

## المخلص

بعد نشر المفكر إدوارد سعيد لكتابه الإستشراق ، تلقى عمله العديد من الإنتقادات التي حاولت النيل من الركائز العلمية التي شملها الكتاب. فبعض المنتقدين استهدفوا جملة المناهج العلمية والفلسفية والإنسانية التي توصل بها المفكر في كتابه "الإستشراق". يعد هذا المقال محاولة لمقاربة الأسئلة الآتية: ما مفهوم الإستشراق في فكر إدوارد سعيد؟ وما هي أنواع وأشكال الإستشراق التي كشف إدوارد سعيد عنها اللثام في التقليد التاريخي الإستشراقي؟ وكيف أبدع إدوارد سعيد جملة من الركائز الفلسفية في دحضه وتقويضه للإستشراق؟ وماذا كانت ردة فعل بعض المفكرين الغربيين تجاه لجوء إدوارد سعيد إلى الدرس والمنهج الفلسفي لدرأ ثغرات وهفوات الإستشراق؟ هذه بعض التساؤلات التي تطرقنا إليها في هذا المقال في محاولة لإبراز الملامح الفلسفية التي يقوم عليها فكر إدوارد سعيد ، علما أن الإستشراق يمكن تناوله ومقارنته عبر وسائط علمية متعددة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإستشراق: الكامن والنشيط ، الهوية ، هيمنة وسيطرة ، قوة وإرادة قوة ، الخطاب.

## Resumé

Depuis sa publication de «Orientalisme», Edward Said avait reçu beaucoup d'observations et critiques qui ont tenté de remettre en question, annuler et même mettre sous silence les axes scientifiques sur lesquelles il avait construit son travail. Cet écrit est une tentative de répondre aux questions suivantes : Qu'est-ce que l'Orientalisme pour Edward Said? Quelles sont les formes de l'orientalisme dans la tradition et l'histoire Orientaliste selon Edward Said? Comment Edward Said a-t-il pu judicieusement et intellectuellement étayer ses idées pour réfuter l'Orientalisme en utilisant plusieurs pensées philosophiques ? Et quelles ont été les réactions de certains penseurs occidentaux et orientalistes envers son instrumentalisation de la méthodologie philosophique pour ainsi refuter les croyances profondément ancrées de l'orientalisme ? Ce sont quelques-uns des thèmes que cet article vise à traiter, en reconnaissant le fait que l'orientalisme peut être étudié sous différents angles scientifiques.

**Mots clés :** L'Orient : latent et manifeste, identité, l'hégémonie et dominance, pouvoir et volonté du pouvoir.

## Summary

Since his publication of 'Orientalism', Edward Said had received sea-waves of observations and critiques which tried to question the scientific premises on which he had built his work. This paper is an attempt to address the following questions: What's Orientalism according to Edward Said? What are the forms of Orientalism that Said identified in the tradition and history of Orientalists? How did Edward Said shrewdly and intellectually elaborate some of his ideas to refute Orientalism on philosophical grounds? And what were the reactions of some western thinkers and Orientalists towards his use of philosophical methodology to refute the deeply ingrained beliefs of Orientalism? Those are some of the unexhaustive themes which this paper aims to deal with, acknowledging the very fact that Orientalism can be studied from different scientific angles.

**Key words:** Orient: latent and manifest, identity, hegemony and dominance, power and will to power, discourse.

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### *Introduction*

Edward Said published his book 'Orientalism' in 1978, his work gathered a plethora of academic, literary, and journalistic reactions that have swept criss-cross the globe. Some celebrating and applauding the work as the culmination of many months of deep insights, intellectual synthesis and heavy academic anchorage, mirroring the indefatigable strength of a researcher (Edward Said) who would not wither away from hard work and intensive research, bringing him ever-lasting eulogies and laud. For others, however, Orientalism had turned some tricky and controversial stones that were unfathomable prior to Edward Said's work. What came as a sledgehammer onto the head of Orientalism's skeptics was not only the sheer power of its detailed, dynamic and systematic methodological approaches that Edward Said unleashed throughout the length of his work, but also the philosophical method that this thinker had had recourse to, something that his opponents relatively lacked in their methodologies. Yet the big uproar that Edward Said's work had triggered was his association between Orientalism and power, therefore Imperialism. An aspect of his work that deranged the academic spirit of some noticeable contemporary Orientalists.

