
Review Of the Book “Orientalism” By Edward W. Said

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Abstract:

This study took into account very systematic but prejudiced study of the Orient, particularly the Near East and Islam, by the Occidental academic, intellectual and political scholarship as has been superbly enunciated in Edward Said’s “Orientalism”--- one of the most influential texts written in the last quarter of the 20th century. To the West, the Orient is a static and lifeless entity so it cannot speak or represent itself; thus it must be represented. So, for this purpose, the West developed a system of “representations”, “cultural hegemony”, and “particular powerful vocabulary” that continued from Barthelemy d’ Herbelot to Silvestre de Sacy and from Carl Marx to Bernard Lewis. The Orient was then defined “by a set of recurring images and clichés and this knowledge of the Orient was put into practice by colonialism and imperialism”¹. In this way, the Orientalists comprising of historians, sociologists, anthropologists, linguists, administrators, politicians and economists made strenuous efforts to prove Western “authority and suzerainty” viz-a-viz the “lowly, inferior, and illogical” Orient. This study tries to highlight that how superbly and indefatigably Edward Said has examined this whole politico-intellectual project of the West in order to prove the Orient a “worthless Other” and “an Outsider and weak partner”. Moreover, this study endeavours to explain that this devious stratagem on the part of the Western “nexus of power and knowledge”² is still going on for “Orientalizing the Orientals”.

Key Words: Islam, Orient, Occident, West, Near East, Orientalism

This study will contain two parts: first part contains an introduction to “*Orientalism*”; and the part second deals with the criticism thereof.

Introduction to “Orientalism”

¹ S. R. Moosavinia, et al, “Edward Said’s Orientalism and the Study of the Self and the Other in Orwell’s *Burmese Days*,” *Studies In Literature And Language* 2, No. 1, (Jan.-July, 2011): pp. 103-113, ISSN 1923-1563.

² Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1978), p.27.

“Orientalism is a long, complex and sometimes difficult book, and it is therefore not easy to summarize in a way that does it justice”³.

The “Orientalism” contains three chapters and a long introduction spanning 28 pages and an afterword of 26 pages. The introduction has three parts with part III being the longest one.

In *part I* of the **Introduction**, Edward Said variously define the term orientalism *as an instance: “a way dealing with the Orient, colonial areas of the Occident especially of France and Britain in Asia and Africa, by Western intellectual tradition” and “a mode of discourse by which the Orient is explored by using numerous tools and techniques employed by the colonial powers resulting in ontological and epistemological distinction between the Orient and the Occident.”* After WWII, the USA has dominated the Orient and Orientalism. The whole network of Western genre about the Orient tends to limitimize the work done by any Orientalist.

In *part II*, Said opines that the Orientalism is a real project of power and dominance commenced by various Western historians, philologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and novelists and a complicated system of hegemony as has been described by Ontanio Gramsci.

Part III commences with the assumption that socio-political and dogmatic background of a writer influences his work; so the Orientalists being the part of the Occident have a sense of superiority viz-a-viz the Orientals. The rise of imperialism paved the way for British, American and French writers to produce their imaginative and intellectual work as a proof for their superiority. Said takes the experience of these trio powers of the Orient particularly of the Arabs and Islam as the starting point of Orientalism. *“As the Orient cannot represent itself so it should be represented”*; so, a system of superficial *“representations”* was developed by an army of Western writers. Hence, the Orient was seen by the spectacles of such sort of texts only. Thus, one can have “a linguistic Orient”, “A Freudian Orient”, “a Darwinian Orient” but not a real, pure and unconditional Orient. Said describes that one’s own *“identity or reality”* should be the starting point of any critical description. In the end, he hopes that his study may become an instrument in obliterating the dichotomy of *“the Orient”* and *“the Occident”* which would pave the way for what Raymond William calls *“unlearning of the inherent dominative mode.”*

Chapter I describes the scope of Orientalism. It comprises of four parts.

³ Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 184.

