

Chapter 11

Said's Worldliness

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What makes someone worldly? Is it the circumstances they are born into; the rising upper class of the post colonial elite into which one is born; or is worldliness a characteristic that one can become qualified for through efforts in their own lifetime? Edward Said certainly was born into worldliness, but what made him into a worldly critic? In this essay, I show that exile was his chosen domain. He arrived at this elective placelessness circuitously, by working through brief engagements with philosophies including phenomenology and Marxism before reaching his classic formulation: “he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.”

He made a point of being unsettled. Sent away from his family in Cairo, he was exiled to Mt. Hermon Academy in northern Massachusetts for high school and then stayed on for college at Princeton and, after a gap year being groomed to take over his father's business in Cairo, gave up on that and relocated to Cambridge, Massachusetts to complete his Harvard Ph.D. in literature. He kept moving, never buying an apartment or house nor settling in Palestine, never settling in to the academic specialty that brought him renown. He had, in that sense, not even an intellectual home. The theme of voluntary displacement crops up in all the most incisive scholarship on Said. The first brilliant essay about Said was Bruce Robbins's “Homelessness and Worldliness” and the superb posthumous biography of Said is called *Places of Mind*—notice the plural. He entitled his only autobiography *Out of Place*. Homelessness was, for him, the essential precondition of worldliness, and it is this proposition that will be explored in this essay.

Edward Said's businessman father gave him worldly advantages of all kinds but little in

the way of a home base. Global commercial worldliness was his father's hallmark.¹ This man, Wadie, was a Palestinian who had served in the American military and in consequence held dual American and middle eastern citizenship. He ran a booming international business and introduced American business techniques and machines to Cairo. Said remembered that more traditional Cairene businesspeople criticized his father "for being too much of a 'salesman'—the word taking on a nasty, demeaning aspect as applied to him."² But his father was proud of what he was doing: "what the hell were we all about if not selling, using salesmen with salesmanship to get it done," Wadie replied to his critics.³ This modernizing father "always sought and obtained exclusive representations, so that he in turn could sell these products to other dealers and customers as the local principal," and was a force to globalize Cairo, then "a provincial Third World capital still mired in colonial economics, feudal landowning, and disorganized . . . peddling."⁴ "By the time I left Egypt [1953]," writes Edward, "his had become by far the largest office equipment and stationery business in the Middle East."⁵ His father was a dynamo who advanced the progress of global capital expansion.⁶ But he also embodied the restless searching, even the homelessness, that came to epitomize, for the increasingly literary Said, the essence of the modern novel.

International products and people defined Said's childhood surroundings. Schaeffer pens, Scripp ink, Art Metal steel furniture, Monroe calculators, Sollingen stainless-steel scissors and knives, Ellam's and A. B. Dick duplicators and spirit machines, Maruzen office supplies, Letts diaries, 3M tapes, copiers, and paints, Dictaphone recording and transcribing machines, as well as English franking machines, a Swedish adding machine, a Chicago automatic typewriter, and the Weber-Costello globe.⁷ This chunky, mechanized environment, symbolically brought the world to the Saida's doorstep.

The young Said also knew an impressive range of international actors. At the top was his relative by marriage, the famous Lebanese statesman, Charles Malik.⁸ Humbler but equally vivid were the traveling salesmen. One of them, Alex Kaldor, a frequent visitor to the Said household, struck the young Said as “a Royal typewriter voyageur who lived first-class all across the globe” and as “the first hardbitten cynic and expense account free-loader I met.”⁹ Acknowledging the man’s flaws as a hardbitten cynic and free-loader did nothing to diminish Said’s respect for Kaldor’s freewheeling style and mastery of situations. Said calls this peddler a downscale incarnation of Said’s boyhood hero, the bloody-minded aristocratic English soldier St. Mandé, a womanizer and a rake. Said “liked his way of appearing to have done everything (except perhaps marriage) and to have been impressed with nothing, not even my father, whom he treated with patronizing amusement.”¹⁰ Travelers such as Kaldor appeared to be equally at home everywhere.

Said came to believe that homelessness was worldliness. Writing “A Mind of Winter” for *Harper’s Magazine*, Said approvingly quoted the medieval Christian saint, Hugh of St. Victor, a visionary rejected provincialism, nationalism, home-ownership, and the comforts of belonging to a given place or culture.¹¹ Hugh of St. Victor’s lines insistently punctuate Said’s published work. His 1997 memoir *Out of Place* might even be considered its book-length elaboration. Even in Cairo, when he was sent to the exclusive American School, he feels the only American thing about him are his socks. Later, the American preppies attending the rural Massachusetts Mount Hermon School for Boys consider him to be a weird foreigner. His superior worldliness and cultivation brand him as an outsider among the upper-crust but quite provincial American undergraduates at 1950s Princeton University. Said’s unique intellectual breakthrough came when he sensed that existential alienation was itself a form of worldliness. His life-long devotion to being an outsider may seem strange in light of the hundreds of friends who attest to his social

genius, but it also explains his liking for oddballs, eccentrics, rebels, and outliers who never could fit in.

The extent of his difference remained concealed even from himself. When his parents suddenly uprooted him from Cairo and sent him to live in America, he made fitful attempts to assimilate. An indicator of his quasi-assimilation is an article he wrote for the *Princetonian*, a student newspaper.¹² In this brief news analysis, he oddly presents himself as a standard-issue American Princetonian. He astutely summarizes the Suez Canal crisis of 1956, and it is true that he asserts the importance of Palestine in middle eastern politics. But he used the voice of “one of us”—an Ivy League undergraduate explaining things to his classmates. His adopted voice is objective, clinical, and personally uninvolved, a stance that is strangely removed from the passionate advocacy that would come to mark his every utterance.

