuing in the common worldviews, at the expense of losing a clearer understanding of our conditions.

Keywords: Orient, Occident, Binary Opposition, Deconstruction, Reconstruction.

ORYANTALİZMİ YENİDEN İNŞA ETMEK: EDWARD SAID’İN DERİNLEMESİNE ELEŞTİRİSİNE DAİR BİR ÖZET VE GENEL BİR BAKIŞ

Öz

Edward Said “Oryantalizm” kavramını aktarması sebebiyle sömürgecilik sonrası (post-kolonyalizm) çalışmalarının akademik gelişiminin yaratıcısı olarak görülmektedir. *Orientalism* onun başyapıtı kabul edilmektedir. Edward Said, günümüz gerçekliğini anlamak için gereken ontolojik çerçeveden kopuk, basit bir ikili zıtlık platformu olarak, yalnızca “Şark” ve “Garp” kavramlarına dair geleneksel anlayışı değil, “Doğu-Batı” ikiliğini de tahrir eden sözde “Batılı” hegemonya biçimlerinin yapı sökümünde bir öncüdür. Lakin bu yanlış ve basitleştirilmiş platform, berrak bir anlayışın kaybı pahasına, ortak dünya görüşlerinde devam etmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Şark, Garp, Doğu, Batı İkili Zıtlık, Yapı Söküm, Yeniden İnşa.

* Assistant Prof., Istanbul University, Faculty of Political Sciences, Political Science and International Relations Department, nevio.cristante@istanbul.edu.tr

Araştırma Makalesi - Gönderim Tarihi: 25.07.2015 - Kabul Tarihi: 03.03.2016.

I. Introduction

For Said, if there was to be an “Orientalism” that deconstructs the dominating ‘Western’ forms of hegemony, it would be outside this binary oppositional framework that even allows such oppositional distinctions as the Orient and Occident, or East and West. This is a clear example that an extreme necessity appears in our contemporary condition that incorporates a polemical reconstruction of the relations of our worldview, including the relations of the human with God, the gods, nature, history, and other humans. Modernity, a time period whose beginning is identified in the latter half of the sixteenth century, has within it a mental framework that is mechanical, limited, and harmful; and it has still not been entirely bypassed today. It also contains the opposing and violent contradistinction of the Orient and the Occident, and incorporated certain geographically-identified locations, the East and West, which, in reality, do not make sense.

Said’s book is polemical as such, responding with equal fortitude to the polemic of the so-called ‘West’ which also occurs in the so-called ‘East’. Said has revealed the abusive nature of the ‘West’ in its comprehension of the ‘Orient’, a crucial display of the denigrating form of imperialism in the ‘Western’ consciousness, which, ironically, is more forcibly used in the so-called ‘East’. Said composes a polemical “attack” on the ‘West’. The attack on the false illusions of these terms can be productive. But he is also fierce and unstoppable; and this, in retrospect, may pose in itself a small pedagogical problem of the full effects of the book. He only deconstructs, with little effort to reconstruct.

Said displays a historical approach that provides motivational and pedagogical strength. A clearer investigation at the roots of the term “Orient” provides divergent constructive lessons on the use of, not only the Orient, but the Occident. If anything, Michel Foucault, another claimed deconstructionist - a label to which he never alleged himself - stated in one paragraph of his “Preface to the 1961 Edition” of *History of Madness*, a call to reconstruct the ‘Orient’ in a completely divergent direction, outside of “the Western *ratio*”(Foucault, 2006, xxx). This *ratio* formed the modern framework that produced the notion of Western superiority and “progress in history,” harmful falsifications generated from the “limitation of experiences” on the real history of the West.

At least today, in the spirit of human dignity and the attempt of designating human rights as principles both shared by the EU and the UN, any form of European or Western supremacy is sought to be abolished. Yet, ironically, one can still sense this frivolous oppositional hierarchy in nothing other than some ‘scholarly’ works, to which Edward Said displayed incessant criticism; more specifically, it is with the notion of the supposed “clash in civilization” advocated particularly by the political scientist, Samuel Huntington, and the well-known historian, Bernard Lewis. Therefore, the battle against ‘Western’ imaginary supremacy, and its related imperialism, is not over. Orientalism, a term that at one time inspired an image of “exotic” and “vivacious” distinctions in conceptualization, rationality, cultural practices, and spiritedness from the ‘West’, has almost disappeared.

To bring about more clarity in these confusing, ironic, and paradoxical conditions in

Edward Said’s display of *Orientalism*, I will do what unfortunately has not been done in most articles: refer more closely to the book itself, and not centralizing on secondary interpretations, since many of them do not escape being meshed in the contradictions of the bewildering conceptual and ontological intricacies involved. I will focus on the details of the “Self and Other,” “Us and Them,” binary oppositional frameworks, as factors in establishing the phantasmagoria of ‘Orientalism’, and give an overview by stating factors that can rise above the dominant, yet limited, modern binary conceptual framework. This work does not question certain critical features constructed by the imposed Occidental or Western supremacy over the Orient, or the East. It is quite worthy to deconstruct the metaphysical premises that shaped the now-known restrictive modern framework of Western science and philosophy, since we can more easily envisage that this imperial framework, which manifests itself even in scholarly approaches, as Said reveals. The hidden imperial premises have had denigrating political and cultural effects through the employment of the hierarchic features of binary oppositions that expose various constituents of oppressive colonialism. But then again, another question quickly follows: does this deconstructive post-colonialism, reconstruct a respectable understanding that has productive effects on our political and knowledgeable malaise, or our ontological and epistemological limitations? As mentioned in the title of this work, Said saturates his criticism, and one can suggest that it is excessive and, therefore, on certain contexts, is non-productive. In an overview, Said’s excessive criticism should be overcome in order to realize the full power of his potential scholarly-merit. A part of this work’s argument is that the overcoming of deconstruction should be a necessity, in order to acquire a truly productive post-modern academic framework. The generated overview, focused upon in the conclusion, will reflect a partial shortage in the deconstructive concentration of Said’s work, suggesting the necessities for a productive reconstruction. The premises for a reconstructive worldview are, if anything, avoided by Said.

I will summarize the important features of Said’s arguments through the chronological order of his own book. The second section, after the first, which is my introduction, will be on Said’s “Introduction.” Sections III, IV, and V, will be a summary of the rest of the book, which contains three huge chapters, with numerous sections within them: Chapter 1, “The Scope of Orientalism,” Chapter 2, “Oriental Structures and Restructures,” and Chapter 3, “Orientalism Now,” which is by far the largest. Section VI of this text will be an encompassing summary, with a conclusion that goes beyond and outside the book in order to obtain its full worth in interpretation, and the ontological and epistemological premises for the possibility of reconstructing the concept of Orientalism itself.

II. A Review of Said’s “Introduction”

I would like to start-off by giving the main thesis and general viewpoint, which, usually is in the introduction, is ironically found in the 6th-last page of the book. Believe it or not, “the thesis” of *Orientalism* is mentioned at this point, as Said tells us,

“the thesis of this book...is not...to suggest that there is such a thing as a real or true Orient (Islam, Arab, or whatever)...On the contrary, I have been arguing

that 'the Orient' is itself a constituted entity, and that the notion that there are geographical spaces with indigenous, radically 'different' inhabitants who can defend on the basis of some religion, culture, or racial essence proper to that geographical space is equally a highly debatable idea." (Said, 1978, 322).

He states rather explicitly that the Orient he is primarily describing is not real; it no longer exists, and therefore, is "blind to human reality" (Said, 326). The purpose is that this imaginary Orientalism is "successfully accommodated to new imperialism...the continuing imperial design to dominate Asia" (Said, 1968, 322). This is the heart of Said's ontological and epistemological problem. It is "constituted" by false images based on the belief of European superiority, which started a long time ago, and its historical lessons are missed. Economic domination is stated as one of the most important factors, since it contributes to his very sardonically-stated "triumph of Orientalism," which is, "the fact of consumerism in the Orient. The Arab and the Islamic world as a whole is hooked into the Western market system" (Said, 324). Western economy is so dominant that it effects scholarship, since "another result is that the Western market economy and its consumer orientation have produced (and are producing at an accelerating rate) a class of educated people whose intellectual formation is directed to satisfy market needs" (Said, 325). Some elements within scholarship, as Said claims, are only "donnish abstractions, or obscure laws or arbitrary systems," absent of lessons on "concrete human history and experience" (Said, 328). Also, contrarily, some 'differences', coming from the alleged 'West' or 'East', can also be an abusive form of identity, which can be used to 'justify' unjust reactions.