Part I commences with the mention of the speech of Arthur James Balfour made in the first quarter of the 20th century before the House of Commons which actually defines the position of the Orient as against the Occident. Balfour maintained that the Egypt should thank its master, the UK, for making its survival possible because in the words of Lord Cromer, who ruled in Egypt and India, Egyptians were “*lethargic, illogical, inferior, depraved and inveterate*” as contrast to the British are “*wise, superior, logical and accurate.*” Thus the Orient’s identity owes much to the Orientalists by whose creative works it has been identified or created.

With Napoleons occupation of Egypt begins the “*modern Orientalism*” and the Orientalists started to illustrate their “*experiences, discoveries and insights*” in modern terms. Various societies were established in the UK, the USA and France in order to disseminate Orientalism. Orientalism being “*a political vision of reality*” and having belief in “*geopolitical distinction*”⁴ divided the world into two halves: “*the developed and the developing*” states; hence widening the gap between the East and West.

Part II states that Orientalism started with the decision of the *Church Council of Vienna in 1312* to establish a series of chairs of Arabic, Hebrew, Greek and Syriac at Paris, Oxford, Bologna and Avignon. Then, Orientalists coined “*unshakable abstract maxims*” about the Orient and in this effort second rate knowledge along with the positive knowledge was collected which has been rightly called by V.G. Kiernan “*Europe’s collective day-dream of the Orient*”. Said also says that since the time of Greek and Roman civilizations, the Orient has been seen through the lens of history, fables, the stereotype and polemical confrontations. So, the West has done so considering the East particularly Islam, a threat to its established view of things. Islam, to them a misguided version of Christianity, drew the hatred of Orientalists and the Prophet of Islam was called “*imposter and heretic.*” In this way, the Orient was given a concrete shape in the form of Muhammad and the Orient became a stage where figures appear and represent it but this stage (closed field) was affixed to Europe. Literary like Shakespeare, Marlow, and Milton used rich Eastern repertoire (Sphinx, Cleopatra, and Muhammad etc.) for their productions. Published posthumously in 1697, “*Bibliothèque Orientale*” remained a reference work not only to Europeans but also a source of “*Orientalizing the Orient*” in which the author Barthelemy d’Herbolt divided history into two parts: sacred and profane with the Jews and the Christians in

⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p.12.

the first part and the Muslims in the second. The presence and punishment of Prophet Muhammad in the 8th of the 9 circles of Dante's inferno shows the working of "*Western imaginative geography*" which according to Henry Pirenne turns Islam into the very "*epitome of outsider*" against which the whole European civilization from the Middle Ages on founded. A bulk of special vocabulary to present the Orient was built and then Renaissance transferred it to the posterity.

Part III examines the upshots of this act of "*Orientalizing the Orient*" by providing material evidence of the Occident's advance to the Orient by means of "*dreams, images, vocabulary and systematic approach.*" Simon Ockley's "*History of Saracens*" became the 1st major work of Orientalism in which Islam was called "*outrageous heresy*". Napoleons foray into Egypt was preceded by two major Orientalists namely Anquetil and William Jones. Both of them went to the Orient without any preparation but Napoleon did full-scale preparation before invading Egypt for it "*nurtured in his mind via the text of the Orientalists*". Napoleon was much influenced by the Comte de Volney's "*Voyage en Egypte et en Syrie*" which contained hostile attitude towards Islam. He popularized himself by gaining the support of Imams and Qadis of Egypt. Side by side, he established an institution containing historians, anthropologists, chemists and biologists who wrote important account of what they "*said, saw or studied*" in "*Description de l'Egypte*"--- a compendium of France's supremacy and Egypt's frailness, barbarism and obscurity and its dependence on the West to regain its classical grandeur.