Edward Said's Orientalism had largely refuted Franco-British and later American Orientalism. His work consisted of analysing and criticising towering Orientalist figures, like Renan, De Sacy, Balfour, Cromer, Flaubert, Nerval, to Kissinger, Bernard Louis and many others. Their texts, articles, books passed through gruelling scientific methodology that Said employed to challenge their ideas. This paper will shed some light on Edward Said's philosophical premises as he went through refuting their observations, analyses and presentations in the process of framing the Orient. We thus shall study Said's ideas refuting the 'truthfulness' and essentialism underpinning the claims of Orientalists such as Renan, and others, who resorted to scientific tools to depict languages, social, cultural, and even religious state of affairs of

the orientals. We will also highlight his recourse to philosophy while proving the connectedness between knowledge -produced by Orientalists – and power, and the systematic arrest of the oriental languages, books and archive by the colonials. We then proceed to present the reaction of some western thinkers and academics towards Said's claims, and will eventually expose their authority to further scrutiny and critiques.

### *What is Orientalism?*

How was Orientalism reconstituted was the stressful question that had occupied Edward Said for many years, before reaching to this flagrant conclusion "My idea is that European and then American interest in the Orient was political according to some of the obvious historical accounts of it that I have given here.." <sup>1</sup> But what kind of dynamic or dynamo that spurred this interest? For Edward Said it was the culture that created that interest, that acted dynamically along with brute political, economic, and military rationales to make the Orient the varied and complicated place that it obviously was in the field of Orientalism. <sup>2</sup>

In a more straightforward and delicate context Edward Said defines Orientalism as a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient and (most of the time) the Occident.' <sup>3</sup> Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind", destiny, and so on. This Orientalism can accommodate Aeschylus, say, and Victory Hugo, Dante and Karl Marx. <sup>4</sup>

For Edward Said, Orientalism therefore turns into a systematic configuration of many aspects. "It is not merely a political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and

expressive of some nefarious 'Western' imperialist plot to hold down the 'Oriental' world." <sup>5</sup> Orientalism, Edward Said sought to clearly elaborate, is subtly more than these things. It is rather a "*distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of 'interests' which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description." <sup>6</sup> That means, in Edward Said's thought, the geographical interest and preoccupation of Western learned-men have encompassed knowledge and scientific fields.

"It not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw."<sup>7</sup> For Edward Said, Orientalism discourse, is eagerly keen on consolidating manipulation and even distortion of the Orient's reality and life, somewhat apparently detached from pure single power. Rather, Orientalism according to Edward Said, "is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values.)"<sup>8</sup> Digging hard into the meanings and nuances of Orientalism, Edward Said novice and creative work lead us to shed light on his two kinds of Orientalism.

### *Orientalism's forms*

An Edward Said's reader discerns two shapes of Orientalism in his work. An almost unconscious (and certainly an untouchable) positivity, which he calls *latent* Orientalism, and the various stated views

about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology, and so forth, which he calls *manifest* Orientalism. The unanimity, stability, and durability of latent Orientalism are more or less constant.<sup>9</sup>

Nineteen century Orientalist writers' ideas about the Orient can be characterised as exclusively manifest differences, according to E. Said, "differences in form and personal style, rarely in basic content. Every one of them kept intact the separateness of the Orient, its eccentricity, its backwardness, its silent indifference, its feminine penetrability, its supine malleability."<sup>10</sup> That is, for Edward Said, the nineteen century where Orientalism saw a remarkable development in academic and field studies, which unrelentingly preached objectivity and unbiased partiality.