The Orient has lost its true identity, since the "antiquity of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes" (Said, 3) became the opposing image of the "Other," a product of the "Self and Other grid," or, more commonly known, as a product of the "Us and Them" oppositional worldview. With the established advantages of the press, education, and primarily politico-economic determinism, the contrasting "other" image of the Orient was created to help define Europe itself, or the 'West'. As Said tells us, the Orient was an integral part of "European material civilization and culture" (Said, 1). But today, these 'advantages' to 'culture' and 'civilization' are called to question. The oppositional nature of Orient and Occident, Asia and Europe, or East and West was not only a product of corrupt and manipulative mental coercion created by imperial political factors, but also by the "intellectual dishonesty of dissembling" (Said, 327). However, scholars, and hopefully politicians and the common people, will realize "the system of ideological fictions," that Said has "been calling *Orientalism*" are even "intellectually discreditable" (Said, 321).

The spread of imperial power transforms the idea of the Orient at different times and in different spaces. The 'Orient' was shaped by "colonial bureaucracy, colonial styles, and feudal principles" (Said, 2) To some academics, this term "Orient" is not preferred, but to others, whether it is in its "old or new guise," it is their main authority (Said, 2). The supremacy over it was presented at first by Europe, particularly the British and the French.

After the victory of World War II, the general misuse of Orientalism was overtaken by "American ascendancy" (Said, 3), which included "every other European and Atlantic power" (Said, 4) that provided the binary oppositional view: "Orientalism is the style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said, 3). Said's scholarly approach is one of deconstructing these false distinctions. It is a "deconstruction" on a polemic analysis. It is not a creative genealogy of the Orient. He even admits that his "project" was "not by any means to displace this system with a new one" (Said, 325). His discourse only has one direction: it is to describe the production of the unreal 'Orient' "politically, socialistically, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively" (Said, 3).

The approach in the book involves the setting up of opposites or boundaries that include the use, misuse, and abuse in the formation of an identity: "It tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said, 3). The Orient was a perceived enemy. The 'East' and 'West' is also a geographical linear-distinctive mindset of opposites in a globally-spherical world. This linear distinction is linked to the notion of progress in history that was advocated during the Enlightenment Era, and its effects still have not disappeared. An interesting article on these notions was made by a Chinese scholar, Wang Ning, entitled "Orientalism versus Occidentalism?" There are elements to learn from his clarity on the subject: there is no necessary opposition involved. Wang Ning begins by recognizing agreeable elements, that "to advocate an opposition between Orientalism and Occidentalism at the present time seems inappropriate," and that in "the current era, the main tendency is cultural dialogue rather than cultural opposition" (Ning, 57). He mentions that "the postmodern paradox always produces ambiguity" (Ning, 57), but he gets caught in the same ambiguous paradox as well: he upkeeps the same binary identity that Said is forcefully criticizing by stating what appears obvious for him, the geographical division of the Orient and the Occident: "Oriental countries like China, India, and Japan are seldom touched upon" (Ning, 61). According to Said, Orientalism is now a "constituted entity": it is not concrete, and neither is the Occident. This lack of recognition is the main problem that Said is addressing. Said is deconstructing the world view of opposition and struggle between Western cultural hegemony and the 'Orient'.

The British and American concentration on the alleged 'Middle East' is the reason why Said focuses more so on this region. He should not be criticized for this focus. It was fostered by those who purposely created this false, oppositional description. The focus of particularly England and America on the ostensible 'Middle East' was unfortunately motivated by a war-like, aggressive tone, which created an unjust 'justification' to overpower and overtake this region. Said tells us their portrayal of the Orient is a part of a political power-game. The notion of the "clash of civilizations" - advocated not directly from Samuel Huntington, but more particularly from the extensively criticized Bernard Lewis, whose 'academic' direction was driven towards creating Islam as an enemy - is still, for Said, a part of the continual colonial attempt at conquest, with a history full of "ideological lies."

This imagined tension made the so-called ‘Occident’, or ‘West’, overpower the ‘Orient’, or ‘East’, by the use of the force of modern science and technology to win the political and economic contest through educational, material, and technological power: “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” (Said, 6). For Europe, it is “a created body of theory and practice, in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment” (Said, 6).

Said mentions one of the basic themes to combat this exploited use of power in his reference to Gramsci through his recognition of cultural hegemony. In Gramsci’s view, the cultural forms of existence in civil society predominate over others. Said refers to Gramsci’s belief that this civil society would create a dissemination of prevailing and previous modes of thought. But his explanation of this “cultural hegemony” indirectly displays the ambiguity in Gramsci. It appears as if “cultural hegemony” was an alternative to the capitalist hegemony. But, for Said, this form of hegemony was not an alternative at all, but a continual producer of a harmful, limited, and morally indignant European identity, an “identity as a superior one in comparison with the non-European peoples and cultures” (Said, 6). It is the European culture, especially of the 18th and 19th centuries, that is “hegemonic on both sides” (Said, 7). Here, It is precisely the deteriorating aspects of the “cultural hegemony at work” (Said, 7).

Said continuously restates the assumed “positional superiority” of the West: it is the “Western upper hand” that was needed to recognize its own worth – positive for the maintenance of its power, and negative to those conceived as “Others” by Europe. Europeans can take every advantage in a whole series of possible relationships, and one where Europe can keep its “upper hand” in almost all forms of human interaction:

“Under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient, and within the umbrella of Western hegemony over the Orient during the period of the end of the eighteenth century, there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in the anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character” (Said, 7-8).

Said admits that the huge focus of his study is on the distortion of academia. In confronting this situation, he addresses the question of how one is to reconcile the individual with the force of the academically valueless, yet prominent, general hegemonic context. In doing so, he analyzes three recognized educational directions.

Three educational directions were outlined in Part III of his “introduction,” which are essentials for the proper understanding of his work. The first is the “distinction between pure and political knowledge” (Said, 9). Said states that his formal designation is one

of a "humanist," not a "scientist." The humanist, for him, is naturally directed towards politics. The scientist he defines as one closely linked to economics: one who studies the proposals of "policy makers, government officials, institutional economists, intelligence experts" (Said, 9). The ideology, under their definition, involves material and economic policy implications. He implies that in the 'West' the studies of humanities are mistakenly conceived of as non-political. Here is another example of the dominance of the scientific method that separates theory and practice, thought and reality. Said explicitly states that the real political knowledge is acquired through fields such as literature and classical philology; in other words, it is produced by investigating political circumstances, not by scientific methodological experiments. Said transgresses the common understanding, implying that it is a misunderstanding. He attempts to overturn the scientific dominance. Humanities, which includes sociology, literature, and philology, is closer to the understanding of politics. It is above the partisan or small-minded doctrinal belief. Typical distinctions of "political" and "nonpolitical" are clouded by the modern scientific notion of "true knowledge." This more negatively "obscures the highly if obscurely organized political circumstances" (Said, 10).

The second feature in Said's scholarly approach involves "the methodological question" (Said, 15). From a previous book on human sciences, he wanted to incorporate "a point of departure, a beginning principle" (Said, 15) within human sciences. A major lesson is learned that asserts success or failure in the 'Western' view as an ontological problem: the problem of finding the origin, the point of departure, the beginning principle; and it also raises the question: which texts are best suited for an appropriate study of Orientalism? Obviously, the answer would be the study of texts in the humanities, such as sociology and literary culture, which include an intensive political study. The means of the false use of the Orient, one can surmise, was a negative and abusive understanding of culture: it was "the culture that created that interest that acted dynamically along with the brute political, economic, and military rationales to make the Orient the varied and complicated place that it obviously was in the field I call Orientalism" (Said, 12).

