TITLE: Edward Said'in Sarkiyatçilik Adli Eserine Elestirel Yaklasimlar

AUTHORS: Hande TEKDEMIR

PAGES: 141-158

ORIGINAL PDF URL: https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/299265

CRITICAL APPROACHES to EDWARD SAID'S *ORIENTALISM*

Hande TEKDEMİR[*]

ABSTRACT

Edward Said's ground-breaking work in postcolonial studies, Orientalism, has received both praise and criticism since its publication in 1978. Focusing on the various reactions to Orientalism, this article draws attention to the relevance of the intricate relationship between Orientalism's main tenets and Said's thoughts about intellectuals' commitment in our current society.

Keywords: *Edward Said, Orientalism, Occidentalism, postcolonial studies*

Edward Said'in *Şarkiyatçılık* Adlı Eserine Eleştirel Yaklaşımlar

ÖZET

Edward Said'in çığır açıcı eseri Şarkiyatçılık 1978'deki ilk basımından beri hem övücü hem de eleştirici yorumlar almıştır. Şarkiyatçılık'a yöneltilen çeşitli eleştirileri konu alan bu makale Said'in Şarkiyatçılık'ın ana ilkeleri ile çağdaş toplumda aydın sorumluluğu arasında kurduğu çetrefilli ilişkinin güncelliğine dikkat çekmeyi hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Edward Said, Şarkiyatçılık, Garbiyatçılık, sömürgecilik sonrası edebiyat*

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[*] Asist. Prof. Dr., Boğaziçi University Department of Western Languages and Literatures, hande.tekdemir@boun.edu.tr

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Edward Said's ground-breaking work in postcolonial studies, *Orientalism,* has received both praise and criticism since its publication in 1978. Roughly speaking, its success has been ascribed to, firstly, its bold manifestation of the power structures in the orientalist discourse and secondly its concluding remarks on the role of the intellectual as being able to acquire an "outsider's" perspective. When compared to the homogeneous compliments, the condemnation of the book has been more diversified, including a long list of several problematics in *Orientalism:* Said's problematical methodology, his futile attempt to bring together Marxist, Foucauldian and humanist perspectives in his analysis have been among the main points of criticism. Moreover, his so-called Eurocentric bias, his reluctance to give voice to the oriental cultures despite his Palestinian origins, his emphasis on 'textuality' rather than actual socio-political conditions are also only some of the relentless criticisms directed not only to the book in question but also to the author's personality. This paper will be an exploration of these various reactions to *Orientalism.* Although part of my analysis relies heavily upon a reiteration of the main points of criticism the book received, which has by now become almost another field of study, I hope to revitalize the debate by drawing attention to the relevance of the intricate relationship between *Orientalism*'s main tenets and Said's thoughts about intellectuals' commitment in our current society.

I. Definitions and the Structure in *Orientalism*:

One of the most ferocious criticisms of Said's book has been concerning the question of definition. In an effort to avoid a structuralist approach, yet to clarify his point of analysis at the beginning of the book, Said provides three definitions of Orientalism, emphasizing the fact that these three are intricately related to each other: Orientalism as an academic tradition of study, as a style of thought and as a corporate institution. The first of all three is "the most readily accepted designation for Orientalism", Said argues. "Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient –and this applies whether the person is

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an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist- either in its specific or in its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism" (1978: 2). This tradition has a history, which starts from Homer and Aeschylus and is still prevalent in the contemporary society. As a perpetuator of this long history, the orientalist contributes to the creation of the Orient, which is subsequently claimed to be represented. As Macfie summarizes Said's argument, the orientalist assists in exacerbating a series of stereotypical images, as Europe (the West, the 'self') being the rational, developed, superior, authentic, active and masculine and The Orient (the East, the 'other') being irrational, backward, inferior, inauthentic and feminine (2002: 8). This system is designed to promote European imperialism and colonialism.

Said's second definition evokes a more abstract interpretation: "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident" (1978: 2). Many Marxist scholars such as Aijaz Ahmad, have taken this to be too much implicated in style and textuality as to aptly address the 'material' history of European colonization. Drawing attention to the terminology used in the definition, Ahmad asserts that "The surprising word, but also the key word, here is *style* –which should save us from supposing that he might be talking about the political economy or ideological constructs of colonialism and imperialism" (1992: 184). Ahmad cautions against using such loose terms since it privileges literature and culture over political and economic aspects of Orientalism. Hence, he criticizes Said's approach to imperialism as an understatement when the aesthetic becomes the decisive aspect in Said's analysis.