According to Edward Said, "every writer on the Orient, from Renan to Marx (ideologically speaking), or from the most rigorous scholars (Lane and Sacy) to the most powerful imaginations (Flaubert and Nerval), saw the Orient as a locale requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption."<sup>11</sup> For Edward Said, the apogee of showing stark scientific Orientalist bias and subjectivity appeared with those indefatigable specialists. As E.Said states, "The Orient existed as a place isolated from the mainstream of European progress in the sciences, arts, and commerce. Thus whatever good or bad values were imputed to the Orient appeared to be functions of some highly specialized Western interest in the Orient."<sup>12</sup>

Latent Orientalism, Edward Said goes further, is "the cumulative prejudicial attitudes inhabiting the consciousness of the western towards the Orient and Oriental peoples. Along with all other peoples variously designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment."<sup>13</sup> For Edward Said, latent Orientalism generates a subconscious and conscious energy that shifts into vigorous cognitive activity that appears in voluminous writings and researches on the nature of Orientals. The latter were, according to Edward Said, usually linked to

elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor), that's all anomalies seen in Western society, having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien. Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or – as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory – taken over. The point is that the very designation of something as Oriental, according to Edward Said, involve an already pronounced evaluative judgement, and in the case of the peoples inhabiting the decayed Ottoman Empire, an implicit program of action. Since the Oriental was a member of a subject race, he had to be subjected: it was that simple. <sup>14</sup>

For Edward Said, *Latent Orientalism* has other uses. It has, for example, "encouraged a peculiarly (not to say invidiously) male conception of the world. The Oriental man was considered in isolation from the total community in which he lived and which many Orientalists have viewed with something resembling contempt and fear." <sup>15</sup> Here Edward Said alludes to the sexist nature of the whole enterprise of Orientalism, as if it pertains to a domain fully appropriated by man. Orientalism itself, furthermore, was an exclusively male province; like so many professional guilds during the modern period, it viewed itself and its subject matter with sexist blinders. <sup>16</sup> Time and space do not warrant one's capacity and ability to go further to the depth of the discussion on *latent* and *manifest* Orientalism, the urgency to deal with some of the philosophical axes that have grounded Said's work need more reflections and analyses.

### *Philosophical axes to refute Orientalism*

Edward Said did not resort to simplistic and superficial methods in his process of deconstructing Orientalism. Rather, his work was a culmination of deep methodological and scientific theories beefed up by meticulous philosophical inductions and deductions. Reading his work a researcher would discern a variety of schools and ideas of some prominent continental and other philosophers' reflections that represent the milestones of Said's

undoing of Orientalists' untenable scientific bases. Edward Said, in other words, had brilliantly chosen the scientific premises to refute Orientalists' claims. You may choose Hegel's ideas on identity, Nietzsche's 'will to power' or 'the verity of truth', Foucault's 'discourse and power', Gramsci's 'revolution' and 'the domineering culture', as well as the sophisticated reading of classic Orientalists' texts with philological lenses, all have proved the academic prominence and elevation of Edwardian analyses on delicate and sensible questions of Orientalism or Culture and Imperialism. Indeed, post-Orientalism has had many detractors in the world of academia and outside who have since the publication of *Orientalism* tried to take down Edward Said's ideas and thus refuting his philosophical inputs as well. What follows is a glimpse of Said's philosophical injections and some attempts to dissolve them in Western academic and cultural spheres.

### *Philological positions on the Semites.*

E. Said noticed that after "losing his faith Ernest Renan had devoted the remaining of his career to the study of Semite nations and languages. His Semitic opus was proposed as a philological breakthrough, from which in later years he was always to draw retrospective authority for his positions (almost always bad ones) on religion, race, and nationalism." <sup>17</sup> It must be noticed that many Western scholars and Orientalists have denounced Renan's controversial ideas, and his 'propos' have even been tagged as racist. Whenever Renan wished to make a statement about either the Jews or the Muslims, for example, it was always with his remarkably harsh (and unfounded, except according to the science he was practicing) strictures on the Semites in mind.