His deep alienation from the American polity became evident only ten years later, when he wrote his second journalistic essay, “The Arab Portrayed.”¹³ His slightly older Palestinian friend, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, commissioned the essay for a book he was editing. This was the essay that made Said known in distinguished Arab-American circles.¹⁴ While he catalogues and condemns the many clichéd perceptions of Arabs, he opens the essay with a striking anecdote that explosively records the shock of his discovery:

The costume for Princeton’s tenth-reunion class in 1967 had been planned before the June War. The motif was to have been Arab—robe, headgear, and sandals. Immediately after the [Six-Day Arab-Israeli 1967] war, and before the reunion, when it became clear that the motif was an embarrassment a change in the program was legislated: wearing the Arab costume as originally planned, the class were to walk in procession with their hands above their heads in a gesture of abject defeat. Surprisingly, there was no serious complaint made about the really vile taste at work as there might have been if any other national or racial group had been similarly insulted. The logic, not so much of events in the war but of events in American consciousness of the Arab, permitted this tasteless demotion of a people into a stupid and offensive caricatures.¹⁵

“The Arab Portrayed” marked the end of Said’s illusion that he could be a part of America. The hurtful charade performed by Said’s very own college class at their tenth reunion made it clear that he could never become one of the “Princeton men” supposedly just like him. As his description of the event makes clear, the incident upset him so deeply that it goes far to explain Said’s entire political future.

His admiring friend Abu-Lughod tried hard to involve Said in the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, perhaps so as to bring Said “home” to his Arab and Palestinian roots. But he learned that Said was not an easy fit. “They don’t read him,” Ibrahim Abu-Lughod said of American-Arabs. “They don’t read his *Beginnings*. They don’t read his *Conrad*. That’s not their bag. But they listen to what he says. And what he says is good. They recognize quality” (Abu-Lughod 38). Abu-Lughod found another way to bring Said into the Arab-American community.

Said was anything but an organization man. The young professor could find no way to hold the attention of a large, non-academic audience. Abu-Lughod recalled Said’s terrible performance in 1975:

We had the AAUG meeting in Chicago. . . . We had lots of dignitaries there. . . . We had Stokeley Carmichael . . . Said was the M.C. He had a beard, in those days. He looked like Trotsky. It was a Trotskyite beard. And he was just speaking in leftist terms. I mean his leftism was coming to the fore. And he couldn’t control the banquet. People were talking—you know, a banquet of six or seven hundred people . . . A friend of ours, a journalist, Brice Nelson . . . said to me, “This is the first time in my life that I have seen the audience almost willing to lynch the M.C.” He was a little bit organized, he was thinking aloud and making some comments, but they were not coming across well. . . . I told him, “Well, our audiences are used to discipline.”¹⁶

Abu-Lughod wryly alludes, that is, to dictators and tyrants when he speculates that lack of a commanding, businesslike presence caused Said to seem alien to “our audiences.” Said probably miscalculated: he was accustomed to speculating and theorizing at will before Columbia undergraduates hanging on his every word, students whose campus radicalism made them eager to learn Marxist literary theory.

Around the time Said bombed as an MC in his Trotskyite beard, he was also taking a first stab at interpreting Arabic literature. He experimented with Marxist moves such as reading imaginative literature as a reflection or allegory of urgent political and social problems.¹⁷ In his 1974 analysis of Arab novels--Barakat's new novel, *Days of Dust*, Emile Habiby, *The Adventures of Sa'eed*, *the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist*, Gassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*--Said demonstrated that book mirrored the instability of Arab political reality. In one of the novels, for example, Palestinian refugees die inside a sealed oil tanker that is smuggling them into Kuwait. The hidden men suffocate quietly while their Palestinian driver discusses a prostitute with the leering Kuwaiti border guards. When the driver finally emerges and finds the three corpses, he cries to himself, “Why didn't they bang on the sides of the tank?” Said interprets the story as a one-to-one correspondence to well-known Gulf States' victimization of Palestinians. The oil monarchies dangle Palestinians on a string with their promises of aid, while the Palestinian leadership fails to do anything to help them. The story puts those realities into compelling dramatic form. The result, according to his biographer, was “easily the defining literary essay of his early career.”¹⁸

Whereas briefly in his 1974 essay he experimented with reading Arabic texts as political novels, he rejected straightforward “political” readings of literature. He destabilized his Marxist reading of Arab novels by declaring that middle eastern novelists formed the bridge between

Marx and Flaubert. This was an unlikely or even oxymoronic combination. Flipping the middle eastern practice by virtue of which “the novel has employed novelists as critics,” Said as a critic considered himself to be a novelist.¹⁹ In a characteristic self-partition, he said that he stood “between directionless brooding and an unlimited episodic repetition.”²⁰ He admired Barakat, Habibi, Kanafani, and Khoury because they had launched “a fundamentally heroic enterprise, a project of self-definition and autodidactic struggle unexampled on such a scale since World War II.” But Said himself would never be content merely to work out his own personal and professional dilemmas or to define his own special identity. To write global literature, he needed to go beyond the boundaries of personal writing, nationalist thinking, or a quest for identity.

The idea of “transcendental homelessness” came, in a sense, to his rescue. Said had found at last a theoretical residence, a combination of literary and political ideas that for the moment seemed to express everything that he wished to say. The phrase “transcendental homelessness” comes from the early, pre-marxist Georg Lukács, in his Hegelian book *The Theory of the Novel*. The novel, says Lukács, is “*the* form of transcendental homelessness” because it is grounded in the experience being ungrounded. The modern novel is almost always the idea “of a changing society in which an itinerant and disinherited middle-class hero or heroine seeks to construct a new world that somewhat resembles an old one left behind forever” (*Reflections on Exile* 181). He found a place to take his stand, at least provisionally, in the transcendental homelessness Lukács identified as the essence of the modern novel.