Part IV starts with the assumption that a text has a tremendous impact upon one's personality hence leading one to adopt almost "*textual attitude*". Napoleon and de Lesseps knew the Orient through texts. That is why writers like William Jones, Franz Bopp, and Frederic Schlegel wrote to prove the lowly status of Orient's languages and accorded transcendental position to European languages. Similarly, other Orientalists namely Renan, Humboldt, Lane, Muir, Dozy, Hugo, Lamartine, Nerval, Scott, Byron, and George Eliot tried to prove the Orient especially the Islamic Orient a static or dead civilization to be unearthed by their writings. By the end of the 19th century, these textual successes were reinforced by the actual domination of the Near East by France and Britain. Said call this nexus of politics and academics a "*crisis*" regarding dealing with the Orient in the history of the West. And this crisis dramatizes the difference between texts and realities.

Chapter II bears the title “Orientalism: structures and re-structures”. It has four parts.

Part I explores four factors of 18th century Western thought viz. “*expansion, historical confrontation, sympathy and classification*” that served the basis for modern Orientalism. Now, China and Japan were also included in the Orient along with Islam. Second, the Europe-Orient relationships were redefined. Third, the notion of human association got popularity. Fourth, the older idea of classification was replaced by new types. It does not mean that Orientalism relinquished her centuries old paradigm but it was reconstituted in the light of above stated secular framework in order to “*transporting the Orient into modernity.*”

Part II starts with the narration of carrier and achievements of “Silvestre de Sacy” and “Ernest Renan”. The former—the father of Orientalism—was regularly consulted on public policy matters after the conquest of Egypt by Napoleon. He was well versed in many languages including the Arabic which opened the Orient before Sacy. Sacy says that “*he has brought to light with powerful vocabulary and unflinching fortitude a vast amount of his subject matter i.e. the Orient*” to place it before his students. His notable work “*Chrestomathre Arabe*” canonizes the Orient. That is the reason that every famous Arabist in the 19th century “*traced his intellectual authority back to Sacy.*” Ernest Renan denies the divine origin of languages. He places the Semitic languages at lowly place and to him the libraries, laboratories and museums are the right places for their analysis and exhibition. His linguistics presented the notion of the dichotomy of the languages: *Indo-European and Semitic Oriental*; the former being live and organic one and the latter being dead and inorganic hence incapable of self-regeneration. Resultantly, Semites are non-living creature.

Part III narrates the impact of the philological studies that led the Orient mind and race to a lowly position. The work of William Muir and Reinhart show an antipathy towards Islam and Arabs. As an instance, Muir wrote “*the sword of Muhammad and the Koran are the most stubborn enemies of Civilization, Liberty and Truth which the world has yet known.*” This shows that the ideas of “*inequality and paradoxes are the hallmark of Orientalism.*” Even Marx supported the presence of England in India for the sake of “*social revolution*”. Said is of the view that “*Sacy and Renan*” and “*Anquetil and William Jones*” form two traditions to be followed by the new generation of Orientalists whom even Marx was unable to avoid. Various classifications, codes, commentaries, translations and periodical reviews were used to *present* the Orient before the

Occidental readership. Hence, *“by the mid of the nineteenth century the Orient had become, as Disraeli said, a career, one in which one could remake and restore not only the Orient but also one self.”*

In *part IV* Said says that the Orient was a pilgrimage place wherein the British and the French writers came as pilgrims. The former wrote about their possessions as a reality and the latter wrote about the Orient in the backdrop of their defeats, memories and ruins. However, *“citations of the predecessor scholars”* became a significant tradition in order to make onward march of the Orientalism. So, Said quotes from French authors like Lamartine, Flaubert and Chateaubriand who degraded the Orient and Islam in their work and illustrated that the Orient could not be survived without the Western occupation. Similarly, Walter Scott’s *“The Talisman”* and *“Count Robert of Paris”* have been set in *“Crusader Palestine and 11th century Byzantine.”* Disraeli’s *“Tancred”* and George Eliot’s *“Denial Deronda”* have Oriental prejudices and Burton’s authoritative tone is manifested by *“Pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina”*. In other words, these writers lost their personal tendencies for the sake of their role as *“an imperial scribe”*. It is worthwhile to note that 20th century has inherited this legacy of Orientalism, too.

Chapter III namely *“Orientalism Now”* contains four parts.