The third is entitled "the personal dimension" (Said, 25). He reverts to Gramsci again with reference to his *Prison Notebooks*: "the starting point of critical elaboration is consciousness of what one really is...to know thyself" (Said 25). He states a continuation of the "cultural domination" in his own individual experiences, by giving an "inventory" of prejudicial views and experiences of being considered an "Oriental" who grew up in "two British colonies" (Said, 25). For him, "the Islamic Orient has had to be the center of attention" (Said, 25-26). For Said, to keep dignity is to do extensive study in his directed field: "society and literary culture can only be understood and studied together" (Said, 27). This leads him to study the history of Western anti-Semitism, a cultural domination in the fabrication of Orientalism. All in all, it is an attack on the dominant pedagogical mode of scientific study in the modern academia, which, he believes, is an opposing scholarly mode that could solve the mistaken and simplistic binary worldview:

"But what I should like also to have contributed here is a better understanding of

the way cultural domination has operated. If this stimulates a new kind of dealing with the Orient, indeed if it eliminates the ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ altogether, then we shall have advanced a little in the process of what Raymond Williams has called ‘unlearning’ of ‘the inherent dominative mode’” (Said, 28).

The colossal implications Said is making here is that the study of humanism is more educative than the dominance of modern science, implying the proposition to override ontologically the modern scientific method. Not only is the modern ‘Western’ scientific pedagogical mode not genuinely educative, but that it is morally disdainful and destructive.

In going this far, the comments enticed are based on the experiences of today, long after the publication of this text, of the virulent irony of the simplistic and limited opposition that is displayed by the extremely oppressive and violent coercion of consciousness that is used in the madness of terrorism. Those, who consider themselves complete virulent opposites to the professed ‘West’, are using the false, simplistic binary oppositions constructed ironically by the ostensibly-fashioned ‘West’ to justify their grossly inhumane and unjust practices.

III. Review of Chapter I, “The Scope of Orientalism”

The prefatory quote in the first chapter - one of three huge chapters that could be considered books – is a stimulating description of a common theme: “Europeans... are impatient in using their new instruments of power” (Said, 29). It is as though the pursuit of power and power only is an uncontrollable psychologically- manipulative addiction. It abides with racism and injustice. In the first section entitled “Knowing the Oriental,” Said displays the “public policy” formulations of two British academics, Balfour and Cromer. Their public policy ironically became a “canon of Oriental wisdom,” that put down the Orient, subsumed it under a perceived supremacy. This justifies the foreign occupation for the sake of contemporary civilization and the “benefit upon those by which we have been sent” (Said, 34). Balfour then praises the work of Cromer, whose subject, as far as Said is concerned, is racism. From this position came the British necessity for occupation over Egypt and onto India from their presumed supremacy, a presumption that may be argued is still not dispensed entirely in the European-American mind in the present day, through the global-economic dominance.

This form of the European scientific *logos* is manifest in the unruly foolishness of British logic: a logic that enforces itself on the current Western world and often ends up with an abominable situation. This ‘supremacy’ assumes that the standards and logical norms are universal and natural. No deviations from the “European logic or symmetry of mind” (Said, 39) were allowed, without being considered unnatural. The modern conception of nature is diametrically opposed to the sacredness of nature of ancient times. This significant change can also be applied to “rationality”, including the “rationalism of colonial rule” (Said, 39). The opposing change in the concept of nature can be duplicated in the change in the concept of rationality: “The absolute demarcation between East and West, which Balfour and Cromer accept with complacency, had been years, even centuries, in the making” (Said, 39).

The “Oriental” was “contained and represented by dominating frameworks” (Said, 40). The inferior was identified, as the West provided a corrective study of “western superiority” over “Oriental inferiority” (Said, 40). The implications that the West is under the “status of scientific truth” has not been entirely revealed in Said’s process. In Bacon - who is not mentioned in this book - the scientific method was to serve as the means for disciplining and organizing the human mind. Bacon developed his own program that called for a new logic, a new natural history, and a new theory of causation. Within each of these, he believed he proceeded in the proper direction of humanity. This one, ‘true’ universal method was the first element in his new scientific civilization. These thoughts motivated modern philosophers, like “Locke and Hume,” to belittle “‘philosophic’ doctrines” to make an “explicit connection” to “racial theory, justifications of slavery, or arguments for colonial exploitation” (Said, 13). From this false inductive, instead of deductive, learning process, there are a lot of misconceptions, as Westerners conceived themselves as “rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion,” and the “Arab-Orientals” are “none of these” (Said, 49).

In “Imaginative Geography and Its Representations,” clearly the connection among the falsely-identified territorial area is related through “imagined” concepts, the geographical “fields” of the Orient and the Occident. The impact of the Orient was made through books and texts produced by western forms of history. Said indirectly reveals his questionable belief in the modern notion that “man makes history”:

“But if we agree that all things in history, like history itself, are made by men, then we will appreciate how possible it is for many objects or places or times to be assigned roles and given meanings that acquire objective validity only after the assignments are made” (Said, 54).

Said suggests that this superior “assignment” makes the historical accounts have “blind spots.” It seems today, we are feeling the backlash of this modern historical ignorance and illusion. It seems that these blind spots are symptoms of an unresolved historical dialectic. Primarily, Said’s use of the word “imagination” implies the negativity done by the falsity or disillusion of the geographical boundaries that separates the East and the West, or the Orient and the Occident. Said goes back briefly to ancient literature that demarcates the Orient and the West. The struggle, Said argues, appears in Homer’s *Illiad*, in *The Bacchae*, by Euripides, and “less so” in *The Persians*, by Aeschylus. He suggests that during those ancient times Asia faired better than Europe, implying that the root of the challenge goes back that far. At one point, Said provides examples of this supposedly false imaginative assignment of the “time and space,” the falsified linguistic use of “history and geography,” in displaying the exaggerated depiction of the European conceptualization of Islam: the “fear” and “contempt” of Europeans made “Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma” (Said, 59). (Clarity on this crucial understanding of the human in relation to history will be reserved for the conclusion.)

In the 2nd century B.C., the division in the “pair of plays” was firmly started, where the Romans and Greeks were seen as superior to other people. The Orient was conquered and became imagined as the “Old World.” At first, in the beginnings of Christianity, it had connections and some cooperation with the New World:

“The Orient therefore alternated in the mind’s geography between being an Old World to which one returned, as to Eden or Paradise, there to be set up a new version of the old, and being a wholly new place to which one came as Columbus came to America, in order to set up the New World” (Said, 58).

Said identifies the powerful notions of the relations within religions. As far as Said is concerned, “Islam is judged to be a fraudulent new version of some previous experience, in this case Christianity” (Said, 59). Hence forth, European fear was in order. From fear comes weakness that enacts violence. Christians’ opinions were produced by ignorance, motivated by fear, generated, in my view, by weakness, which were a part of the process to overtake the ‘east’:

“it is finally ignorance which becomes more refined and complex, not some body of positive Western knowledge which increases in size and accuracy. For fictions have their own logic and their own dialectic of growth or decline” (Said, 62).

Mohammed was made into a Christian, as though he was an imitation of Christ. The Orient was incorporated in a closed space, a stage of a theatre. In Dante’s *Inferno*, Mohammed “belongs to a hierarchy of evils” (Said, 68), and is brutally punished. These sentiments were constructed at a time when the Ottoman Empire was in its full multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious recognition within its territory, and therefore ahead of Europe. Said further contends that Orientalism is a “paranoia,” but this “ordinary” paranoia is a formulation of ‘Western’ historical knowledge, a historical illusion. It draws the false imaginative geography with dramatic boundaries. These sentiments are still continuing today, right up to the year 2016. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the modern false framework is being challenged by so many so-called ‘Westerners’, especially the youth.