Transcendental homelessness was not a comfortable place to be. The Arab writer’s primary task was to explain the present political and social moment in terms of past authenticity

and future possibility (“Arabic Prose and Fiction after 1948” 49). In the Arabic novel Said found confirmations of his own now-developed, post-marxist theory of time:

Here are the three dimensions of time of which Lukács, more even than Georges Poulet, and before Heidegger, was the philosopher and poet, the technician of its pathos: an unrecoverable, yearned-for unity in the past, an intolerable disjunction between present ideals and present actualities, and all-conquering and all-destroying future. Loss, alienation, and obliteration. (*Reflections on Exile* 65).

The novel as thus defined was a thoroughly dour enterprise. Kanafani’s novel *Men in the Sun* almost schematically illustrates the triad loss-alienation-obliteration. First, a leading character, Abu Qais, is found lying on the Arab soil of Iraq (where he is an exile), listening to the heartbeat of the land and breathing in its aroma that he compares to “the smell of his wife’s hair as she had stepped out after bathing it in cold water.” After this nostalgic reverie hymning the Palestine he has lost, there comes the alienation of bargaining with the ruthless smugglers and making desperate plans to reach Kuwait. Finally, Abu Qais undergoes a gruesome obliteration in the belly of the tanker. Equipped with this triadic theory of the novel and indeed of history itself, Said’s essay worked like a well-oiled meat grinder: put in a literary text, and out comes a plausible socio-political interpretation.

Said’s uncompromisingly grim compound of the pre-Marxist Lukács’s aesthetics and the uncompromising realism of Arabic novels stood in sharp relief against the happier endings of other historical theories. For example, in *History and Class Consciousness* the imaginary coalescence of the proletariat into a unified movement is supposed to end human alienation. Subject and object became one: the successful communist revolution ends even the existence of social classes. As Said’s literature student in these years, I was immediately drawn to this

apocalyptic romance. The later Lukács's Marxist theory, which I read feverishly, was as dependable as a Krups meat grinder. It produced the literary equivalent of a hamburger: delicious, nutritious, and well-rounded. The grinder could churn out any liberal arts undergraduate paper. Said himself was drawn to Lukács but never indulged his marxism, saying any labeled criticism (e.g., "Marxist criticism") was not criticism at all. It could never be real *criticism* because its conclusions were dictated in advance.²¹ It was too reliable, too predictable, and therefore too uninteresting.

When Said's breakthrough book appeared, *Orientalism* (1978), he felt the heavy hand of Marxist interpretation laid on his own shoulder. Detractors such as middle-eastern Marxist Al-Azm delivered a wooden, party-line analysis of *Orientalism*, much to Said's annoyance. Said was appalled at the "didactic, even pedantic, quality of Al-Azm's prose."²² Rightly so: his critics had failed to understand him. Said had never claimed to be a Marxist. "Right now in American cultural history," Said explained, "'Marxism' is principally an academic, not a political, commitment. It risks becoming an academic subspecialty."²³ He had wanted to write something that was big, powerful, and new. Something that mattered to more than 2000 literary "crickets." The result was a triumph: *Orientalism*.

Orientalism was unquestionably the work that launched Said to planetary importance--I use *planetary* to escape the word global with its neoliberal associations. What made *Orientalism* so popular? Said's friend Abu-Lughod proposed a *trickle-down* theory:

I think that the media takes its cue from the academic works. I see it as a two-step floor: before the ideas reach the public, that the scholars are actually the ones who generate the ideas, and then the [ideas] get vulgarized and so forth. This is where *Orientalism* is, you see. *Orientalism* is about the basis of all that.²⁶

As Abu-Lughod astutely notes, *Orientalism* (1978) bridged Said's two worlds. Academically, the book was a best-seller, translated ultimately into 32 languages. *Orientalism* has obviously had widespread impact. Departments, schools, and institutes of "oriental studies" changed their centuries-old titles, revised their curricula, and demanded new textbooks that deleted all references to "the Orient" and "the oriental." Very quickly after the book's 1978 publication, no politician, foundation sponsor, NGO director, or television commentator could ever again seriously use the word *oriental*. This transformation was a direct result of Said's intervention.

I had the privilege of watching the gestation of *Orientalism*. In his graduate seminar in 1977 gave an oral report on Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* compared to the Benthamite colonial policies in the British governing of colonial India, most notably the very panopticon stood at the heart of *Discipline and Punish*. When Said's *Orientalism* was published two years later, I understood that I had been present at its conception.²⁷

The scopic drive that Heidegger savaged in his expose of "the world picture" was at that stage already primary to Said's thinking. He told me to pair *Discipline and Punish* with *The English Utilitarians in India*. Jeremy Bentham, the intellectual kingpin of the Utilitarian movement, was also the inventor of the panopticon, that novel design for prisons that permitted guards to observe all the prisoners all the time. These all-surveilling structures were featured in *Discipline and Punish* as a primary example of power—power that suddenly manifested itself anonymously, simultaneously across a heterogeneous assortment of institutions. These are the sources for Said's own way of understanding those uncomprehending unfortunates who were grouped in what Heidegger called the "disposable reserve."