However, it is crucial to understand that for Said, "style" is only a starting point which then is reflected in the actual power structures between the Orient and the Occident. His main assumption, as he puts it, is "that the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely *there,* just as the Occident itself is not just *there* either. (…) such locales,

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regions, geographical sectors as 'Orient' and 'Occident' are *man-made*" (1978: 4-5 emphasis mine). Therefore, the essence of his argument is based on an exploration of the *process* through which these two 'geographical entities' are made in and through Orientalism –be it the academia, the style of thought or the whole network of institutions, all of which he labels as 'discourse' of Orientalism and which are all crucial to understanding how Europe came to colonize the Orient. Later on, Said elaborates more on his definition of orientalism and clarifies it in various interviews. Addressing a question about the concept of worldliness as being-in-this-world, part of Said's answer to the *Diacritics* interviewer incorporates a re-definition of orientalism: "As a systematic discourse Orientalism is written knowledge, but because it is in the world and directly about the world, it is *more* than knowledge: it is *power* since, so far as the Oriental is concerned, Orientalism is the operative and effective knowledge by which he was delivered textually to the West, occupied by the West, milked by the West for his resources, humanly quashed by the West (Williams 2001: 20).

The third meaning, as Said puts it, "is something more historically and materially defined than either of the two": "Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient –dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (1978: 3). This third definition, in fact, fills in the gap that has been left by the other two: that Orientalism, as a textual creation, has been used to impose authority (Kennedy 2000: 21). On the other hand, it also draws criticism in terms of its totalizing view of the Occident by providing Europe with a fixed and stable identity (Ahmad 1992: 100).

As with Said's definitions, there is equal amount of dissent about the structure of *Orientalism* and the content of the three chapters, namely "The Scope of Orientalism," "Orientalist Structures and

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Restructures," and "Orientalism Now." In the first chapter, Said casts a retrospective look at the past centuries and points out the Western representations of the oriental long before the late nineteenth century, the age of colonization. By focusing on two specific projects, Napoleonic expedition and Suez Canal authority, and the stereotyping of Islam, Muslims and Arabs, Edward Said, as Valerie Kennedy also indicates, provides a historical background to the discourse of Orientalism and how it came into being in the following decades (2000: 16-17, 1978: 16). Hence, Said not only underscores the 'textual attitude' of Orientalist discourse but also justifies his gradual move from the text to the external history –from textual to actual representations of the Orient. However, some critics find fault with his wide-ranging approach and accuse him of being *ahistorical* which seems to be missing Said's main point that the conflict between Europe and its Other did not originate at a certain period in history, and is not historically specifiable in that sense, but in fact has origins in the remote past.

When compared to the wide scope of the first chapter, "Orientalist Structures and Restructures" is mainly concerned with the manifestations of Orientalism in the nineteenth century. Although Said limits his observations to a historical period in this chapter, he has a wide range of areas such as philology, anthropology, history, religion, arts, education that deal with the Orient in order to control it. In an effort to contextualize his argument, Said chooses two orientalists, Silvestre de Sacy and Ernest Renan, whose research interests testify to the relevance of the epigraph from Benjamin Disraeli: "The East is a career". While Sacy is "the originator, whose work represents the field's emergence and its status as a nineteenth-century discipline with roots in revolutionary Romanticism", Renan's task, as belonging to the second generation, is "to solidify the official discourse of Orientalism, to systematize its insights, and to establish its intellectual and worldly institutions" (Said 1978: 130). As a follow-up of the argument in the

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previous chapter, Said indicates the interaction between textual knowledge of the Orient and colonial administration while underscoring the subservience of the former to the latter. Through Sacy and Renan's works, Said points to the reciprocal relationship between knowledge and power.