In the “Projects” section, the continuing history of unchallenged ‘Western’ dominance into modern transformations is revealed. The lesson here is that an enemy is easily chosen out of people that, at least, have metaphysical and general similarities. In the process, the differences are “paranoiac and exaggerated”:

“Doubtless Islam was a real provocation in many ways. It lay uneasily close to Christianity, geographically and culturally. It drew on the Judeo-Hellenic traditions, it borrowed creatively from Christianity, it could boast of unrivaled military and political success. Nor was this all. The Islamic lands sit adjacent to and even on top of the Biblical lands; moreover, the heart of the Islamic domain has always been the region closest to Europe, what has been called the Near Orient or the Near East. Arabic and Hebrew are Semitic languages, and together

they dispose and re-dispose of material that is urgently important to Christianity” (Said, 74).

It is stated that the great Islamic civilization outstripped and outshone Rome. (Of course, it depends to which Rome is being referred, the Roman Empire or the Roman Republic. I will argue that the Roman Empire will hopefully be outshone. But, it may be that it hasn’t, unfortunately). This ‘reality’, at one time, could not be left out of the minds of Europeans. It is still today the unconscious force behind the animosity that continues in the struggle for greatness, even though most Europeans, including North Americans, know nothing of the great period of Islamic civilization. This is a symptom of the ignorance of the imperialistic dominating powers. But, then again, the Islamic world knows little of the ‘West’.

Tensions existed in the 18th century between Britain and France in their hunger to take over the Near East. In memory of Alexander’s conquest of the ‘Orient,’ Napoleon desired to take over Egypt at the expense of the British. It became evident that the manufacturing of the new imperialism was directed towards the psychology of the West and its dependence on education. In conquering a part of the Orient, according to Said, Napoleon only knew of the classic texts themselves, and the reality of his mind was formed by illusory ideas and myths, not the actual reality of the Orient. The Near East became a place of colonial ambition. Part of that colonialism was to overtake a full-scale academy on the matters of the Orient. Egypt was to become a part of the French learning process in the formation of an institute. This institute, with its meetings, experiments and fact-finding missions, published a huge 23-volumes book entitled *Description de l’Egypte*. The desire stated by Napoleon and his scholars was to “restore a region from its present barbarism to its former classical greatness” (Said, 86). The Orient was reconfigured with the “clarity of modern European science” (Said, 86). But Napoleon evacuated Egypt in 1801. Yet the combination of old forms of occupation under new imperial forms through education was produced in the imposition of the modern scientific influence on education and the power of technology on the military to enhance the hostility between Islam and European Christianity. The Orient became more of a scholar’s word, and a target for administrative, executive, and military power. This new approach was to “change” or “develop” the Orient.

In the “Crisis” section, the heroic imagination is manifest and revealed by previously mentioned authors, to “capture, treat it, describe it, improve it, radically alter it” (Said, 95). Britain and France, the principal colonial powers, sought to categorize the Orient. The geographical area, the life of ease, the state of despotism, imbued with Oriental fatalism, these aspects that were once appealing, became bizarre. Islam had become something typically Oriental. The Orient became a privileged terrain for the ‘West’:

“The scope of Orientalism exactly matched the scope of empire, and it was this absolute unanimity between the two that provoked the only crisis in the history of the Western thought about and dealings with the Orient. And this crisis continues now” (Said, 104).

Said's index of the educational crisis of the 20th century included the works of H.A.R. Gibb and Bernard Lewis. These historians both foresaw Islam as a "cultural synthesis." Eighteen years after the publication of his book, *Modern Trends of Islam* (1945), in front of his British compatriots, Gibb states an alternative change: "the Orient is much too important to be left to the Orientalists" (Said, 106). What we need now, according to Gibb, is "the traditional Orientalist *plus* a good social scientist working together: between them the two will do interdisciplinary work" (Said, 107). This is done with careers directed to "public life and business." For Gibb, it became a necessity to make them understand "self-governance."

For Bernard Lewis, under his limited historical view of "cultural synthesis," if one opposes Israel and its settlements and desires the "overturning of Palestinian land," it is an example of "the return of Islam," or, it is "Islam's opposition to non-Islamic people," which is "a principle enshrined since the seventh century" (Said, 107). For Lewis, almost nothing mattered except the combination of all the various activities and differences in performance under the ridiculous synthesis focused solely on one word, Islam: "History, politics, and economics do not matter. Islam is Islam" (Said, 107). According to Said, Lewis' views are governed by "policy sciences," with ultimately no humanistic considerations.

After WWII, the 'West' turned to face a new revolutionary turmoil: Islam, an entity that was neither capitalist nor socialist, but was responded to the new western crisis of the intolerance of colonialism: "anti-colonialism seeps and indeed unifies the entire Oriental world, the Orientalist damns the whole business not only as a nuisance but as an insult to Western democracies" (Said, 108). But what "floods the press and the popular mind" is not the criticism of new version of Western colonialism, but the belittling of 'Oriental' people. Western subjugation is hidden. Arabs, for example, are thought of as "camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization" (Said, 108). Said explains the "the hegemonism of possessing minorities":

"anthropocentrism is allied with Europocentrism: a white-class Westerner believes it is his human prerogative not only to manage the nonwhite world but also to own it, just because by definition 'it' is not quite as human as 'we' are. There is no purer example than this of dehumanized thought" (Said, 108).

Said concludes that "the present crisis dramatizes the disparity between text and reality" (Said, 109). Said even displays the shortages of humanistic studies in giving their attention within "departmentalized topics of research" (Said, 109). Humanism became a similar victim of study as Orientalism is through historical limitations, a "pompous scientism," and a distorted form of "rationalism." The subject matter was the envisioned limited and degenerate Orient, constructed with texts, visions, and scientific methods. As such, true "humanistic values" were "all but eliminated" (Said, 110).

IV. Review of Chapter II "Orientalist Structures and Restructures"

Said begins the second chapter by relying on one of his supposed fortitudes, the use of

literature. For Said, even literary greats could come under this phantasm. Said points to the fact that the old religious patterns of human history and destiny were “reconstituted, redeployed, redistributed in secular frameworks” (Said, 113). This will be the new focus, as he states in one of his “theses” almost in the middle of the book:

“My thesis is that the essential aspects of modern Orientalist theory and praxis... can be understood, not as a sudden access of objective knowledge about the Orient, but as a set of structures inherited from the past secularized, re-disposed, and reformed by such disciplines as philology, which in turn were naturalized, modernized, and laicized substitutes for Christian supernaturalism” (Said, 122).

Modern Orientalism became an “aspect of imperialism and colonialism,” with a systematic discipline of accumulation, where “science could prepare the way for what armies, administrations, and bureaucracies could do in the Orient” (Said, 123).

In the following section, he reports on the academic works of Silvestre de Sacy and Ernest Renan, who are samples of the “Rational Anthropology and Philological Laboratory.” Everything in the Orient had to be properly transformed through a scientific and technological method, to prove the aforementioned strangeness of the people, their differences in social, climactic, and historical conditions. Sacy’s work canonizes the Orient; it begets a canon of textual objects passed on from one generation of students to the next. Said theatrically portrays Silvester de Sacy, a rational anthropologist, by claiming his works “as having *uncovered, brought to light, rescued* a vast amount of obscure matter. Why? In order to *place it before* the student” (Said, 127).

Renan was a “devout racist.” Within this forefront he systematizes Orientalism in his philology, the “scientific Oriental philology” (Said, 139). The scholarly focus on Orientalism in the 19th century was appraised by giving the Orient greater visibility. But what of this alleged visibility? Renan used the laboratories, libraries, museums as a means of analysis to exhibit the “inverse, eccentric, quasi-monstrous phenomenon of the Semites” (Said, 141). Said summarizes the observations of Renan’s research on a philological laboratory. In other words, it was not based on experience:

“Everywhere Renan treats of normal human facts – language, history, culture, mind, imagination – as transformed into something else, as something peculiarly deviant, because they are Semite and Oriental, and because they end up for analysis in the laboratory. Thus the Semites are rabid monotheists who produced no mythology, no art, no commerce, no civilization, their consciousness is a narrow and rigid one; all in all, they represent ‘*une combinaison inférieure de la nature humaine*’ “(Said, 141-142).

