

Edward W.Said, an episode in the struggle of the Orient.

Mrs. Fatiha Kaid
University Djillali Liabes
Sidi-Bel-Abbes.

The year 2003 is one of the most afflictive dates in the Arabs' minds, the Arab world had, in effect, been increasingly hurt as the various western misdeeds have people in the Orient in focus. The Israeli barbarous demeanour seems to become a definitely rooted discourse with the Palestinians. Beyond this experience, the Iraki-American war has broken out to fulfil part of the westerns' latent desires towards the Orient. The bloody picture is, then crowned by the death of the most outstanding oriental advocates. Edward W. Said, the witness of the Palestinian intellegentsia in America and the world as well, quits on his disciples in the fall of the year. That period would settle in our world literature as the metaphor of Said's death leaving behind him the most daring voice to the oriental man to remove the West second-hand representations and affirm himself through narrative and self-representation.

Edward W. Said is a complex, yet, a well elaborated mind. Though neighbouring the Americans (State and People) his very penetrating views has shaken the western biases in their view of the “Other”. His assault on the West, being the agent of colonialism, has occurred in his masterpiece “Orientalism” where the dichotomy West-Orient highlights the inaccuracies of a wide variety of assumptions. It also debates various paradigms of thought which are adopted on individual, academic, and political levels

In its early beginnings “Orientalism” as a concept was explored by Said to be the Orient that the European and American writings are fraught with, it is the fictitious set of ideas about the “Other” meant to empower the emerging self-identity of the West. Said explains that his work “Orientalism” does not principally stress the correspondence between orientalism and the Orient for both “Occident” and “Orient” are man-made areas, but it rather focuses on the internal consistency of orientalism and its ideas about the Orient as far as the individual is concerned. Therefore a set of definitions has risen storming the defamatory speech of orientalism. Gyan Prakash joins Said in his cause and defines the term as

“ a body of knowledge produced by texts and institutional practices , responsible for generating authoritative and essentializing statements about the Orient, characterised by a mutually supporting relationship between power and knowledge.” (Gyan Prakash,1990, p.384)

It is very clear that in the most distinguished European and American universities orientalism as a scholarly discipline fosters the European- Atlantic power over the Orient. Said’s contentious attitude is driven by orientalism as a fundamentally political doctrine that would secure a permanent strong position for the West overseas. The process could be effected through the cultural pressures that rise from the stern sense of difference between the European and Asiatic parts of the world.

The rejection of orientalism is the pivoting idea in E. Said decolonizing theory. But, the ideas above unanimously call into question the way Said managed to contribute such uproarious discourse. The theory may be read in terms of a newly set discourse embodying power and culture. In the process, orientalism in its earliest invasions of the writing practices of colonized peoples, the

colonized frequently reproduced western discourses to show up their characterizing oriental cultures. The act refers, on the one hand to those who leant upon imitation to repel western dominance by justifying their abilities to become modern, for, modernity is not the proper hold of the west. On the other hand, there are those who contended with the mimetic approach by insisting on the pure value of oriental culture.

In fact, rejecting mimesis is to be well considered for such approach would be implicitly loaded with the cultural prejudices to annoy the oriental reader. Yet, the other stand holders' method would fail due to the possible misunderstanding of the western reader.

E W. Said's remedy occurred along his search for a proper style to express one of the noblest causes that a man may embody in his bosom, his cosmopolitanism led him to discover Michel Foucault's views of "Power". M. Foucault describes power not only in terms of its repressing function but rather as potential forms of knowledge and pleasure. E. Said is more attracted by M. Foucault's both constructive product of the hegemonic power and the physical conception of a realm for the social formations in which the texts are produced and consumed in order to appreciate the pleasure we derive from them. The implementing of this optimistic view is reflected through the power structure of orientalism as a discourse, that attainment is intricately achieved unless the writer and the reader undergo the same predicament . E.Said's work, indeed, suggests the inescapability and irresistibility of orientalism when being that

"other" that the West describes from afar.

Yet, M. Foucault's theory of power helped E. Said establish the causality between the west's discriminating power and the oriental culture. In Culture And Imperialism, Said views culture as the vehicle for the imperialist venture beyond being an area of art and learning. Connecting Joseph Conrad's Heart Of Darkness with this enterprise Said holds him reprehensible of depicting native peoples as "marginally visible" and "people without history". Conrad in this case is not regarded as an imperialist, it is so thought of for the salient aim to display to the world how deeply convincing are the western clichés about Africa and South America even to a non-English like J. Conrad.

The intellectual practice of decolonization as carried out by E.W.Said has reshaped the world mind as oriental people are concerned, they has always been described statically-minded and vastly inferior in thought to the westerns. His counter-attack departs

fundamentally from the way the English, French, and American scholars have approached the Arab societies of North Africa and the Middle East. Sternly, he demonstrated how meaning is created by the orientalist literati elite assigned to be the high knowledgeable agent, so he states:

“(orientalism) is a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and psychological texts,..., it is , above all, a discourse shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political(as with colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual(as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics, anatomy, or any other modern policy science), power cultural(as with orthodoxies and canons of tastes, texts, values), power moral(as with ideas about what “we” do and what “they” cannot do or understand as “we” do)” (Edward W. Said, 1994, p.12)

Henceforth, Orientalism summarises three major claims, First of all, orientalism, although professing to be an objective disinterested field is, in fact, politically centred. Secondly, orientalism is the main sustaining policy to Europe in its setting of the identity pattern. Self-image is drawn out of the establishing opposites. to see Islamic cultures as static in both place and time is to assign the West to the opposite pole, therefore, the West is the dynamic, innovative, expanding culture as well as the liberty maker and keeper. Orientalism permeates the view that western imperialism is a matter of redeeming the world of its decadent aspects. Thirdly, orientalism transmitted to the world a false picture of Arabs and Islamic culture. The Orient has always been stamped with backwardness as it is thought of the hindrance to human progress in the sciences, arts, and commerce. The last word, but never the least, bid farewell to the man whose pitiless foe like Bernard Lewis -the famous orientalist- could not condemn him even when being a citizen of the other world. As he was asked by the newspaper Le Monde at the announcement of Edward W. Said's death B. Lewis answered “ De nisi mortuis nihil bonum ” i.e., nothing harmful is to be said about the dead. Edward Said has delivered the Orient and its peoples when teaching the world that the “Arab” is never the irrational, menacing,

untrustworthy, anti-western, dishonest character that performs in the orientalist scholarly texts. Nowadays the practices of orientalism as ideology and policy developed by the Occident start moving in a collapsing trajectory since the western people themselves show out their compassion to the Arabs' predicament and their scorn to their political institution.

Besides, E. Said's prowess lies in his project that criticising the orientalist thinking does not call for a refutation of the differences between the West and the Orient but rather an evaluation of such differences in a more critical and objective frame. To put it differently, consistency of worlds between the texts and reality should be the pursuit which can be achieved only if the "oriental" does it by himself. The message sent to the occidentals is give back the Orient to the Orientals not to the Orientalists.

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