That his main focus is confined to British and French colonialism is considered as yet another gap in Said's analysis which excludes other types of European domination and provides an unwittingly structuralist approach to the Occident. In other words, Said's portrayal of the Occident is 'orientalism in reverse". This might not sound so contradictory when one considers that what Said starts out to discuss is the Western conceptions of the Orient. Although Said provides the reader with at least two different phases of colonialism in this particular chapter, he is not really comparing and contrasting the British with French colonialism but is more concerned to pinpoint the common argument used in both of them to *know* a particular geography so as to dominate it. As Said puts it, "(…) knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control" (1978: 36). In Said's view, who is in charge of power does not really make a major change as long as the orientalist discourse is kept intact.

This last point is clearly evident in the third chapter which concentrates on the end of 20th century and is mainly concerned with the transition of power from Britain and French to the United States in the post-Second World War period. While highlighting the continuity of the discourse in the twentieth century, Said is also careful to point to a significant shift from "an academic to an *instrumental* attitude" (1978: 246). This change is especially evident in U.S interventionist politics in the Middle East, he contends. Said also introduces the distinction between the *latent* and *manifest* Orientalism in this chapter –the former being "an almost unconscious (and certainly an untouchable) positivity"

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and the latter being "the various stated views about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology, and so forth" (1978: 206). Such a distinction enables Said to emphasize that modern Orientalism, being manifest in the supremacy of American imperialism, is rooted in the latent Orientalism, which had been discussed in the first two chapters. As Valerie Kennedy argues, this final identification (latent and manifest) is Said's attempt to negotiate the historical and ahistorical, the totalizing and contextualized definitions of Orientalism used throughout the book (2000: 24). "That is, the book seems to suggest at times that scholarly Orientalism paved the way for imperialism and was then superseded by it, but at other moments imperialism is seen as coming to determine the development of scholarly Orientalism as a field" (Kennedy 2000: 24). Despite occasional contradictions throughout the book, the final section proves that it is not always possible and meaningful to try to differentiate these two implications formulated by Kennedy above, -and this is precisely Said's point. Indeed, in the case of modern Orientalism in the form of American imperialism, both of these assertions hold true. Perhaps the most important reason why a book written in 1978 can still be up-to-date in the present-day is its 'applicability' across the globe.

II. The Orient and the Occident in *Orientalism:*

In the Introduction, Said posits his purpose as follows: "(…) the phenomenon of Orientalism as I study it here deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and the Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient (the East as a career) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a 'real' Orient" (1978: 5). Despite his clarification that he is not really concerned with portraying the Orient, many critics have persisted in their comments about the underrepresentation or misrepresentation of the Orient. For instance, James Clifford criticizes Said since in his book "Orientalist inauthenticity is not answered by any authenticity" (1988: 260). Fred Halliday finds the category of the 'Orient' rather

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vague and considers it unwise to categorize it only as the Middle East which is depicted in Said's book as "in some ways special, at least in the kind of imperialist or oppressive writing produced about it" (1993: 158). Halliday points out that racist writing is not unique to a special geography, but can be found "about all subject peoples" and that it is not a historically valid argument to claim, as Said does, that there is a special European animosity to Arabs or to Muslims (1993: 158). According to John Mac Kenzie, Said fails to consider the historical development of imperial culture. He draws attention to the fact that while Britain's other was France in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Russia, Germany and the Soviet Union became her "other" along with France in the following century (Macfie 2000: 11). Another critic of his ahistoricity, Bernard Lewis, whom A.L. Macfie calls 'a traditional orientalist', insists that Said had made a number of 'arbitrary decisions' such as the reduction of the Orient to the Middle East and a concentration on the British and French imperialism (Macfie 2000: 111). In partial agreement with this piece of criticism, Said explains his objective in writing *Culture and Imperialism* to be not only providing a sequel to *Orientalism* but also further exploring some ideas that were underdeveloped in the previous book. In response to his interviewers from *boundary,* he points to the complimentary relation between the two books: "*Orientalism* didn't really cover Asia at all. So, I wanted to extend the analysis to include further and different places than the Arab and Islamic Near East. The second thing I wanted to do was to deal more extensively with the response to imperialism, that is to say, the resistances, as well as the oppositional work, of European and American intellectuals and scholars who couldn't be considered a part of the structure of things like *Orientalism*" (2003: 153).