Renan contained a “notorious race prejudice against the very Orient Semites whose study had made his professional name – a harsh divider of men into superior and inferior races” (Said, 143). He used the encoded language of a new prestigious science to belittle the Orient.

To contend this, Said uses a quote by Nietzsche, who was – in part – also a philologist: “What a marvelous book one would write by narrating the life and adventures of a word! ... consider a word in its triple aspect of soul, body, and movement” (Said, 131). Nietzsche questions the scientific aspect of the modern practice of philology, and entices a creative approach in language. Nietzsche, for Said, employs the “exceptional spiritual insight into language,” and “veritable aesthetic and historical power” (Said, 131). What Nietzsche really did in philology is he “created as a category of human discovery, self-discovery and originality” (Said 132). Nietzsche states that the focus of semantics is on metaphor. It points to a creative scholarly approach as truer to the reality at present: “Philology is a way of historically setting oneself off, as great artists do, from one’s time and an immediate past even as, paradoxically and antinomically, one actually characterizes one’s modernity by doing so” (Said 132). Here, creativity is beyond the modern scientific practice of philology. (Yet, one can argue, that Said did not use this overarching direction of creativity. Said may have lodged himself in his own criticism of modernity.)

He continues with his reference to Foucault on the origins of language. The ontological basis for human nature has been overridden with scientific discovery: “a secular event that displaced a religious conception of how God delivered language to man in Eden” (Said 135). Even language is changed through the route of imperial power and colonization, where it points to nihilism in the meaning of language. Both Nietzsche and Foucault subside the difficulties of philological interest back into the origin of languages, instead of creating deviant divisions.

Furthermore, the psychological sickness that is revealed in the simplistic abuse of culture is included in the binary superiority/inferiority oppositional complex, which is based on a shallow and worthless assimilation: “the best relationship is one’s parity with one’s own culture, its morality and ethos; and to verify that by perceiving an opposition, giving an example of inferiority to allow the belief in superiority” (Said 148). We finally see a negative abuse of culture, yet Said does not say so clearly. In the process of one’s own culture, goodness is inflated, the worst is forgotten; and the opposite culture’s evil is easily perceived and exaggerated, while the true good is by-passed. This process is a way of not generating bitterness in one’s homeland, but it is a ‘culture’ void of reality. It is based on power, and is not the “disinterested objectivity” (Said, 148), which is falsely proclaimed by science. It reveals the directed objectivity to power for modern science and the expansion of technology.

Said, not only goes beyond this traditional modern and ‘Western’ worldview, but Marxism as well. With his partially influence of Gramsci, his identity of a perverse cultural hegemony is beyond the typical view of progress in history. Marx shares the supremacy of his utopian doctrine similar to his supposed opposites, the foundations of liberalism. In the section, “Oriental Residence and Scholarship,” Said criticizes Marx’s conception of the Orient as being “Romantic and messianic” (Said, 154). Marx favored that “even in destroying Asia, Britain was making possible there a real social revolution” (Said, 153). It displays the shallow appearance of regenerating a perceived lifeless Asia, conceived

in large collective terms and abstract generalities, reducing plurality to the frequent collective abstractions made in Marx’s mind: “The collective Orient was easier for him (Marx) to use in illustration of a theory than existential human identities” (Said, 155). Marx, through his “Romantic and even messianic” views, also conceived the Orient as inferior: “as human material the Orient is less important” (Said, 154). Marx still shows his influence was embraced by the historic conception of “progress in history” that advocated the spreading of European supremacy and economic ‘liberalism’ in the Enlightenment, which contained advocates who were, ironically, his supposed opponents. Anyway, it marks off any close allegiance of Said to Marx.

Said reverts to literature in the following section “Pilgrims and Pilgrimage, British and French.” Poetry became a pilgrimage to the Orient after Napoleon. By the 1880s, the imperial domain of the British arose. British imperialism surpassed Napoleon. The French had no sovereign presence. (The British imperial realm of political will, management, and bureaucracy was attempted all the way from Turkey to Egypt.) Yet, for Said, the highest literary formulations of the Orient were in the French literary artists, Flaubert and Nerval. Flaubert and Nerval were in contrast, yet were connected to Orientalism, although in a minor way. They employed personal aesthetic projects to relieve the Orient. Yet, Nerval ends in a negative vision in the search for a stable Orient that he could not find. His approach was with sorrow, fashioned by the canonized Orientalist texts.

In Said’s view, Sir Richard Burton - who wrote *Pilgrimage or Arabian Nights* - had an assertion of humanistic knowledge of the Orient. He and the others contributed an “important share,” yet they could not escape prejudice. The *mise en scene* of later Orientalists took hold of Renan and Sacy, with their legacy from the 19th that led to the 20th century. For Said, it was only a minor success. Orientalism was “formalized into a repeatedly produced copy of itself” (Said, 197).

V. Review of Chapter III “Orientalism Now”

In the section “Latent and Manifest Orientalism,” Said makes distinctions of the dogma of “latent Orientalism,” the typically accepted view from the 19th century of “unconscious positivity”; and “manifest Orientalism,” from the 20th century’ where Oriental knowledge and its scholarly work is more to the “contemporary observations, in language and terminology, whose cultural validity derived from other sciences and systems of thought” (Said, 205-206). The differences, he pertains, are evident; yet they retain the “stability, unanimity and durability of the latent Orientalism” (Said, 206).

What is manifest, as far as Said is concerned, is the “attention, reconstruction, and redemption” of the Orient. Yet according to Said, this apparent positive newness in approach for the Arab Oriental still has within it an absence of remaining an outsider, or the beginning of an “incorporated weak partner of the West” (Said 208). To describe this idea further, he uses the Heideggerian notion of the simultaneous nature of presence and absence: “I mean to say that in discussing the Orient, the Orient is all absence, whereas one feels the Orientalist and what he says as presence; yet we must not forget that the

Orientalist's presence is enabled by the Orient's effective absence" (Said 208). Said does not develop it any further. The intent here, I surmise, is that the actuality of the discussion of the Orient, in its presence, is absent of truth, or that the true Orient is absent.

He states the usual description of the Western view of the Orient "as weaker or underdeveloped regions," and the West having "intellectual supremacy" that justifies the expansion of colonialism in old and new vestiges (Said, 219). The "inimitable foreignness," the "distant, barely intelligible civilization or cultural monument" was considered a hard-to-reach object (Said 222). The distance was being reduced throughout the 19th century as encounters between East and West increased. A tension developed between the *latent* standards and the new *manifest* Orient.

In the next section, "Style, Expertise, Vision: Orientalism's Worldliness," the racial distinction within Western education is revealed. Kipling's ironic fiction of displaying the "White Man," which "served many Britishers," was seen as the European who proposed the purpose of "clearing the land" to justify racial colonialism (Said, 226). The color of their skin gave them a "superior ontological status plus great power over much of the inhabited world" (Said, 226-27), and "a sense of irreducible distance" was incorporated "separating white from the colored" (Said, 228). According to Said, the "White Man" spoke in a certain way, responding to a code of laws and regulations, which is a form of power where the white man ruled "a way of taking hold of reality, language, and thought" (Said, 227). The oppositional language of "ours" and "theirs" was used to designate the "former" over the "latter." Racism was actually reinforced by the scholarly fields of even literature and Darwinian theses, which was falsely-considered as "the rhetoric of higher cultural humanism" (Said, 227).

Said continued with the idea that there is no true historic grounding in the Orient of the past or the present. The generalizations of descriptions are far too general, and prejudiced by the dogmatic *latent* view, with no expanding recourse. On the condition of bureaucracy on imperialism and as an imperial agent, Said refers to Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*, stating that "the collective academic endeavor of Orientalism was a bureaucratic institution based on a conservative vision of the Orient" (Said, 240). The encompassed chauvinistic superior assumption of intellectuals promotes Western knowledge and European culture, with the enforcement both indirectly and directly through technological power. This foreshadows the instrumental attitude towards the Orient. Within this construction is, again, the "imprint of great European fear of Islam" (Said 254). Such a fear broke out with the assumed liberalism of Europe; yet, Said points out, that such 'liberalism' has an illiberal basis: "In fact, what took place was the very opposite of liberal: the hardening of doctrine and meaning, impaired by 'science' into 'truth'" (Said, 254). At this point, Said reverts to his humanistic historical basis of this work, reminding us that the dominance of the West, of constructing the gathering of the human tradition under its current influence within "the technical field," retards the humanizing process of enlarging the togetherness of East and West.