Said transformed others' theories rather than reiterated them.²⁸ Foucault apparently felt that Said had outdone him at his own unprecedented invention. In the words of Eqbal Ahmad,

I saw Foucault six months after *Orientalism* had come out and I asked him, “What do you think?” I said, “He says that he is using your categories in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. He says that in the ‘Introduction.’” He [Foucault] said, “Yes, but it is beyond my own imagination the uses to which he has put it.”²⁹

Foucault admitted, in other words, that Said made an impact that overshadowed even Foucault’s own. He showed the way in which Foucault’s ideas and methods might be used to disentangle key coincidences from the apparent disorder of events that matter urgently to living people today. Foucault had shown the way an idea about “discipline” could arise without any apparent author or origin and yet sweep through and conquer a congeries of institutions: schools, prisons, hospitals, India itself. In *Orientalism*, unrelated fields such as literature, music, immigration law, and education were similarly shown to be unified in their understanding of the East and of so-called Orientals. This demonstration was of compelling interest. Obviously, it mattered to the actual people affected, from residents of the East, middle-east, and Asia all the way to professors and managers who depended on the inviolable difference of the “Orient.” His book was no mere abstraction. Said gave a local habitation and a name to ideas about the nature of statements in Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* by demonstrating that Orientalist statements have overpowered empirical truths and first-hand experience. Napoleon’s deployment of artists and scribes to go into Egypt along with the French troops concretized an argument of Heidegger’s. *Orientalism* materializes a theory of the statement. Just as Said flipped the middle-eastern practice of writing novels that are really theories, Said writes theories that read like novels.

But in the end, Said thought that such theoretical breakthroughs mattered exclusively to the 2,000 academic elite. Said had come to believe that theory had accomplished little on behalf of those whom Foucault called “docile bodies,” Heidegger called “standing reserve,” Arendt

called “superfluities,” and Agamben re-names as “bare life,” belong with Said’s “Orientals” as a category of people who are essentially beneath concern.

Orientalism had hit a collective nerve. It is the one book that continues to have a profound, daily impact on residents and scholars of the East. When, shortly after its publication, Said drew back from literary theory, I was concerned. Had his decade-long immersion in theory not given him the basis for *Orientalism*? His departure from theory was final. For all that it attends to gender, language, sexuality, and postcoloniality, the sequel to *Orientalism* offered nothing really new. *Culture and Imperialism* could very well have been published in 1965. While the later book argues that literature and imperialism developed inseparably together, it lacks the devastating theory of history as three stage progression from pathos to alienation to devastation. Said had by then abandoned pessimism of the intellect, writing as if to *will* humanism into existence.

My research suggests that anti-theoretical humanism failed to hold the global, non-academic audience that *Orientalism* had won for Said. *Orientalism* gained him an international renown and a global readership that continues to some extent today, 46 years after its publication. Said was well aware of the price he would have to pay for abdicating from his pre-eminence in literary theory circles. He knew that by spurning theory and embracing humanism, he was presenting a big fat target for poststructuralist hipsters and fancy-pants know-it-alls. Chinese scholars in recent years attended, for example, more to Terry Eagleton than to Said. The Chinese wrote four times more books and articles about theorist Jacques Derrida than they wrote about Said.³⁰

Academic friends in Japan also feel that “Said is well known, especially his *Orientalism* and *Culture and Empire*, but utterly unknown by the general public.” Another

Japanese scholar, Professor Shigeko Mato, writes that “Said's works have been translated into Japanese, but I don't think he is well known among the general public” Said’s name is mentioned sporadically. It appeared in Japanese mainstream newspapers when Kenzaburo Oe died: Said was his friend. Film maker Makoto Sato made a documentary film based on Said's life as an immigrant, a film entitled *Edward Said* (in Japanese) *Out of Place* (in English; 2005). Mato adds that Said’s name has been mentioned in the Japanese major business newspaper *Nihonkeizai Shinbun* in connection with 19th to early 20th century Japanese colonial territorial expansions. “But I would say he is not known as a Palestinian activist,” Mato adds. Said insofar as he is present at all is mediated by newspapers, film, and television.³¹

A glance at Google Scholar or any such database instantly reveals where Said’s planetary influence resides: it is in *Orientalism*’s continuing presence and impact among non-European peoples. Published articles based on *Orientalism* continue to appear in unabated flow. I would like to present here a sampling of articles written by Indians, Pakistanis, Ukrainians, Saudis, Iranians, Tamils, West Bengal, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Albania, Turkey, and Dibrugarh. This list of recent publications barely scratches the surface: only a full-bore digital humanities approach could do justice to the immense collection of *Orientalism*-based publications. I have omitted from my list, for example, dissertations based on *Orientalism* that are regularly produced by non-European candidates.³²

Ahmad Ghaforian and Ahmad Gholi have written, in Iran, “Shooting an Elephant with Special Reference to Edward Said’s *Orientalism* and Binary of the Self and the Other.” Kabita Kamen has published, from Nigeria, “No Longer at Ease,” an article based on the argument that “Achebe’s portrayal of Nigeria is akin to Edward Said’s description in *Orientalism*.” Chetna Gupta published an article entitled, “*Orientalism*: A Perspective,” in which the author declares

“special reference to Edward Said” and “six different styles of Orientalist discourse about India . . . using the example of Edward Said as a Western Orientalist.” Berna Köseoğlu (2014) published "Postcolonial identity in Buchi Emecheta's *In the Ditch* and in *Second Class Citizen* in the light of Edward Said's postcolonial discourse."³³