Perhaps a more substantial criticism about *Orientalism* is regarding the question of representation and the position of the West in Orientalist discourse. As Dennis Porter posits, Said's main dilemma is whether or not truth can be really 'obtainable' in and through language

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(2001: 351). The main contradiction lies in the fact that while Said believes that there is no distinction between "pure and political knowledge," he also implies, as Porter puts it, that there is a real and knowable Orient. Along with Porter, Aijaz Ahmad also finds fault with Said's book which, to him, fails to decide whether Orientalism misrepresents the Orient simply because an authentic representation is impossible in the first place or Orientalism willfully distorts an otherwise representable objective reality (1992: 125). In fact, this is a question Said poses himself without providing his own stance. Since Said prefers to remain within a system of representations, that is the Orientalist discourse, 'the real issue', as he puts it, is "whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they *are* representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer" (2003: 272).

The most plausible criticism about the question of representation in *Orientalism* comes from Timothy Brennan who draws attention to the two dimensionality of Said's argument. He coins Said as a 'historical materialist', being fully aware of Said's reluctance to be associated with a certain school of thought. The first level in Said's argument, for Brennan is in line with a historically materialist one: "European knowledge production vis-à-vis the Orient took the form it did because it could. Europe controlled the land, the trade, the government registers, and the means of disseminating information" (Brennan 2001: 95). However, there is yet another level to Said's analysis which is usually studied independent of its relation to this so-called historically materialist position and is mainly for this reason severely criticized. Brennan writes that "The observation that on one could counter the European view gave way to the belief that no one need question it. It is essential in that sense to recognize that Said is speaking about a propaganda system at the same time as he is speaking about a self-generating system of images and values that professional

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intellectuals in a specific social setting create" (2001: 95). One thing that Brennan overlooks in this otherwise judicious perception is the fact that Orientalism is a two-way relationship in which the Orient plays as significant a role as the Occident, a point that has to a great extent been disregarded by Said as well.

Indeed, Orientalism is not simply a discourse that the West produced in order to dominate, but also to define itself. In that sense, the Orient serves almost like a temporary, nourishing, underground self without which the Occident cannot exist. As Said asserts in the introduction, "[This book] tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (1978: 1). However, Said seems to forget this reciprocal relation between the Orient and the Occident once he formulates it at the beginning: "The Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be "Oriental" in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it *could be* –that is, submitted to being –*made* Oriental" (1978: 5-6). After the introduction, almost the entire book seeks to understand Orientalism without responses from the Orient that actually partakes in the creation of this discourse. By disregarding the interactive nature of Orientalism, Said unwittingly endows the discourse with a stable perspective. Hence, Said's analysis is incomplete not because he underrepresents the Orient and betrays his Palestinian origins as some critics argue, but because he fails to study the interaction between the subject and the object, between the Occident and the Orient, as he had promised to do at the beginning of his book. Despite its validity, Orientalism is ultimately destined to remain as a system that relies on generalizations, and that has to disregard contingencies in order to exist. It is no coincidence that *Orientalism* does not mention Ottoman history, which includes almost six hundred years of domination of the region by an *eastern* imperialist country. On the other hand, to criticize Said for disregarding the Orient and not

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speaking up for the Orientals would not only be misunderstanding his main argument in the book, but also to leave aside a body of work he produced specifically about the Middle-East and the Palestine-Israeli conflict.

III. Methodological Framework in *Orientalism*:

Part of the criticism about Said's Eurocentric approach is related to his Foucauldian analysis, which he states in the introduction: "I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse, as described by him in *The Archeology of Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish,* to identify Orientalism" (1978: 3). Although Foucauldian notion of 'discourse' is certainly illuminating to understand the interconnection between power and knowledge in Orientalism and to *historically* locate it, the real problem with Said's methodology comes to the surface when he attempts to combine different discourses together. Another radical break with Foucault in Said's analysis is concerning the approach to history and to the concept of 'episteme'. As Ahmad too points out, "Now, the idea that there could be *a* discourse – that is to say, an epistemic construction –traversing the whole breadth of 'Western' history and textualities, spanning not only the modern capitalist period but all the preceding pre-capitalist periods as well, is not only an un-Marxist but also a radically un-Foucauldian idea" (1992: 166).