The next section, "Modern Anglo-French Orientalism in Fullest Flower," focuses on the post-war era. At this time, the West is beginning to see their own cultural crisis in its "affliction of excess parochial and nationalistic self-centeredness" (Said 257). Suddenly, the Orient, "appears more a partner" due to "the diminishment of the suzerainty over the rest of the World" (Said 257). The French contributor is Massignon, a major thinker in Islamic-French relations, who is called a "mystical lexicon," by using the vocabulary of Islamic devotion. This is a sign that academic notions of the 'West' are beginning to lack their integrity and civil coherence. Massignon, however, was considered a challenge to his colleagues. He attempted to tie Catholicism to his view of Islam. Through his admiration, "the Anglo Gibb" reports that Massignon, "pursued the themes that in some way linked the spiritual life of Muslims and Catholics and enabled him to find a congenial veneration of Fatima and consequently a special field of interest in the study of Shi'ite thought" (Said 265).

The link with Catholicism was furthered by the identity of "Abrahamic creeds," one of the distinctions within Islam that moved away from the notion of active resistance. The Islamic religion of Ishmael was excluded by a divine promise made by Isaac, therefore a religious appeal of resistance was fostered, dividing Islam, as similar to Christianity being divided by Protestantism, which is the Christian version of active resistance both religiously and politically. This movement has fostered the adjudication of colonialism and western political domination. With Islam, Massignon believed that it involved a countercurrent to the interior enemies of Catholicism in Judaism and Protestantism. This is somewhat similar to the perceived enemies in the traditional view of Islam, as the common reflection of *jihad*, with Arabic as the "language of tears" (Said, 268). Therefore, according to Massignon, the "mission" of Islam's "important intellectual dimension" is in "war against Christianity and Judaism as external enemies" (Said, 268).

Massignon appealed to "al-Hallaj," a Sufi mystic, who sought liberation outside the orthodox Islamic community. He did so by "asking for and finally getting the very crucifixion refused by Islam as a whole" (Said, 268). For Massignon, as an obvious Christian, al-Hallaj was more significant than Mohammed, since, for him, Mohammed "had deliberately rejected the opportunity offered him to bridge the gap between him and God" (Said, 268). This "achievement," as Said states, gave al-Hillaj "a mystical union against the grain of Islam" (Said, 268). As such, it seems Massignon had also adopted an even more profound active resistance or change in the religious zeal for Islam:

Massignon's image of Islam is a religion ceaselessly implicated in its refusals, its latecoming (with reference to other Abrahamic creeds), its comparatively barren sense of worldly reality, its massive structures of defense against 'psychic commotions' of the sort practiced by al-Hallaj and other Sufi mystics, its loneliness as the only remaining 'Oriental' religion of the three great monotheisms (Said, 269).

In the end, according to Said, Massignon implied that "the essence of the difference

between East and West is between modernity and ancient tradition” (Said, 269). Massignon had similar intentions to Said’s *Orientalism*: “Islam *has* been fundamentally misrepresented in the West” (Said, 272). The secularization of Western reason and the development of a modern version of science and technology, could easily find justification for racism and terroristic violence, similar to the current day terrorists who crudely abuse the meaning of Islam similar to the former imperious westerners and their abuse of the past and Islam itself. Said mentions that some elements in Massignon’s intellectual mission are agreeable, but neglects Massignon’s verity. He implies there is no real “truth” in Massignon’s representation, even though he admits that Massignon does not fully misrepresent Islam, as is done by other Western intellectuals.

Said sardonically reverts back to the “professional Orientalist,” H.A.R. Gibb, whose “career was a foil for Massignon’s,” and who constantly demonstrated the nationalist tendencies in the academic tradition (Said, 274). Gibb maintained a very orthodoxly view of Islam. Oriental studies were instruments of national policy. For Gibb, the purpose was to assess Islam in its present situation and the possibilities in its future:

“Islam as a religion has lost its force, but Islam as the arbiter of social life [in the modern world] is being dethroned...in the broadest aspect of history, what is happening between Europe and Islam is the reintegration of western civilization, artificially sundered at the Renaissance and now reasserting its unity with overwhelming force” (Said, 279).

But Said contends this by stating that Gibb’s analysis was an example of standard metaphysics, using Islam and appropriate timing as abstractions, making them “simply never clear” (Said, 280). He became upset of any changing views of Islam. For Said, most of the study of Islam is still within traditional and limited “dogmas.”

In the last section of this book’s largest chapter, “The Latest Phase,” the focus is on American imperialism that has overtaken the British and the French. Orientalism has “disbursed itself” in the U.S. The first subsection deals with the “scope” of the Arab, as incompetent and an easy defeat: “a camel-riding nomad” (Said, 285). The transference of anti-Semitism from the Jew to the Arab was made smoothly “since the figure was essentially the same” (Said, 286). The ‘Semites’ were at “the bottom of all of ‘our’ troubles” (Said, 286). But then again, seen as oil suppliers, the Arabs “threatened” the democratic world. The image of the Arab “in films and television” was “associated either with lechery or bloodthirsty dishonesty” (Said, 286). Afterwards, the menace of the *jihād* through its misinterpretation was all that was known about Islam by the westerners. The consequences engendered a fear that “the Muslims (or Arabs) will take over the world,” and the “virulent anti-Islamic polemics” (Said, 287). Arabs were murderers, terrorists, and violent, and this was believed to be the cause of the Arab genes. The current western media at times still propagates such a view, generating crude ideas and extremely limited knowledge of the Islamic religion. But not all media shares these crude views. In the present day, such derogatory reporting is almost completely dismissed.

In the next subsection, one can see the link that Said makes with the use and particularly abuse of culture surrounded by imperialism. The U.S. showed overtly imperial concern in its cultural relations policy. America's attempt was to follow the imperialism of European powers from a more limited educational and policy framework. An Islamic image was contrived that was "anti-human, incapable of development, self-knowledge, or objectivity, as well as uncreative, unscientific, and authoritarian" (Said, 296). The cultural prestige would look at this manipulative image as "canonical wisdom." There were further examples given of the many misinterpretations and misrepresentations under the context of a "theory of culture." But the West reduces culture or abuses it by focusing on ideology, present-day politics, hostility, and tyranny. 'Culture' was reformed by Western imperialism. But this 'reform' only elevated the *latent* dogmas.

Next is an extreme criticism of the British historian Bernard Lewis and his essay "Islamic Concepts of Revolution." For Said, Lewis is full of "condescension and bad faith," portraying "sarcastic scholarship" (Said, 315). Lewis puts down the revolutionary stirrings of the Arabs, to "wait till the excitement dies down." It is common for students and policy makers to assure that revolutionary moments are,

"as consequential as a camel's getting up, as worthy of attention as the babblings of yokels. All the canonical Orientalist literature will for the same ideological reason be unable to explain or prepare one for the confirming revolutionary upheaval in the Arab world in the twentieth century" (Said, 315).

For Lewis, instead of a revolution, it is a "sedition," by "setting up a petty sovereignty." As such, the "authority of the Orient is a scandal of 'scholarship'" (Said, 316). For Said, Lewis is polemical, one who only wants to show "that Islam is an anti-Semitic ideology, not merely a religion" (Said, 317). This is claimed as Lewis' "political propaganda," where Said arrives at a culmination on Lewis: that "Westernness" creates "Orientalism as a dogma that not only degrades its subject matter but also blinds its practitioners" (Said, 319).

For Said, the last subsection, "Orientals. Orientals. Orientals" reveals that the "system of ideological fictions" is "intellectually discreditable" (Said, 321). The old Orientalist stereotypes are inadequate to describe the recent occurrences in Said's day. These ironic "Orientalists" only foresaw the Orient as a means for an imitation of the West. According to Bernard Lewis, it can only improve itself if it followed the West, or "prepared to come to terms with the West" (Said, 321).