Abdellatif El Aidi and Yahya Yechouti (2017) published "Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony in Edward Said's *Orientalism*." Gezim Alpion (2005) published "Western Media and the European." Mohammad Tamdgidi (2005) published “Orientalist and Liberating Discourses of East-West Difference: Revisiting Edward Said and the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam,” writing for example, “The article focuses on the text of Professor Edward Said with regards to the use of East-West difference. The author presents an argument that distinguishes the literary and political rhetoric of Said.” Bahman Zarringooee and Shahla Khatar (2006) published “Dissemination of English Culture in Chinua Achebe's ‘No Longer at Ease,’” stating that the article is based on “Edward Said's (1935-2003) attempts regarding Orientalism.” Syeda Sadaf Munir Kazmi, Ishaq Khan, and Nijatullah Khan (2021) wrote “Representation Of Africans As Degenerate People in Joseph Conrad's Heart Of Darkness,” stating that “The selected text is analyzed in light of the various stereotypes described by Edward Said in his famous work *Orientalism* (1979).” Sucheta Mandal (2019) wrote “The White Man's Gaze and Hergé's Tintin: Analysing Comics of Colour,” explaining that “Edward Said's idea of ‘orientalism’ represents the colonial ideology of ‘the West’ and it also strongly emphasizes on the Occidental notion of Orient which constructs the Eastern world as the land of mystery and evil, and its inhabitants as barbaric, lazy, and superstitious.” Jukka Jouhki (2009) published “Orientalism and India” based on the original thesis that “In this article Orientalism, a special hegemonic discourse about ‘the Orient’ by Europeans is discussed by focusing on how it is

manifested in a "Western" view of India. Orientalism as a discourse about the Orient is a concept first coined by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978) and contains a long history of European way of relating to the Orient as a counterpart of European/Western culture. In this article Orientalist discourses about India by hegemonically Western (and particularly Anglo-Saxon) sources are portrayed and the so-called Indo-Orientalist essentialism defining Indianness from the outside analyzed. Moreover, a Indo-Orientalism as an imported ideology to be used in Indian nationalist discourses to emphasize a dichotomy between India and "the West" is discussed.” Bushra Naz and Areeb Mushtaq Ahmad. "Postcolonialism, History, Security, Racism and South-Asian Experiences: Decolonizing Western-Centrism." *Multicultural Education* 8.1 (2022) based on another original thesis, this one about security studies: “a post-colonial account through Muppidi’s historical amnesia is taken in support of the seminal work of Edward Said, to provide deeper theorizing to the insecurities of marginalized people, to analyze the exclusionary nature of the securitization theory.”³⁴

Anwer, S., Dr. Irfan Ali Shah, & Riaz Uddin. (2024). Pashtun Ethnic Chauvinism in Lillias Hamilton’s *A Vizier’s Daughter: A Tale of the Hazara War* . “Retaining the fundamental precepts of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, this article employs the lens of internal orientalism. . . . It is found that the Pashtun characters consider the Hazaras as inferior, subordinate, and migrants, though, the Hazaras reflect themselves free of all subordination and inferiority.” Nikita Sinha and Sanjay Kumar Jha, “Propagation of English Culture in Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease*.” The authors announce that “Edward Said’s (1935-2003) attempts regarding Orientalism and Frantz Fanon’s (1925-1961) issues relating inferiority of the indigenous people caused by colonization are used in this paper.” Fahad M. Al-Otaibi “Towards a Contrapuntal Reading of History: Orientalism and the Ancient Near East.” “This article is concerned with the idea of

Orientalism which was introduced by Edward Said as early as 1978. However, since almost all scholars who have written about Orientalism concentrate on Islamic and modern history, this article ancient history. As will be seen, the root of Orientalism discussed by Said should be sought in ancient times, not least when the West (the Greeks) came into contact with the East. . . . we shall try to see if some elements of the picture of the Orient given by the 19th and 20th century Orientalists are still at work as far as the ancient Near East is concerned and how they affect the study of the area.” Khirfan, Haneen Samir, and Mohammad Y. Shaheen. *Edward Said's Counter Discourse to Western Hegemony from Orientalism to Humanism*. University of Jordan, 2008. Jouhki, Jukka. *Imagining the other: orientalism and occidentalism in Tamil-European relations in South India*. No. 47. University of Jyväskylä, 2006. “Orientalism as a discourse was first described by Edward Said who in his book *Orientalism* defined it as hegemonic Western popular and academic discourse of the Orient. . . . I collected material on the relationship between Europeans and Tamils in Auroville, a multinational intentional community and Kulapalayam, a rural Tamil village in India. According to the material gathered, the Europeans of Auroville followed the traditional Orientalist discourse in describing their Tamil neighbors.”³⁵ This list includes scholars who apply Said’s ideas from *Orientalism* to illuminate, among much else, the culture of the ancient Greeks, and other scholars who use those Saidian ideas to intervene in the non-European debates about security.

Khalid, Samia, and Muhammad Fiaz Anwar. "Orientalism and its Relevance to Colonial Sources of South Asia: An Analysis." *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 3.2 (2019): 380-390.

Orientalism and its Relevance to Colonial Sources of South Asia: An Analysis “This article will explore how Eurocentric colonial sources on India established stereotypes while at the same time brought overlooked past of this country to the pages of history. . . . Because in the case of India

these outsiders actually preserved of its history and brought ancient past into broad daylight. Although these writings of Europeans are not free from the Euro-centric approach still they had credit to preserve the past of India.” Said’s work here seems potentially to underwrite a polemic of Pakistanis vs. Indians, fought out on the turf established by *Orientalism*?