Another major 'flaw' in the theoretical framework in *Orientalism*, as Ahmad contends, is the "impossible reconciliation" between Foucauldian analysis with Auerbachian High Humanism and Nietzschean (Foucauldian) anti-humanism. However, Said himself does not see it as a flaw since 'consistency' is not among his major concerns in his work, as he explains to Bill Ashcroft: "You see it is very hard for me to map my interests –why is it that I am interested in this thing, why am I interested in all these other things? So I simply gave up and figured that one is moved in ways that are quite mysterious, and that it

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is better for me than trying to find some system to contain them all. I am invariably criticized by younger post-colonialists (Ahmad, etcetera) for being inconsistent and untheoretical, and I find that I like that- who wants to be consistent?" (Ashcroft 2001: 281).

However, a more poignant piece of criticism comes from Valerie Kennedy, who posits that the problem with Said's methodology is his wish to work within the humanist tradition in spite of the fact that it is almost impossible to disentangle Western humanism from its Eurocentric roots and from the supposition that Western culture is superior. Western humanist tradition supports "the idea of the civilizing mission which provided the rationale for colonial possession and imperial domination in the past and justifies neo-colonial economic inequality in the present" (Kennedy 2000: 34). The inconsistency for Said is to appropriate such a tradition into his discussion of a non-Western geography.

In fact, Said's theoretical inconsistency proves the fact that his purpose is to stay away from any totalizing system or theory while critiquing one such discourse, Orientalism. In his introduction to the first volume of *Edward Said,* Patrick Williams also posits that "[Said] is not a formulator of theories, nor an elaborator of conceptual systems (…) In fact, one of his particular worries is the way in which theoretical work can become an obstacle to a proper understanding of social and political realities" (Williams 2001: x). It is striking to note that although *Orientalism* became a pioneering work in postcolonial studies, Said is reluctant to refer to any specific theorist from this particular field (Williams 2001: 318). Being interviewed by Ania Loomba, a well-known scholar in the field, who asks him whether post-colonialism and Orientalism were subject to the same problems, Said frankly expresses his ignorance: "I would rather myself not talk about it because I do not think I belong to that. First of all I don't think colonialism is over, really. I don't know what they are talking about… So I think to use the word postcolonialism is really a misnomer and I think I referred to the

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problems of that term in the Afterword to *Orientalism* (qtd. in Williams 2001: 320).

One other important reason why Said feels so hesitant about postcolonial studies is the heightened jargon frequently used, which, according to him, is more concerned with style then with actual reality (interestingly, reminiscent of the main criticism *Orientalism* had received). Indeed, on a broader scale, he is not really interested in theoretical studies in general despite the fact that his work is read, responded to and taught in relation to its position in literary theory. His remarks made in 1991 are supportive of his estranged position: "I simply lost interest in literary theory about ten years ago. It just doesn't strike me as something that is of interest to me in what I'm doing on a given day" (qtd. in Williams 2001: 316).

IV. The role of the intellectual in *Orientalism*

Said's disapproval of literary jargon and his humanist approach, despite leading to various inconsistencies in his theoretical framework, are closely related to each other and signify an important aspect of his work: his concern to supply the individual agent with the ability to resist the power structures he sets out to disclose. Unlike Foucault, Said believes in the "determining imprint of individual writers." This belief is crucial both for his analysis of individual writers (in whose writings he believes, are imbedded the cultural context) and for his own stance as a writer. In his interview with *Diacritics,* he expresses sympathy to Harold Bloom's celebration of human activity while dismissing Bloom's political beliefs: "(…) [Bloom] has hit on something I find absolutely true: that human activity, and the production of work does not, cannot take place without power relationships of the sort he talks about in poetry. One doesn't just write: one writes against, or in opposition to, or in some dialectical relationship with other writers and writing, or other activity, or other objects" (Williams 2001: 12). This

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belief in the power of the human agency is central in Said's discussion of resistance on an individual basis.