Power politics is used to describe the situation of the Arab-Islamic world. It is clear that the dominance of this power politics is so overwhelming that scholarly institutions are directly involved. Imperialism includes the spread of consumerism, the western market system, the mass media, education directed towards satisfying these market needs, that even overrides social sciences and Marxist critiques. Economics subordinates politics in the West. With this new imperialism, the U.S. is the "hegemonic commander of affairs"

(Said, 323). The relation of the scholar and the state, which is governed by the economy, according to Said, is “too close,” creating cultural and knowledgeable decline (Said, 326). The US, “the greatest economic and political influence in the region” has made “the Arab and Islamic world...hooked into the Western market system” (Said, 324). These general factors exist in this present day, since scholars see predominant economic forces of “neoliberalism” – the most ironic term in present history – overrides political power: neoliberalism is doubly ironic since it is not new; it is a return to the exploitation of the work force like 19th century Britain, and less people are free in our globalization of economic dominance.

On the third last page, Said makes an argument for “decolonializing humanity” through the representation of other cultures; not imperialism over culture. Here he elaborates a bit on the foundational ontological principles. “What is Culture?” is an important question, as well as the recognition in the “independent, critical consciousness,” which is “an oppositional critical consciousness” (Said, 326). He appeals to a scholarship of one that is not as corrupt, or as “blind to humanity,” as the one he describes. The fields of “Islamic history, religion, civilization, sociology, and anthropology” is considered as “deeply valuable” (Said, 326). He wishes to free ourselves from the “old ideological straightjacket” (326). We should disregard the distinctions between “‘them’ and ‘us’” or the “East/West division” (Said, 327), and have a “progressive’ scholarship” rather than a “dogmatic slumber” (Said, 327).

Said sees human freedom and knowledge as better “norms” for the scholar, and obviously above the dominance of modern science and technology that reveals for him the humanistic denigrated imperialistic endeavor of Western research. A “concrete human history” is needed and “not an abstraction or obscure laws or arbitrary systems,” and to dispense with the “racial, ethnic, ideological and imperialist tendencies” (Said 328). The worldwide hegemony of Orientalism, and all it stands for, can now be challenged. At the end of the book, he states the “answer to Orientalism is not Occidentalism” (Said 328). Yet, in the second last line, all he does is reveal that the creation of this illusory form of Orientalism involves “the seductive degradation of knowledge” (Said 328). An answer is not clearly provided for a Renaissance in the development on the ontological and epistemological distinctions. Another form of the Orient is not prescribed.

VI. Conclusion

The elaborate criticism of the traditional Western or Occidental world view is of veritable importance. Its “deconstruction” through post-colonialism beyond this tradition is required; therefore, as the primary portion of this work, the summarization of his arguments can become a pedagogically sound process. He certainly avoids any “dominative mode.” However, Said’s “deconstruction” is not overturned by reconstruction, and, if regarded in its ontological and epistemological stance, it does not entirely surpass the Western or Occidental framework that he is severely dismembering. Extensive deconstruction is part of the negating ontology and related epistemology that he is brutally obliterating.

We have certainly seen the unrelenting criticism of the European past or the creation of the ostensible ‘West’ with their identified manipulative construction of Orientalism. But the word Orient is rarely used today: the term ‘East’ has overtaken it, or, now specifically, the Middle East. Or, it may only be used in the study of the historical epistemology of the ‘West’. It only survives within this context. It becomes evident that Edward Said was almost entirely focused on the scholarly creation of the “Orient.” His polemical attack was mostly on Oriental scholarship. He comprises it as a foremost scholar, jumbling together many fields of study: from politics and political ideologies, social constructivism, political thought and history, deconstruction, nihilism, philology, humanities, and, in a lighter vein - even though studied by a professor of English and Comparative Literature - literature itself. The plenitude of the various fields of study drawn upon is impressive. The separation of “us” and “them,” “ours” and “theirs” attributed through means of ‘logic’ and ‘science’ are stated as reductive formulae that should not be scholarly recognized. Yet most scholarly endeavors, generated at relatively the same time, no longer used the once dominant form of modern science, nor a particularly reductive form of modern binary logic in the contemporary academic direction

The Traditional ‘Western’ worldviews were displayed as a “constituted entity” for only the imagined ‘benefit’ of Europe, which is now perceived in direct opposition. This perceived benefit was implicitly revealed as a harmful depiction, not coming close to matching the contemporary global spectrum, a worldview that recognizes our international interdependence, instead of the oppositional national independence. At times, one can see that Said himself gets trapped into excessiveness, albeit from a divergent position. Of course, his opposition is not on the derogatory nature of superiority, but on his appeal for the expansion of knowledge, history, and theory that overrides the simplistic and destructive illusions created by the imperial forces of power. But it would have been a more influential book if he comprised a divergent ontological and epistemological framework within it, or a differing worldview to override these flaws with a truer description of the Orient. Islam can be, in reality, just as, if not more, aggressively oppositional to other internal sects and external religions as Judaism and Christianity.

He does not provide any strong foundational basis on a divergent scholarly ontological-program. He avoids giving a “veridic discourse” of the Orient. There are only a few suggestions laid-out over small, incongruent spaces. A portion of this shortage was partially fulfilled in his later books, *Culture and Imperialism* and *Covering Islam*. Nevertheless, a good reconstruction of the Orient may come from a good deconstruction. From his excessive criticism, he, ironically, does not easily surpass the forceful oppositional direction seen in the framework of the ‘West’. *Orientalism* remains a quintessential book that started the academic school of thought of post-colonialism. But a good school of thought includes certain prognoses, and is not smothered with excessive forces of criticism. When the balance of criticism is lost, the strength of critical work is deteriorated. Even though he mentions it at the end, Said does not lay out in depth many of the factors for producing a “progressive scholarship” (Said, 327).

With his return to Gramsci, one can assume that Gramscian thought is a foundational principle within this work. But much of Gramsci's political thought is questioned today. Gramsci may have displayed weaknesses in Marxist thought, but he does not override the modern framework. The problem is with the focus on hegemony, with no recognition of heterogeneity. An "alternative hegemony" does not erase the problem of cultural hegemony, which Said criticizes forcefully. Gramsci's "alternative hegemony" does not solve the problem. Said makes no comment on this factor. Said does not provide an alternative hegemony, even though he seems to have understood this Gramscian notion as important. Nevertheless, the extent to which Said understood Gramsci and his alternative cultural hegemony is not very clear.

It is favorable that Said brings to light the merit of linguistic analyses in the appearance of certain words; but these are examples of only "negative identities," therefore, without a display of a more correct or fruitful linguistic performance. This is good for displaying the importance of history for understanding, but the belief, that "men make their own history" extends from the modern notion of "progress in history," which, as argued by many leading political thinkers, is negative, limited, and includes an ignorance of the past. It is a very simplistic modern ontology that man controls history, which appears to continue with Said, with little recognition of its fallacies. This undermines Said's own approach. Said is not consistent in this factor in his own historiography. He does not correct these false images, and one can argue that, at specific "times and spaces," he makes nearly similar mistakes as his scholarly opponents. Said does not escape the "deviant divisions" made in his own linguistic work.

There is an appeal in this book on the history of antiquity, but it is not nourished. It is good that he displays the importance of history for understanding, but the idea that "man can make history" extends from the modern view of "progress in history" that has been extremely criticized for its ignorance of the past. It is often stated that the roots of Western politics, philosophy, and history refers to Athens and classical Greece. However, most of those influences stemmed from Asia Minor: Thales, Herodotus, Heraclitus, Anaximander, Homer, to name of few. Most of those influences have been forgotten. Perhaps there was no hostility and therefore no "imaginative boundary between Europe and Asia." But, according to Said, "the Orient and in particular the Near Orient, became known in the West as its great complementary opposite since antiquity" (Said, 58). But this statement, made by Said, can be an example of the false and harmful historical imagination, construed by the previously valued idea that "man makes history," linked to the falsely perceived progress in knowledge.