Furthermore, for E. Said, "Renan's Semitic was meant as a contribution both to the development of Indo-European linguistics and to the differentiation of Orientalisms. To the former Semitic was a degraded form, degraded in both the moral and the biological sense, whereas to the latter Semitic was a – if not the – stable form of cultural

decadence."<sup>18</sup>

As a branch of the Orient, Semitic was not fully a natural or unnatural object, as E. Said pointed out. Rather, "Semitic occupied a median position, legitimated in its oddities (regularly being defined by Indo-European) by an inverse relation to normal languages, comprehended as an eccentric, quasi-monstrous phenomenon partly because libraries, laboratories, and museums could serve as its place of exhibition and analysis."<sup>19</sup> Here Renan's racial impartiality is stark naked, showcasing his clear bias towards superior race's theories. If we read almost any page<sup>20</sup> by Renan on Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, or proto-Semitic and; to Edward Said, we shall read a fact of power, by which the Orientalist philologist's authority summons out of the library at will examples of man's speech, and ranges them there surrounded by a suave European prose that points out defects, virtues, barbarisms, and shortcomings in the language, the people, and civilisation. From that library, Edward Said continues, "that Ernest Renan, through his philological reading of Semites' texts, drew his prejudicial and racist conclusions, notably his notorious analogy between the asymmetric form of the Semites' anatomy and their languages (which for him are dead and strange to the Indo-European family.)"<sup>21</sup>

### *Controversial philology questioned*

Untangling the highs and downs, straight and bended instrumental theories that Edward Said's present in his work cloaked in scientific and philosophical dress, we come across his systematic recourse to Nietzsche the prominent philosopher. Here is an example of the shrewd and clever citation Edwardian thoughts make use of resorting to Nietzsche in order to challenge Ernest Renan's racist allusions and analogies.

What is the category, Nietzsche will ask later, that includes himself, Wagner, Schopenhauer, Leopardi, all as philologists? The term seems to include both a gift for exceptional spiritual insight into language and the ability to produce work whose articulation is of aesthetic and historical power. Although the profession of philology was born the

day in 1777 "when F.A. Wolf invented for himself the name of *stud. Philol.*" Nietzsche, as E.Said pointed out, is "nevertheless at pains to show that professional students of the Greek and Roman (and others) classics are commonly incapable of understanding their discipline: "they never reach the *roots of matter*: they never adduce philology as a problem."<sup>22</sup> For simply "as knowledge of the ancient world philology cannot, of course, last forever, its material is exhaustible. It is this that the herd of philologists cannot understand."<sup>22</sup> Implicitly in this context it is as if Edward Said is saying: Nietzsche's foresight is alluding to another figure called Renan, and possibly others, who would ignore these facts. Renan, according to E. Said, "had boldly asserted the speculative but uniting nature of philology as a science that unifies peoples, nations and races, and yet what was the philologist on the other hand, as Renan himself proved with his notorious race prejudice against the very Oriental Semites whose study had made his (Renan) name."<sup>23</sup> Renan's philology, for E. Said, turned into a science that divided humanity into superior and inferior races.

In the same context Edwardian thought refers cogently to Nietzsche ideas. The objective of Orientalism's discoveries – the work of innumerable devoted scholars who edited texts and translated them, codified grammars, wrote dictionaries, reconstructed dead epochs, produced positivistically verifiable learning – are and always have been conditioned by the fact that its truths, like any truths delivered by language, are embodied in language, and what is the truth of language, Nietzsche once said, but a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms – in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is

what they are. <sup>24</sup>

Perhaps, Edward Said comments, such a view as Nietzsche will strike us as too nihilistic, but at least it will draw attention to the fact that so far as it

existed in the West's awareness, the Orient was a word which later accrued to it a wide field of meanings, associations, and connotations, and that these did not necessarily refer to the real Orient but to the field surrounding the word.

For the Orient idioms became frequent, and these idioms took firm hold in European discourse. Beneath the idioms, according to E. Said, "there was a layer of doctrine about the Orient; this doctrine was fashioned out of the experiences of many Europeans, all of them converging up such essential aspects of the Orient as the Oriental character, Oriental despotism, Oriental sensuality, and the like. For any European during the nineteenth century – one can say this almost without qualification – Orientalism was such as system of truths, truths in Nietzsche sense of the word."<sup>25</sup>

What the West prepares in its academic and Orientalist laboratories, then delicately recycles, assembles, packages and presents to formal and informal institutions is based on human observation, reflection, retrospection, not seldom constrained by whims, prejudicial biases and stereotypes, and for Edward Said the ideas converged from such process are displayed as unshakable truths. Illusionary truths in Nietzsche's thinking, yet the majority of Westerners would not take Nietzsche seriously as far as the Oriental is concerned.