Safa Almijbilee, Azra Ghandeharion, and Zohreh Taebi. “From Foucault to Postcolonialism: New Outlook into the Middle East,” of which the authors say, “This research reviews Foucault’s idea about discourse and power, Said’s view about the Orient and Bhabha’s perception regarding stereotype. Benefitting from Foucault's ideologies, postcolonial theorists like Edward Said and Homi Bhabha illustrate how colonial discourse circulates. They insist that Western episteme on knowledge, science and understanding has empowered the Occident/ West to control and command the Orient/ East. Said’s insight toward *Orientalism* sheds light on how the occident represent and dominate the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively in the past centuries whose effects are still prevalent. Fascinating but as yet untranslated articles have been written applying *Orientalism* to Islamophobia:

"مجلة الدراسات التربوية والإنسانية 15.44 (2023): 850-882. نورFrom Orientalism to Islamophobia: Media-850 : (2023) 15.44 .882

Utpaul Kumar Ghosh and Md Kaiser Ali have written "The Theme of Imperialism in Kipling's Kim." As the authors explain, “This article attempts an exploration of Kipling's Kim mainly in the light of Edward Said's *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* showing Kim's complicity with imperialism . . . will show how Kipling's *Kim* is complicit in imperial/colonising enterprise

in spite of its pictorial and idyllic celebration of India.” Shalbak, Ihab. "Prejudice and pride." *Arena Magazine (Fitzroy, Vic)* 156 (2018): 23-25. “In the late 1970s, particularly after the publication of Edward Said's devastating criticism of Orientalism ('Orientalism' was published forty years ago this year), pride joined prejudice as a driver of what became Lewis' relentless rage against those who refused to see the history of humanity as a series of inevitable clashes of civilisations.”³⁶ As these example suggest, Said's *Orientalism* is also being put to more traditional literary uses, for example working out brilliant rereadings of Hergé's *TinTin* or Kipling's *Kim*.

Such a list is gratifying especially against the background of Said's extensive writing on politics and humanism. Many non-professors began to read about Said in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, where they learned that U.S. President Jimmy Carter had summoned Said to act as the U.S. intermediary with the PLO. Said was indeed on his way, at age 43, to becoming a world-historical figure. He entered public, non-academic consciousness in a very big way.³⁷

Immediately after *Orientalism*, Said published *The Question of Palestine* (a historical account) and *Covering Islam* (a study of media statements): both of these were entirely new genres. Another experiment was *After the Last Sky* (a photo essay about Palestine). These forays into new areas and types of writing count as his later versions of transcendental homelessness. So too might be categorized his forays into polemics in favor of humanism.

Humanism was a universal idea that bridged all creeds, Said felt. With it, one could “think and experience with Genet in Palestine of Algeria, with Tayib Saleh as a black man in London, with Jamaica Kinkaid in the white world, with Rushdie in India and Britain, and so on. . .” Said's admired authors were deeply rooted in internationalist humanism: “To paraphrase

from a remark made by Auerbach . . . our philological home is the world, and not the nation or even the individual writer.” Most of all, humanism functioned as a rhetorical weapon. Against gladiators in the press such as Dinitia Smith, who taunted Said as “Arafat’s man in New York,” he could fire back, “I am a humanist, not a terrorist,” and cite Great Books to prove it.⁴⁰ He didn’t mind having to admit that “the whole notion of humanism, which had for so long done without the historical experiences of African Americans, women, and disadvantaged and marginalized group, . . . was restricted to a small group” basically of white middle- and upper-class Europeans.⁴¹ He brandished humanism against proposers of “aggressive new subspecialties, mostly centered on the academic study of postmodern identities.”⁴²

When we look back over the non-Europeans who are most in tune with Said today, it is obviously *Orientalism* that has inspired all those Ukrainians, Bangladeshis, Iranians, and Nigerians. The book still inspires them and urges them to continue its work. That is a fitting trophy for a genius like Said, who as a young boy who cherished his one pair of American socks, but who eventually learned to prize outsider-ship above belonging. As a public speaker he overcame early failures and attracted standing-room-only crowds all across the world. He out-earned his self-made father and went beyond the imagination of Michel Foucault. He shone bright in political debate and publicly humbled professional pundits, noisy hecklers, American ambassadors, and Israeli prime ministers. As a universally known intellectual, he ranks alongside Noam Chomsky and well above Heidegger, Fanon, and Hannah Arendt. In Japan, scholars know who he is. In China, he is virtually tied with Terry Eagleton and Jacques Derrida. Politically, he accomplished the impossible: he made the Palestinians a cause célèbre. Distressingly, his idea of history was deeply pessimistic. To some extent, he himself went through the same three stages

he perceived, with no small sense of horror, in the Arabic novel, *Men in the Sun*. Like Abu Qais he began with pathos, came to feel deep alienation, and anticipated his people's own obliteration. Refusing to applaud the so-called peace process of 1993, he called it the Palestinian Versailles and sank into the despondency that, along with his fatal illness, made his last decade a tragic event. *Orientalism* has sold more copies than have *The Politics of Dispossession* and all his political writings put together. Yet by strategically renouncing the role of "literary cricket," he set a new standard for professors by setting action above theorizing. As an activist, an intellect, and a human of the world, he remains the mark to shoot for.

The End

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¹ A discussion of theory as world literature should begin with a review of work by Goethe, Auerbach, Damrosch, Casanova, Moretti, Robbins, Cheah, Puchner, Harvey, and Spivak. See for example David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Pascale Casanova and Marlon Jones, "What Is a Dominant Language?: Giacomo Leopardi: Theoretician of Linguistic Inequality," *New Literary History* 44, no. 3 (Summer, 2013): 379–99; Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (New York: Verso, 2013); Franco Moretti, "World-systems, Evolutionary Theory, Weltliteratur," in *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From European Enlightenment to the Global Present*, eds. David Damrosch, Natalie Melas, and Mbongiseni Buthelezi, 399–408 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Pheng Cheah, "What Is A World? On World Literature as World-making Activity," *Daedalus* 137, no. 3 (Summer, 2008): 26–38; and Bruce Robbins and Paulo Horta, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (1998; New York: NYU Press, 2017); See also, David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990); Martin Puchner, *The Written World: The Power of Stories to Shape People, History, Civilization* (New York: Random House, 2017).