Part I discusses the *“abstract, dilatory and projective aspects of Orientalism”* commences in the later part of the 19th century which served as momentous background for the 20th century crises of Orientalism and the resurgence of cultural and political power in the Orient. Said is of the view that constant and unconscious form of Orientalism is *“Latent Orientalism”* whereas *“Manifest Orientalism”* is characterized by many changes and views of the Orientalists about the religion, literature, history and society of the Orient. The former was used by universities, poets, explorational and geographical organizations by which any upheaval in the empire was avoided. The later was used by pilgrims, travellers and statesmen and the like; it was a sort of hermeneutical relationship between the Orient and Orientalism. Sometimes both these methods of Orientalism converge resulting in disintegration of Asia and the dominance of the West. That is why every writer from Renan to Marx, from Lane to Sacy and Flaubert to Nerval saw the Orient to be re-thought and re-constructed by the Westerners. Similarly, the idea of *“social segregation”* put forward by Robert Knox, Cuvier and Gobineau rarely saw the Orient not as

people but problems to be solved. Theoder Noldeke, Lord Curzon, and Cromer also have “*low opinion*” about the Orient.

Part II describes the style, expertise and vision of early 20th century Orientalism of France and Britain. As an instance Kipling’s famous character the “White Man” is a prototype of a tangible representation of British Empire because of particular traits he has. Making generalizations like “*ours*” and “*theirs*” is the hallmark of the whole history of Orientalism; so, writers like Ruskin, Mill, Carlyle, and Comte has supported this divide. Similarly, other 20th century writers like T.E. Lawrence and W.B. Yeats wrote that Arabs had centuries of experience but no wisdom. This was also true for the 19th century writers like Renan, Marx, Lane, Flaubert and Lamartine who wrote “*an Oriental was first Oriental and only second a man*”. Smith criticizes the Prophet of Islam for giving protection to the “*barbaric ideas and prejudices*” for the promotion of his religion. Though, in the early 20th century, the Orient was assigned new job of “*performance and activity*” but it did not mean total freedom. For example, T.E. Lawrence’s work tries to resurrect the lifeless Orient but on his own terms and this style and vision of Lawrence brings Asia closer to Europe but for a while. This reality is also corroborated by the ending of the E.M. Foster’s “*A Passage to India*” where Aziz and Fielding attempt but fail at reconciliation. Similarly, John Buchan put it in 1922: “*Chinese are nothing but a hoard of directionless souls whose collective efforts are futile and the world laughs at China.*”⁵ Valantine Chirol said in his series of lectures that “*Muhammdanism was great world force*” responsible for “*the deepest line of cleavage*” in the world. Faur wrote that the Orientals are lazy and until they do not get developed there “can be no rapprochement between the East and the West.”

Part III investigates the change that took place in the history of *Orientalism* “*between the periods immediately before and after the World War I.*” Hurgronje is of the view that East-West relations are sine qua non in order to maintain “*European suzerainty*”; while H.A.R. Gibb in “*The Legacy of Islam*” says that the Orient’s literature should be read “*for its own sake*”. It looks, in *this “new rising dialect*”, the Orient is a partner for it has now become a sort of challenge that it was not before and secondly, the West is facing new epoch of “*cultural crisis*” because it is losing control over its colonies. However, French author Louis Massignon accuses the West for colonizing the Orient and its relentless attacks on Islam. He was of the view that France should help the

⁵ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p.251

Orientalists' rehabilitation. H.A.R. Gibb wrote an essay in 1951 namely "*The Near East and the Great Powers*" in which he emphasized that new relationship with Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe should be maintained. Gibb was much influenced by Duncan Macdonald—pioneer of Islamic and Arabic Studies in the USA. Duncan commented positively about Islam as a way of life in his famous book viz. "*The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*." In this book, Duncan opines that the main difference between the East and the West is that the former takes life as a whole and has firm belief in "*a single idea*" (that is the *Unseen*); whereas the later does not have such dogmas. So, there is no wonder when Gibb said that Islam was an eternal Oriental fact. That is why Gibb lauds Islam's universality and the status of minorities therein. To Gibb, Islam is handy in its modern form as it is a "*complement and counterbalance to European civilization*." After Massignon and Gibb, two ecumenical authorities of European Orientalism, American social sciences replaced the European Orientalism.