### *Discourse, Knowledge, Power and Orientalism*

In studying Orientalism, Edward Said was deeply influenced by Foucault's works. Edwardian thought found it useful to employ Michel Foucault's notion of discourse, as described by him in *the Archeology of knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish*<sup>26</sup> to identify Orientalism. Without examining Orientalism as a discourse, Said believes, one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. Yet unlike Michel Foucault, Edward Said believed in determining imprint of individual writers

upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism.

Foucault believes that in general the individual text or author counts for very little; empirically, in the case of Orientalism (and perhaps nowhere else) E.Said found this not to be so. Accordingly Edwardian analyses employ close textual readings whose goal is to reveal the dialectic between individual text or writer and the complex collective formation to which his work is a contribution.<sup>27</sup>

Another example, Edward Said borrows Foucault's appellation of "a controlled derivation" in advancing his theme that in natural history, in anthropology, in cultural generalization, a type had a particular *character* which provided the observer with a designation a controlled derivation."<sup>28</sup> In the writing of philosophers, historians, encyclopedists, and essayists we find character-as-designation as physiological-moral classification: there are, for example, the wild men, the Europeans, the Asiatics, and so forth.

Physiological and moral characteristics, according to E. Said, are distributed more or less equally: the American is "red, choleric, erect," the Asiatic is "yellow, melancholy, rigid," the African is "black, phlegmatic, lax." But such designations gather power when, later in the nineteenth century, they are allied with character as derivation as genetic type. In Vico and Rousseau<sup>29</sup> for example, for force of moral generalization is enhanced by the precision with which dramatic, almost archetypal figures – primitive man, giants, heroes – are shown to be the genesis of current moral, philosophic, even linguistic issues. Thus when an Oriental was referred to, it was in terms of such genetic universals as his "primitive" state, his primary characteristics, his particular spiritual background.<sup>30</sup>

From *surveiller et Punir*, Edward Said drew on Foucault's themes, as to how carefully the colonizer made the colonial native speak his language either as an exhibit or as a sign of tribute to the strong or politically dominant society. As E. Said goes "I think we have to think in terms of

*making someone speak*, in much the same punitive sense that Foucault has studied (*in Surveiller et punir*) the imposition of orthographic or penal disciplines upon European students and convicts respectively during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When the local or native language was studied in the colonies it was always imprisoned within the perspective of a dead or classical language, what the untutored native spoke was a kitchen language, nothing more."<sup>31</sup>

For Edward Said, *surveiller et punir* is not confined to men or the colonised, as when you consider too that the historical archives of several of the Arab states exist only in London and in English. Add to the fact that, for E. Said, "there exists in Europe a vast cache of Arabic texts, removed out of the Arab world by the colonial powers during the nineteenth century. Here Foucault's theory of the archive and discourse acquires a very material dimension; the archive of much of modern Arab history resides unmetaphorically, has been deposited in, has been physically imprisoned by Europe."<sup>32</sup> The Europe. E. Said is alluding to, not only makes its foreign other speaks at its whims, but also preserves the right to dominate his outlets that produce language, culture and civilisation.

### *Critiques revisiting Edward Said's work*

As said above Edward Said's Orientalism has amassed vociferous reactions since its publication. The controversial backstage of these reactions has taken various shapes and colors. Some have stressed the generalization and systematic nature of lumping Orientalism in monolithic paradigm, and thus ignoring the rich, positive, creative, and diverse contribution that Orientalism has added to the field of Islamic studies and humanities. Edward Said has been sternly attacked for his slack indifference to German and Russian legacy. Others have taken Edwardian thoughts to the tasks, questioning his work's philosophical axioms, some of which we are addressing in the rest of this paper.