This is also crucial in understanding the role ascribed to the intellectuals in *Orientalism:* to detach oneself from the dominant culture and to assume a critical consciousness. On the other hand, this ties another knot in Said's intellectual career. While Said advocates the freedom of speech and the power of the intellectual to be able to stand outside history in order to provide objective criticism (as Said claims to do for the Palestine-Israeli conflict), he also believes that writing is saturated with a certain ideology deeply imbedded in a specific socio-political context. He insists that "Writing is not free, nor is it performed uniquely by a sovereign writer who writes more or less as he pleases. Writing belongs to a system of utterances that has all sorts of affiliate, often considering relationships with the world of the nations, as Vico called it" (qtd. in Williams 2001: 19). As a result, what interests Said in the analysis of literature is to reveal the hidden historical experience that is implicated in the literary work. But how will he free himself of the system of utterances if all writing is ultimately not free? How can he, or any other intellectual, assume an objective stance if writing is not performed uniquely by a sovereign writer who would have control over his/her objectivity, who could not be able to decide not to be subjective? Said underlies the urgency of objectivity in intellectual life while simultaneously pointing out that subjectivity is unavoidable in writing. On a more subtle level, Said seems to be suggesting that the only way to maintain the ideal critic status is to be both metaphorically and literally always in a state of exile. As Said notes in *Representations of the Intellectual,* "exile for the intellectual in this metaphysical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others" (qtd. in Williams 2001: xix).

In his discussion of Said's ideas about the role of the critic in today's world, Patrick Williams suggests that "At what we might call the existential level, experience of loss, displacement, or non-belonging

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generates feelings of alienation or dissatisfaction which provide the ground for critical consciousness, while at the intellectual level this positioning lends itself to the necessary separation which allows a critical perspective (2001: xix). In order to obtain this critical perspective, Said introduces another necessary condition called 'worldliness' in *The World, the Text, and The Critic:* "Most of all, criticism is worldly and in the world so long as it opposes monocentrism, a concept I understand as working in conjunction with ethnocentrism, which licenses a culture to cloak itself in the particular authority of certain values over others" (qtd. in Gallagher 2001: 34). However, this all-encompassing position disenables any possibility for a particular commitment on the part of the critic. In other words, the critic's worldliness, being in limbo, deprives him/her of any political cause. Catherine Gallagher too points to the self-destructive nature of Said's proposal: "Thus in his desire for a confluence of critical-intellectual and political activity, Said empties the category of the political" (2001: 35).

This is an unexpected implication from a scholar whose work has been highly committed to the Palestinian cause, particularly after 1967 when Arab-Israel war broke out. Hence, Said seems to favor a postmodern state of uncommitment while simultaneously asking the critic/intellectual to speak up for underrepresented groups: "The intellectual's representations –what he or she represents and how those ideas are represented to an audience –are always tied to and ought to remain an organic part of ongoing experience in society; of the poor, the disadvantaged, the voiceless, the unrepresented, the powerless", Said argues in *Representations of the Intellectual* (qtd. in Williams 2001: xxii).

In writing *Orientalism*, Said has inaugurated a discussion about the role of the intellectual exposed to a segmented society led by prejudices and hearsay. He has also initiated a discussion about the role of the academia in general. Despite its defects and problems, Said

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considers the American university in general and Columbia in particular as "still one of the few remaining places in the United States where reflection and study can take place in an almost-utopian fashion" (qtd. in Williams 2001: xvi). Indeed, reading *Orientalism* raises fundamental questions such as what should be studied in the academia and what should be the subject matter in order to produce 'neutral or objective knowledge.' That these questions are inspired by Said's work proves his potential for self-criticism. Hence, Said's legacy is crucial and pioneering not only for a specific school of thought (i.e. postcolonial studies) but also for a much-needed discussion on the role and function of the whole academia in general.

Perhaps it is high time that *Orientalism* needs to be revisited once more –by someone who will take up what Said had left behind and will take recent events into consideration while building upon Said's legacy. Technological advancement and change in power structures in today's world are two important points that are related, but new, to the main tenets in *Orientalism.* The East-West polarity seems to have changed into a complex and constantly changing network of relations around the globe while high-tech knowledge has increased monitoring – as a result, a manifestly latent Orientalism is on the rise. Hence, it is crucial to re-define the Orientalist discourse. While Said's book can effectively be used to reveal power structures as abstract systems, it needs to be re-visited to address the consequences of the most revised version of Orientalism that pervades our daily lives as a result of the creation of a paranoia society.

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