Part IV bears the title "*The Last Phase*". It starts with the mention of the removal of Britain and France from the world stage and its replacement by the USA in the backdrop of WWII and Arab-Israel War. Now the oil producer "*lecherous, blood thirsty and dishonest*"⁶ Arabs are represented through caricatures and cartoons in American media. Islam, Quran, Prophet of Islam and the Arabs were degraded. Professor Morroe Berger following Renan wrote that the Orient could not be understood without his "*meditating and interpretive role*"---- the centuries old stance that the Orient can only be defined by the Orientalists. Mocking images of Islam and the Prophet by the Western media has academic support, in fact. Professor Berger has transformed Orientalism from a philological discipline into a social science. In 1842, John Pickering addressing to the first annual meeting of American Oriental Society said that "*The USA is following the European powers in the study of the Orient*". That is why the USA, after the WWI and WWII, manifested her "*new post-war imperial role*." Von Grunebaum relentless attacks on Islam show that he has fallen prey to the old Orientalism tradition and his Islam is also "*monolithic, reductive and unchanging*" like his predecessors. This view of Von was highly criticized by Abdullah Laroui--- a Moroccan historian. Islam is being represented as "*an unrelieved chronology of battles, reigns, deaths, rises and heydays*"⁷ and astonishingly the Golden Age of Abbasid period from 8th century to 11th century is totally ignored. Koenig report of 1976 shows that Israel followed the

⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p.286.

⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p.303.

Orientalism so far his policies towards Palestinians are concerned. Raphael Patai, Sania Hamady and Bernard Lewis followed their predecessors when they proclaimed: *“the world is my idea”* and *“Islam is an anti-Semitic ideology”* not mere a religion. The term *“the Arabs”* is being used for dumbness and sluggishness. In the last part of his book, Said says that the Orient is *“itself a constituted entity”* and the Orientalism in spite of all its flaws and failures still exists. The fact is that Orientalism has adapted itself to new imperialism of the USA to dominate Asia especially the Middle East. Because of this new strategy of Orientalism, *“Arab world today is an intellectual, political and cultural satellite of the USA.”* The result is that the students of oriental studies still have to sit before American orientalists because of the absence of a Muslim challenging place viz-a-viz Harvard or Oxford. Said also says that Orientalism will not be unchallenged as is evident form the work of *“anthropologist Cliffered Greetz whose interest in Islam is discrete and concrete enough to be animated by specific societies and not by the rituals, preoccupations and doctrines of Orientalism”*. On the other hand, the stance of scholars and critic like Jacques Berque and Maxime Rodinson is a sort of *“instructive correctives”* to the study of the so-called Oriental problems. Last but not the least, *“If the knowledge of Orientalism has any meaning, it is in being a reminder of the seductive degradation of knowledge, of any knowledge, anywhere, at any time.”*⁸

Criticism of “Orientalism”

In the simplest way the term *“Orientalism”* means the scornful portrayal of the East i.e. the Orient by the West i.e. the Occident and the latter’s political and cultural superiority upon the former.⁹ *“Orientalism”* is a groundbreaking and seminal work of Edward Said and has gained a prominent place in the realm of literature, political science and philosophy. Moreover, it has become a foundational text in the field of Post-colonial Studies. This notable book by using tenets and principles of post-structuralism/post-modernism has left indelible imprints on the development of *“literary theory, cultural criticism and Middle Eastern Studies.”* and castigates the entire his history of Occidental study of Islamic culture and society. That is why this book of

⁸ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p.328.

⁹ Mart Çağrı Tuğrul, et al., *“Criticism on Edward Said’s Orientalism,”* 2nd International Symposium on Sustainable Development, (June 8-9, 2010): P.367.