² Edward W. Said, *Out of Place* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 127.

³ Said, *Out of Place*, 127.

⁴ Said, *Out of Place*, 95.

⁵ Said, *Out of Place*, 91.

⁶ Said in *Out of Place* uses the theories of Antonio Gramsci to globalize his own father.

See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971). Said's father conveyed to his son many worldly lessons:

he was basically a modern capitalist with an extraordinary capacity for thinking systematically and institutionally, a sort of organizer and shaper of his clients' business interests, providing them with an articulation of their needs and goals, then with the necessary products to realize them. (Said, *Out of Place*, 93–94)

Said's description of his father echoes a Marxist philosopher, Antonio Gramsci, who wrote:

the entrepreneur himself represents a higher level of social elaboration, already characterized by a certain directive (*dirigente*) and technical (i.e., intellectual) capacity: he must have a certain technical capacity, not only in the limited sphere of his activity and initiative but in other spheres as well, at least in those which are closest to economic production. He must be an organizer of masses of men; he must be an organizer of the "confidence" of investors in his business, of the customers for his product, etc. (Gramsci, 135)

Cyrus Veeseer has defined third-world modernizers as those who transformative modern practices for business offices across the Middle East. For descriptions of this process, see Immanuel Wallerstein and theorists of imperialism who credit globalization to capital logic, an insistent, inhuman objective need to expand.

⁷ Said, *Out of Place*, 91.

⁸ For the most straightforward account, see M.D. Walhout, *Arab Intellectuals and American Power: Edward Said, Charles Malik, and the US in the Middle East* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2020). Said's uncle by marriage, Charles Malik, was a Lebanese professor of philosophy and a very active player in Lebanon's greatest political crises. *The New York Times* obituary emphasizes Malik's role in global politics: "Dr. Malik, who also served as Ambassador to the United States from 1953 to 1955, was regarded as a friend of the United States and the West" (Ihsan A. Hijazi, "Charles H. Malik of Lebanon, 81; Was President of U.N. Assembly," *New York Times*, December 29, 1987, section D, page 19, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/12/29/obituaries/charles-h-malik-of-lebanon-81-was-president-of-un-assembly.html>). But the Times also observes laconically, "He was a member of the Lebanese Front, an all-Christian grouping that led a political campaign against the presence in Lebanon of Palestine Liberation Organization guerrillas."

Malik helped to found the Front for Freedom and Man in Lebanon, which he named as such, to defend the Christian cause. It was later renamed the Lebanese Front, a group that cold-bloodedly massacred 1,500 unarmed Palestinians on September 15-17, 1982. "Fawwaz Traboulsi writes that while the massacre was presented as a reaction to the assassination of Bachir, it represented the posthumous achievement of his 'radical solution' to Palestinians in Lebanon" and "aimed to create a new demographic balance in Lebanon favouring the Christians" (Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* [London: Pluto Press, 2007], 218–19). Said's uncle was worldly in a most chilling sense.

⁹ Said, *Out of Place*, 91.

¹⁰ Said, *Out of Place*, 91.

¹¹ Hugh of St. Victor, quoted in Edward W. Said, "Reflections on Exile" (1983), *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173–86. "The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land"

(Said, “Reflections on Exile,” 185).

¹² Edward W. Said, “Nasser and His Canal” (1957), *Daily Princetonian*, accessed June 14, 2023, <https://pastandfuturepresents.blogspot.com/2014/11/nasser-and-his-canal-edward-w-said-57.html>. In his obituary for Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, he notes that he and Abu-Lughod were aware of a strong pro-Israeli faction at Princeton. See Edward W. Said, “My Guru: Elegy for Ibrahim Abu-Lughod,” *London Review of Books*, December 13, 2001, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v23/n24/edward-said/my-guru>.

¹³ Edward W. Said, “The Arab Portrayed,” in *The Arab-Israeli Confrontation of June 1967: An Arab Perspective*, ed. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 6.

¹⁴ See Said, “My Guru.” Said tells how his slightly older friend commissioned Said’s first published intervention on the Palestinians’ behalf: “Then, the thunderbolt of 1967 hit us all, and unexpectedly, Ibrahim sent me a letter asking if I would contribute to a special issue of *Arab World*, the Arab League monthly published in New York, guest-edited by him, and intended to look at the war from an Arab perspective. I used the occasion to look at the image of the Arabs in the media, popular literature, and cultural representations going back to the Middle Ages. This was the origin of my book *Orientalism*, which I dedicated to Janet and Ibrahim.” Abu-Lughod found Said’s essay to be outstanding:

“And then this piece came. And it was b-r-e-a-t-h-t-a-k-i-n-g. And he did it so fast! And so beautifully. The question is, What can we do with him? Both, Is he willing, is he not willing to continue that path?” Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, interviewed by H. Aram Veesser Evanston, Illinois, 29 December 1990.

Later in the interview Abu-Lughod explains Said’s eventual transition to a non-academic style: “But he is a polemicist. And on the media you have to be a polemicist.”

¹⁵ Said, “The Arab Portrayed,” 1–9. It was originally published in a special issue of the US journal *The Arab World*, which was republished as an edited volume titled *The Arab-Israeli Confrontation of 1967: An Arab Perspective*.

¹⁶ Abu-Lughod interview by H. Aram Veesser.

¹⁷ See Edward W. Said, *Arabic Prose and Prose Fiction after 1948* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). Also published as the introduction to Halim Barakat’s novel.

¹⁸ Timothy Brennan, *Places of Mind: A Life of Edward Said* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021), [page number](#).