One of the poignant names in western academia that seriously addressed Edward Said's work is Robert Irwin – indeed among others – Irwin

has strenuously suspected Said's (taking cue from Foucault) association between discourse and power to vindicate his [un]tenable Orientalism and Imperialism claims, for different reasons. Working on imperialist state projects, Irwin notices, few Orientalists had succumbed to conflict of interest, but many others did not. While few were openly racists – like Renan and Gaubineau – most were not. On the contrary many were fascinated by the Orient and Islam, and though some of their scholarship may have been affected by stereotypes and prejudices, there is no evidence to back up Said's ideas that all of their works did fall to such scholarship's defects. Irwin emphasises the fact that Orientalists' works do not see an overall unitary scientific cloak, thus the link between discourse and power (in Foucaultian themes) is nuanced, if not flawed.

Like any other academic field, Irwin recalls, Orientalism takes changing paradigms seriously and marches through contentions and criticism rather than complacent agreement and approval.<sup>33</sup>

Said's recourse to the language of discourse and power was not clear-cut according to Irwin. In some occasions Said felt desperate to express the inescapable system of thought Orientalists were forced into, on the other hand, however, he sometimes blamed them for irresistibly forging the scientific staple of Orientalism's discourse. Irwin accurately refers to the tension and ambiguity in Said's allusions to the views of Foucault and Gramsci, which have undermined Said's arguments.<sup>34</sup>

Irwin got away with some ideas that weakened Said's themes and generalizations on Orientalists but the question raised by some western academics is whether Irwin has taken down Said bigger concern that western imperialism has gathered a racist and inferior stance in its discourse on Islam and the Muslim world? For many western scholars, observers, and specialists Irwin has not.

Kheith Windshuttle who had been reported in an interview called "Edward Said: Due Consideration"<sup>35</sup> considered that Edward Said's notion that Western culture has needed an 'Other' to define its own identity derives from the structuralist

version of Freudian theory that became prominent in France in the 1960s...This is a central concept of Said's thesis but, unfortunately, according to Windshuttle, it leads him into a direct contradiction with one of his core methodological dicta: his rejection of essentialism. In the afterword to the 1995 edition of *Orientalism*, he (Said) says [his] own approach is explicitly anti-essentialist. It is difficult, though, to reconcile this assertion with the way he characterizes Western identity. He argues that, from its origins, the West's self-concept was defined by its opposition to Asia...the claim that every culture needs to be defined by an Other... is not an historical statement at all, but an epistemological assumption derived from structuralist theory... Europeans do not primarily draw their identity from comparisons with other cultures. Instead, identity comes from their own heritage... Western identity is overwhelmingly defined by historical references to its earlier selves, rather than by geographical comparisons with others. To claim otherwise is to deny the central thrust of Western education for the past one thousand years.<sup>36</sup>

We encounter another philosophical divide. Said is not working with a self-identity of a self-contained thing. He is working with a revised--non essentialist---Hegelian relational identity, in which identity comes through the ongoing development of relationships. The classic example is Hegel's old Master/Slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. What this means is that the West defines itself in relation to Islam; ie., to what it is not. There is a long historical and mostly antagonistic relationship between Western nations and Islamic ones.<sup>37</sup>

The critiques addressed to Said's work stated above are not exhaustive. Other critiques and observations by Bernard Louis, Albert Hourani, Michael Richardson, Ibn Warraq and many others have also appeared in other works, academic papers, periodicals and journals that precipitated Said's *Orientalism*.