Said is regarded as “milestone text,” “pathbreaking,” “seminal critique,” “monumental,” and “tour de force.”¹⁰

Orientalism endeavours to present before his reader a complete picture of insolent and contemptuous political cum intellectual attitude of the Occidental powers particularly Britain, France and the USA that they had during the last about three hundred years viz-a-viz the Orient. In this race, an army of poets, philologists, anthropologists, chemists, historians, novelists, playwrights, sociologists, and even colonial administrators took their proper part in order to prove the “cultural hegemony”, as has been put forward by Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci, of the West as against the East in a well-knitted discourse spanning over three centuries. During this whole course of history, the Orient and the paraphernalia thereof was presented as something of lowly and scornful origin by representing it through “orientalists’ texts.” and it was as a matter of fact, was not the “natural depiction of the Orient”. Little by little, this “deliberately demeaning textual representation of the Orient” got the status of “truths” and the Orient particularly the Near East and Islam were seen by the spectacles of the Occidental texts resulting in disdain and disrespect of the Prophet of Islam and disciples thereof. Thus, it can be said that Orientalism is not a pure but political knowledge which is based more on fantasies and imaginations. In other words, Orientalism is all about politics of Knowledge.¹¹ The very nexus of Imperialism and Orientalism produced a class of Orientalists who consciously or unconsciously paved the way for the colonization of the Orient.¹²

The Orient is being represented by Western authors, print and electronic media as stereotypes. Various types of clichés and vocabulary used by the Orientalists have played an important role in presenting the Orientals’ society, culture, history and religion in accordance with their own rules and principles. About 60,000 thousand books written by the European Orientalists about the Near East¹³ are an obvious proof of their indomitable will and unflinching fortitude that they have shown in order to prove the Orient “sluggish, inferior, and lowly”. So, Said, in this backdrop of the strategy adopted by the colonial powers, make an impugn of social, historical,

¹⁰ Daniel Martin Varisco, Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid London (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2007), p. 80-90.

¹¹ . Amal Rassam, et al. “Comments on Orientalism” Comparative Studies in Society and History 22 No..4 (April, 1980), pp.505-512

¹² . Ibid. 506.

¹³ Edward W. Said, Orientalism, p.204.

political, anthropological and other literature written by France, Britain and the USA about the Orient ranging from 18th century to the present times.¹⁴ Professor Landow opines:

“In fact the book’s final section, “Orientalism Now,” addressed the ways in which, from the late nineteenth century down to the present, Orientalism had been a form of knowledge which authorized and justified the assertion of Western power over the predominantly Arab and Muslim lands of Western Asia and North Africa.”¹⁵

However, Said is of the view, “*this schematization of the entire Orient*” goes back to the Classical Greek period. As an instance, Aeschylus in his famous tragedy “The Persian” describes the overwhelming defeat of the Xerxes, the then king of Persia, by the Greeks. The ode sang by the chorus at this defeat clearly manifests the reality that “Asia speaks through and by virtue of the European imagination.”¹⁶ “Thus in Aeschylus’s The Persians, Asia is identified as a region associated with emptiness, loss and disaster. In Euripedes’s The Bacchae, it is associated with excess, danger, the demonic and the irrational. In the works of Mediaeval polemicists and theologians, it is associated, through Islam, its latest embodiment, with terror, devastation and an apparently irrational unwillingness to acknowledge the evident truths of Christianity – images later reinforced by the writings of such major Renaissance figures as Ariosto, Shakespeare, Marlow, Milton, Tasso and Cervantes.”¹⁷ The point is that this tradition of showing the Orient (Asia, the East, and Middle East) something of low and mean background continues till today through the weapon of Orientalism and American Orientalists are playing their part in this regard. Hence, following the Michael Foucault’s theory that “*knowledge is always connected to power*,” Said makes a relentless and close analysis of the literary texts, travel writings, and numerous European documents to unmask a cultural description which was deeply related to politics and strategies of power.¹⁸

Some scholars are of the view that as “Orientalism” of Said talks about the Occidental “*representations*” of the Orient for the sake of the promotion and success of the Western needs and projects, so this book can be taken as a work which has its own representations and purposes

¹⁴. Mart Çağrı Tuğrul, et al., “*Criticism on Edward Said’s Orientalism*, P. 368.