¹⁹ Said, [source](#), xiii; “[F]rom Fielding’s digressive essays on the novel in his novels, through Sterne’s technical brilliance, through Stendhal’s and Balzac’s critical work, and on into the commentary and metacommentary of such writers as Proust, Henry James, and James Joyce, the novel has employed novelists as critics” (xiii).

²⁰ Said, [source](#), xii.

²¹ Years later, when Fredric Jameson advanced a similar argument that all non-eurocentric literature had necessarily allegorized contemporary “third-world” history, he was condemned. Leftist critics found his theory to be patronizing as well as reductive. See Fredric Jameson, “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism,” *Social Text* 15 (Autumn, 1986): 65–88.

²² Al-Azm, quoted in Brennan, 165.

²³ Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 28. Said adds, “‘solidarity before criticism’ means the end of criticism” (28).

²⁶ Abu-Lughod interview by H. Aram Veesser.

²⁷ Catarina Kinnvall, *Globalization and Religious Nationalism in India: The Search for Ontological Security* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006). As Kinnvall points out, Spivak uses the term worlding to signal that textuality privileges and justifies colonial expansion:

As far as I understand it, the notion of textuality should be related to the notion of the worlding of a world on a supposedly un-inscribed territory. When I say this, I am thinking basically about the imperialist project which had to assume that the earth that it territorialized was in fact previously un-inscribed. (Spivak, "Criticism, Feminism, and the Institution," 153)

²⁸ See Casanova and Jones, "What Is a Dominant Language?"

²⁹ Eqbal Ahmad, interviewed by H. Aram Veesser, New York City July 11, 1990.

³⁰ CNKI in China reports 266 Chinese dissertations and 50 Chinese books written about Said. It reports 1829 Chinese dissertations and 207 Chinese books about Derrida. (accessed July 1, 2022).

³¹ Shigeko Mato, correspondence with H. Aram Veesser, June 25, 2023.

³² For one example among many, ABERKANE, LYDIA, and DHAOUIA BOUALIT. *Orientalist Representations in Paul Bowles' Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue: Scenes from the Non-Christian World (1963)*. Diss. university Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi-Ouzou, 2015.

³³ Ahmad Ghaforian and Ahmad Gholi, "Shooting an Elephant with Special Reference to Edward Said's Orientalism and Binary of the Self and the Other," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 5 (7)1361-1367; Chetna Gupta, "Orientalism: A Perspective," *RJPSS* 42 (2) 84-90; Berna Köseoglu, "Postcolonial Identity in Buchi Emecheta's *In the Ditch* and in *Second Class Citizen* in the Light of Edward Said's Postcolonial Discourse," *Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 6 (5) (2017): 1-9.

³⁴ Abdellatif El Aidi and Yahya Yechouti, "Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony in Edward Said's *Orientalism*." *Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* (6)5 (2017): 1-9;

Gezim Alpion, "Western Media and the European," *Albania Journal of Politics* 1(1) (2005): 4-25; Mohammad Tamdgidi, "Orientalist and Liberating Discourses of East-West Difference: Revisiting Edward Said and the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," *Discourse of Sociological Practice* 7 (1/2): 187; Bahman Zarrinjooee and, Shahla Khatar, "Dissemination of English Culture in Chinua Achebe's 'No Longer at Ease'" *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 7 (4) (Aug 2016): 231-238; Syeda Sadaf Munir Kazmi, Ishaq Khan, Nijatullah Khan "Representation Of Africans As Degenerate People in Joseph Conrad's *Heart Of Darkness*," *Multicultural Education* 7(2) (2021): NA; Sucheta Mandal, "The White Man's Gaze and Hergé's Tintin: Analysing Comics of Colour," dissertation, Department of English, Bankura University (West Bengal); Jakka Jouhki, "Orientalism and India," *Historian ja etnologian laitoksen tutkijat ry, Jyväskylän yliopisto* (2006); Bushra Naz and Areeb Mushtaq Ahmad, "Postcolonialism, History, Security, Racism and South-Asian Experiences: Decolonizing Western-Centrism," *Multicultural Education* 8(1) (2022);

³⁵ S. Anwer, Dr. Irfan Ali Shah, & Riaz Uddin. (2024). "Pashtun Ethnic Chauvinism in Lillias Hamilton's *A Vizier's Daughter: A Tale of the Hazara War*," *International Journal of*

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³⁶ Samia Khalid and Muhammad Fiaz Anwar. "Orientalism and its Relevance to Colonial Sources of South Asia: An Analysis." *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 3.2 (2019): 380-390; Safa Almijbilee, Azra Ghandeharion, and Zohreh Taebi "From Foucault to Postcolonialism: New Outlook into the Middle East," Fifth National Conference on English Studies and Linguistics Iran-Ahwaz (WWW. ELTL. IR), 31 January-1 February (2019); Ghosh, Utpaul Kumar, and Md Kaiser Ali. "The Theme of Imperialism in Kipling's Kim." *Dhaka Commerce College Journal*: 72; Shalbak, Ihab, "Prejudice and pride." *Arena Magazine (Fitzroy, Vic)* 156 (2018): 23-25.

³⁷ As a professor of comparative literature, Said was an unlikely political leader of the Arabs. He couldn't speak proper Arabic. He was distant from the daily realities of the front line of struggle. Never part of the inner circle, he was excluded from the secret negotiations that resulted in the transformative Oslo accords. The accords proved unfortunate for the Palestinians. Oslo resulted in the further isolation of Gaza, the bantustanization of the West Bank, and the Second Intifada, whereas Said was increasingly well known around the world for his writing, speaking, and television appearances urging justice for the Palestinians.

⁴⁰ Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, 45–46. His home base, Columbia, was known for Humanities and Contemporary Civilization, two great books courses required of all undergraduates.

⁴¹ Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, 45–46.

⁴² Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, 55.

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