### *Conclusion*

Any one concerned with the study of

*Orientalism* objectively and scientifically, will not hesitate to link western knowledge of the Orient -or *Orientalism*- to power and imperialism. Balfour and Lord Cromer, both graduates of prestigious British academic institutions, did not only serve Britain's colonies but also had left their knowledge, expertise and *savoir-faire* in thick hard-backs depicting the Orient, specifically Egypt and India. Napoleon in his conquest of Egypt in 1798 was heavily influenced by French Orientalists who had before the conquest traveled to Egypt and again reported their knowledge and experience in big volumes. To disassociate *Orientalism* from power and the ingrained intention of the west, as Said rightly stressed, to represent, absorb, report back, dominate, improve and even swallow this Orient is to deny the obvious. In addition, one can not but agree that some Orientalists' works did tremendous favor to Islamic history and studies, and possibly some were fascinated by Islam or Muslims, yet we can not disregard the fact that their endeavours flip into the machine-slot of a general schemata and paradigm characterising the studies and analyses of something called the Orient, and thus rendering apt services to the big and dominant powers. Edward Said had already consented to the fact that *Orientalism* did a great many things. As he stated, "During its great age in the nineteenth century it produced scholars; it increased the number of languages taught in the West and the quantity of manuscripts edited, translated, and commented on; in many cases, it provided the Orient with sympathetic European students, genuinely interested in such matters as Sanskrit, grammar, Phoenician numismatics, and Arabic poetry."<sup>38</sup> *Orientalism*, epistemologically speaking had left massive production and impression on the Orient's scientific efforts. Yet -and here we must be very clear, asserts E. Said, "*Orientalism* overrode the Orient. As a system of thought about the Orient, it always rose from the specifically human detail to the general transhuman one; an observation about a tenth-century Arab poet multiplied itself into a policy towards (and about) the Oriental mentality in Egypt, Iraq, or Arabia. Similarly a verse from the Koran would be

considered the best evidence of an ineradicable Muslim sensuality."<sup>38</sup>

Also, to state that the west has never been concerned with identifying itself through its legacy and history away from Islam or the Orient is anything but close to reality and truth. The west's ever-long concern to preserve its identity in the face of competing ones (especially Islam) had been marked throughout the course of history and this was especially reflected in the crusading wars and the dark nights of colonisation to borrow Frantz Fanon words. Edward Said was anything but close to essentialism and generalization, Orientalism, however, largely was in its dealings with the Orient and Orientals.

Perhaps one might reach out to the most objective critiques facing Said's 'Orientalism', some of which said that Said's attitude towards the

'Orient' as an imaginary textual making permits him to avoid any observations as to whether the knowledge produced looks like the *real* Middle East. The assumption would be that *Orientalism* (Said's work) has no scope to be able to pass judgement on the truth of Orientalists' representations. Yet, judgement is passed, according to what Said decides is in keeping with his own understanding of the Middle East. Such a stance makes it a 'catch all critique' allowing Said to drop off what he finds objectionable and to accord whatever he approves'.<sup>39</sup> Said had been challenged into giving the Orient the chance to represent itself, which he ultimately refused, and thus declining the same demand if undertaken by integrate, unbiased, and neutral Western scholarships.<sup>40</sup> But a question begs another one: who is to warrant such integrate and unbiased scholarships?

*References:*

- <sup>1</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (Vintage Books Edition London, October 1979), pp.12-13.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>3</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, pp.2-3.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp.12-13.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp, 130-40.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp, 156-66
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp 188-95.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid, pp, 206-7.
- <sup>20</sup> Edward Said is alluding to Renan's work: *Histoire générale et système comparé des langues sémitiques*. <sup>21</sup>Ibid., P 142.
- <sup>22</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 134-135.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>24</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, (Penguin Classics, 1994), pp.46-7.
- <sup>25</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, pp.157-8.
- <sup>26</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (trans. Alan Sheridan, New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), pp. 193-4, and reproduced in *Orientalism*, p.360.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>28</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (Vintage Books London, 1994), pp.113-15.
- <sup>29</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 67-9.
- <sup>30</sup> Edward Said, *Power, Politics, And Culture*, (Vintage Books New York, 2001), pp.30-31.
- <sup>31</sup> Michel Foucault's characterisation of an archive can be found in the Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language, (trans. A, M Sheridan Smith and Rupert Sawyer New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), see *Orientalism*, p.361.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>33</sup> Robert Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents*, (The Overlook Press, November 2006), pp34-35.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>35</sup> See the interview on <http://www.sauer-thompson.com/archives/philosophy/000908.html>, 30-11-2016
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>38</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, p96.
- <sup>39</sup> Michael Richardson, *Enough Said: Reflections on Orientalism*, (Anthropology Today, Vol. 6 No. 4 August, 1990) p. 19, taken from an article: 'Orientalism Revisited',  
see: <http://www.al-bab.com/arab/articles/text/orientalism.htm> 30-11-2016
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.,