¹⁵. Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, p. 189

¹⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p.56.

¹⁷. A.L. Macfie, *Orientalism* (New York: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), p. 88-89.

¹⁸ Harry Oldmeadow, *The Debate About Orientalism* (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004), p 3-19.

like Arab political issues. So, this book should be reviewed in terms of its own purposes and representations.¹⁹ Bernard Lewis too gives the rebuttal of the stance taken by Edward Saeed and argues for an approach which falls, to a greater or lesser extent, into the Orientalist type.²⁰ Ziauddin Sardar in his recent work namely “*Orientalism*” maintains that there is nothing regarding orientalism that is objective or neutral. By definition it is a subject that entails the seeds of partiality, partisanship.²¹

The main argument against Said’s account of Orientalism has been one of historical errors.²² David Kopf in “Hermeneutics versus History” opines that Edward Said’s critique of the Orientalism lacks historical exactitude and accuracy. In particular, Said misunderstood the character of British Orientalism in the Indian-Subcontinent. In fact, by the presence of British Hindu religion, culture and national consciousness get impetus and were reconstructed.²³

Bernard Lewis, a well-known British-American historian famous for his expertise in Oriental Studies and history of Islam criticizes Said’s “Orientalism” for it contains so many factual and conceptual errors. Said does not give a satisfactory answer to the question as to why British and French pursued the study of Islam in the 16th and 17th centuries, very long before they had any hope of conquering the Orient particularly the Middle East. Said willfully ignores many genuine efforts of writers of Enlightenment and Victorian periods who contributed a lot towards the study of Eastern culture and society. Said also ignores the contributions of Dutch, German and Italian intellectuals in Orientalism. Said does not explain why much of such sort of Orientalist study did nothing to promote the cause of Imperialism.²⁴ Lewis also opines that “*what imperial purpose was served by deciphering the Egyptian language, as an instance, and then restoring to the Egyptians knowledge of and pride in their forgotten ancient past.*”²⁵ Furthermore, Lewis

¹⁹ Harry Oldmeadow, *The Debate About Orientalism*, p.509.

²⁰ Fred Halliday, “Orientalism and Its Critics,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20, No.2, (Dec.1983): pp.145-163.

²¹ Ziauddin Sardar, *Orientalism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999), P.75.

²² Fikret GÜVEN, Criticism to Edward W. Said’s Orientalism, *RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies* No. 15, (June, 2019): p. 420.

²³ David Kopf, “Hermeneutics versus History”. *Orientalism: A Reader*. Ed. A. L. Macfie. New York: New York University Press. *Journal of Asian Studies* 39, No. 3, (Jan. 2000): pp. 500-505.

²⁴ Bernard Lewis, *The Questions of Orientalism* (The New York Review, 1982), pp.49-56.

²⁵ Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.126.

condemns Said for politicizing the scientific study of the Middle East; deliberately neglecting the intellectual findings of the Orientalists and giving free rein to his prejudices.²⁶

British historian Robert Irwin in one of his notable books *“Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and its Discontents”* calls into question the very thesis of Said that every European was racist, an imperialist and almost entirely ethnocentric. Irwin examines that before the arrival of the terms like *“third-worldism”* and *“post-colonialism”* entered the circles academic scholarships, many Orientalists were staunch supporters of Arab and Islamic political causes. However, the stance taken by Irwin is criticized by Lockman in the following words:

“He displays an ad hominem animus toward Edward W. Said that strikes me as both excessive and intellectually counterproductive”²⁷

Daniel Martin Varisco has referred to the comments of various writers who belittled Said’s Orientalism by saying that it is: *“deeply flawed and deeply disturbing,”* *“deconstructive reflection,”* and *“political fiction that is at the same time an act of scholarly violence.”*²⁸