Even though he displays profound and productive criticism, at times, Said is "exaggerated," and perhaps, in a few particular instances, even "paranoiac" in his criticism. Said's saturated criticism does not escape the lack of depth in foundational principles, as there is little direction in this work of getting out of the ontological and epistemological foundations that he ironically severely questions. For example, one can say that Massignon did a better job of valuing the Orient than he did. Therefore, some of

Said's criticisms are suspicious. Said minimizes any latent success in twentieth-century studies in overcoming the previous racial, spiritual, and scholarly segregated divisions. Yet no comment was made by Said to alleviate this presumably denigrating intellectual dogmatism. On the subject of Massignon, Said's criticism is not convincing, therefore, his form of criticism is unproductive. Said too easily dismisses an scholarly-merited opportunity that displays a close link between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

Perhaps the term Orient was heard more in the middle 1970s when the book was written, but a significant amount of people today recognize the problem is associated under the 'Western' imperial image of superiority. In the 20th century, new configurations of imperial power arose. Previously the U.S. and the Soviet Union contested for imperial power; but today, in the 21st century, there are other forms of imperialism and authoritarianism arising in various nation-states through neo-liberalism, an imperial oligarchy of economic determinism manifest in the global spread of a term that is full of discreditable irony. Almost no one is truly liberal, unless it is constituted under the practices of licentiousness for the few who will do anything to advance their economic power, as more people become enslaved. Obviously, some form of the 'Western' imperial image of superiority still exists. Yet, there is also today an attempt to obliterate the use of superiority in national and international governmental power in the EU and UN, at least theoretically.

Currently the realization of overcoming the superiority of imperialism is growing. The Declaration of Human Rights is directed by a repudiation of European superiority and denounces any attempt to universalize solely supposed 'Western' values. If the reported 'Western' imperial, exploitative, controlling form of rule is used today, it is less so in the ostensible 'West', and more so in the alleged 'Middle East'. The worst forms of rule happen mostly in the so-called 'Middle East', and if simplistic opposition is a "Western" concept, then it has existed and still exists in some portions of the 'Middle East'. And one cannot separate the effects of the abuse of Islam as being the oppositional current-day political activities in the area. The reality of the current-day overview should obliterate such opposing terminologies of East and West. These linear oppositions do not even make sense in the global spherical world in which we live. They only display their obvious ideological and religious limitations, illusions, and venues for manipulation.

Unfortunately, for some odd reason, many scholars, including Said, forget to look back at the meaning and previous conceptualization of the term they are investigating. The term "Orientalism" is extended from the Latin "*orior*," meaning "rising," such as the rising sun; and it is also related to birth, of being born. Most of the emphasis of the term was on the sun which rises in the east, but this appears unimportant. It involves the circular motion of the earth revolving around the sun. The east or west makes little sense on a cyclical resolution. It also erases any notion of the east and west, or the Orient and the Occident as having any distinct, well-grounded location. Everywhere on earth can, at different times, be both 'east' and 'west', through the quintessential cyclical basis, therefore everywhere on earth experiences both the sunrise and the sunset. Orientalizing was also used to designate a rising in distinction and brightness, similar to the rising of the morning

sun. One can even interject that Orientalism can imply a re-birth, or a renaissance. The primary importance is the rising of some important element similar to the sun: the birth of a new day, a re-birth, a Renaissance. The divisive attachment made primarily in the modern period, of the Orient to the solidified-geographical 'east', and the Occident to the opposing 'west', becomes another example of the fallen and simplified misuse to disuse of the veritable meaning of ancient terms and conceptualizations. Truly, there are those all over the world - and one can add especially in the so-called Middle East - that ironically use the perverted so-called 'Western' opposition, eradicating the ancient identity of global cosmopolitan togetherness. The misuse of the Orient and the Occident seems to have occurred with the loss of the ancient cosmological 'ontology', which unfortunately, was replaced by a disenchanting, debilitating, and erroneous historical view of progress in history, which, politically, only generates opposition. And the general activities of the Middle East, and the beliefs generated by Islam, do not entirely overcome this loss.

According to Foucault, the creation of the "constituted" Orient was a requirement formed by the debilitating "universality of the Western *ratio*" (Foucault, 2006, xxx). The Occident/Orient division was formed by a refusal of the tragic elements, a refusal that was central in constructing "progress in history" by the Western world, which accepted blindly the binary form of opposition that formulated "the great divide" (Foucault, 2006, xxx). In a sense, Said provided the required knowledge of this condition, the "history of the great divide" (Foucault, xxx). The harmful formation of the illusory vision of the Occident, or the "Western *ratio*," is penalized by the subsequent oppositional otherness, "the great divide" in the Orient that is formed at the same time as this illusory Occident. Yet, It is from these standpoints that the Orient can be reconstructed anew: an Orient where "the thought of the origin" of the Orient that was "dreamt of as the vertiginous point," is where "promises of return are born" (Foucault, xxx). A necessity is the re-birth of conscientiousness far beyond the dominant modern Western framework, which overturns the belief in the superiority of the Western world and progress in history. Foucault did not obliterate the term and the potential meanings of the Orient. Yet one of the first basic "assumptions" that Said stated is that "the Orient is not an inert fact of nature" (Said, 4). Through this included little addition, Foucault would contrast this notion.

As Said reports in his last page, "promoting human community" (Said, 328) against the arbitrary derogatory manufacturing of "the Other" is a necessity. Yet, to believe as he apparently did that - though he conscribed this to Vico - the modern idea that "men make their own history" (Said, 4), should - contrary to Said -*not* be extended, because, its "reality and presence" actually displays that man, with this false belief, is controlled by history. These are the means for the simplistic modern historical-geographic reduction. This leads to the question: how much of this limited historically-geographical statement was a part of Said's criticism? This is clearly a major flaw in *Orientalism*. Said uses as the foundation of much of his critical stance, a negating argument produced by the Western mentality, which he so utterly reprimands. Hardly anything is dedicated in *Orientalism* to promote such humanitarian elements, with a divergent understanding of the human in relation to the earthly world. His understanding of the essence of the human is similar

to the reductive and damaging modern ontology, which he is so radically criticizing. It may be true that the Orient and the Occident has been created for derogatory purposes, but they exist, and if there use is denigrating, then men can be creative in harboring a change, if they accept the true nature of the world, even its negative components. Largely, the simple advocacy that “man makes history” extends from the non-acceptance of what is. Along with it comes the false belief of “progress in history,” a part of the Western *ratio*, that man is now in a different order of things, that he is entirely changed from previous times and the past means nothing: or, that he, all of a sudden, historically-speaking, has become god. This belief is reductive of the ontological nature of the human and the relation with the world in which we live; and a *re-orientation* on these factors should be the foundation for this extreme criticism of the West. The belief in “progress in history” actually allows history to control man. Uncontrollable history dismembers the human. Under these realizations, the presence of “promoting human community” can be a productive archetype for a re-orientation of the meaning of the Orient, a re-orientation of ontology, the essence of the human, and the related epistemology, of what the human can truly know. Instead of accepting that “its time is over” (Said, 1), why not use its “remarkable,” “romantic,” and “exotic” entities to rebuild it anew? Its ‘death’ should be conceived as a re-birth to life, not its elimination.

The Orient that should be used today is obviously from a divergent standpoint, outside the modern ‘Western’ ontological and epistemological framework. The Orient should be seen as a new sunrise, a new birth, a renaissance, an ancient cosmological collaboration of a multi-lateral homogeneity of equality, coalesced with a heterogeneous distinction that casts out the darkness of traditional Western ignorance, corruption, ungraciousness, meaninglessness, and terroristic madness in our present-day political and human malaise.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Foucault, Michel, *History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa & trans. Jonathan Murphy & Jean Khalfa, Routledge Books, London and New York, 2006.
- Ning, Wang. “Orientalism versus Occidentalism?,” *New Literary History*, Vol. 28, No. 1. Cultural Studies: China and the West (Winter, 1997), pp. 57-67.
- Said, Edward W. *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, Vintage Books, Random House Group Limited, New York & Great Britain, 1997.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., New York, 1993.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., New York, 1978.