George Paul Landow, a pioneer in criticism and theory of electronic literature, hypertext and hyper media, rebukes Said for neglecting non-Western Imperialism and non-Arab Asian countries in the mention of the Orient or the East; he also finds its political focus pernicious to the students of literature because it has led to the political study of literature. Moreover, Landow maintains that Said has not given value to the views of other scholars while doing analysis of the Orientalists’ work. Therefore, he committed *“the greatest single scholarly sin”* in his Orientalism. Ibn Warraq in his famous book namely *“Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said’s Orientalism”* criticizes Said for regularly producing ostentatious, meaningless and contradictory statements. Like a slick post-modernist, Said emphasized that the Orient does not exist but is rather the paranoid construction of the Orientalists. According to Ibn Warraq, the thesis of Said against the West has many flaws; Said has not only deliberately misinterprets the work of many Western scholars but also has systematically misinterpreted the Western civilization as a whole. In a 2009 review of the above said book of Ibn Warraq, A. J. Caschetta concluded that "Ibn Warraq's critique of Said's thought and work is out and out convincing, indeed devastating to

²⁶ Bernard Lewis, *The Questions of Orientalism*, pp. 49-56.

²⁷ Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, p. xiii.

²⁸ Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid*, pp.81-90.

anyone depending on Saidism.²⁹ David Pryce-Jones says that Warraq "demolishes in close detail the Saidian'narrative."³⁰

Wael B. Hallaq in his famous work namely "Restating Orientalism: A Critique of Modern Knowledge" criticizes Said's stance on Orientalism in the following words:

"Orientalism as an institutional and thought structure was, contra Said, more about the Orient itself and the material, physical, and psychoepistemic reproduction of it than it was a distortion and a textually reconstructive form of "knowledge and scholarship."³¹

He further says:

"Furthermore, Orientalism was reduced to a rudimentary political concept and political enterprise, because Said himself, after all, was heavily inclined to this view of reality; and his book is replete with statements that amply attest to this fact."³²

Edward Said in "*Orientalism Reconsidered*" giving an answer to the critics of his "Orientalism" opines:

"I think that two things are especially important one, a methodological vigilance that construes Orientalism less as a positive than as a critical discipline and therefore makes it subject to intense scrutiny, and two, a determination not to allow the segregation and confinement of the Orient to go on without challenge. My understanding of this second point has led me entirely to refuse designations like 'Orient' and 'Occident'."

In the "Afterword" of the book, Said denies his "*alleged anti-Westernism.*"; *also, he repudiates "to be a supporter of Islamism or Muslim fundamentalism."*³³ He also says that he has no interest in showing "*what the true Orient or Islam*" are; nor he wants to defend the Orient or Islam. Thus,

²⁹ . A. J. Caschetta, "Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism," Middle East Quarterly, Vol. XVI, No. 1, (Dec. 2009): p.121.

³⁰ . David Pryce-Jones "Enough Said," The New Criterion, January 2008.

³¹ . Wael B. Hallaq, Restating Orientalism: A Critique of Modern Knowledge (New York: Columbia University Press New York, 2018), p.57.

³² Wael B. Hallaq, Restating Orientalism: A Critique of Modern, p.58.

³³ Edward W. Said, Orientalism, p.330-331.

from these statements of Said, it becomes crystal clear that he has nothing to do with Islam or the Orient. As a matter of fact, through his impartial inquiry of the whole project of Orientalism, he just wants to end this tradition of Orientalists that use derogatory language and other pernicious methods to prove the Orientals “a lesser breed of human beings.”³⁴ This not only exposes the “misrepresentations and falsifications that ensue”³⁵ but also the so-called intellectuals that produce such things as the “Orient” or the “West.” On the Contrary, Said is interested in freeing both human thought and relationship thereof from the “effects of imperialistic shackles.”³⁶ So that, the dichotomy of “the Orient” and “the Occident” may be obliterated from the Globe and all nations irrespective of their origin can enjoy real respect and freedom to make progress under the sun.

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³⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p.341.

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³⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, p.354.

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