

Edward Said and the Critique of the Orientalist Reason : From the Production of Knowledge to the Manufacturing of
Hegemony

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Abstract: This research paper aims to clarify Edward Said's critical project of the Orientalist Reason ,deconstructing Orientalism into an epistemological-authoritarian discourse aimed at hegemonic or Western domination of the East. It is not an innocent epistemological-academic discourse, but rather one in which the epistemological and the political are always intertwined. The Orientalist's goal was not to understand the East or to gain insight into its culture, history, civilization, and heritage. Rather, his goal was to employ knowledge to create negative intellectual patterns about the East for the purpose of controlling and dominating it, and for the colonial occupation of its lands. In this project, Edward Said relied on the ideas of Michel Foucault, who discussed the relationship between knowledge and power: knowledge produces power, and power reproduces knowledge, He applied this relationship to Orientalism, drawing on real-life examples, including the British occupation of Egypt, and the french occupation by napoleon.

Keywords : Edward Said and the critique of the Orientalist Reason , latent Orientalism, Manifest Orientalism.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Although the subject of Orientalism was addressed critically by Arab and Western researchers and thinkers before Edward Said, such as Anwar Abdel-Malek, Abdullah Laroui, Malek Bennabi, and the French Orientalist Jacques Berque (who criticized the colonialist tendency within Orientalism), none of them presented the subject in the same way as

Edward Said did in his book "Orientalism" (1978). This book is considered a decisive turning point in contemporary cultural and intellectual criticism. His study was not merely an examination of the image of the "Orient" in the Western imagination, but rather a gateway that opened wide horizons for critiquing the Orientalist mind as an epistemological system intertwined and interwoven with the mechanisms of power. For him, Orientalism is not an innocent epistemological-academic discourse, but rather a system of representation produced by Western academic and political institutions to consolidate the relationship of Western control and hegemony over the East. Thus, knowledge itself becomes a tool of power, and representations of the East are transformed into a colonial strategy aimed at subjugating the other through knowledge and Understanding it.

The importance of Edward Said's critique of Orientalist thought lies in dismantling the boundaries between thought or knowledge and politics within Orientalist discourse. The question posed is: How did Edward Said transform Orientalism from mere academic studies into a discourse of power and hegemony?

1-The Concept of Orientalism: Linguistically, the word "Orientalism" is derived from the word for the direction of sunrise. The verb "to go east" means to head east, and the "s" in "Orientalism" indicates a request, i.e., a request to study something in the East (Fawzi, 1998, p. 29). It refers, on one hand, to the East as a place, i.e., "the direction of the East," and on the other hand, it refers to the study of this geographical place (Orientalism). The word "Orientalism" is a translation of the English word. Although the words "Orient" and "East" are synonymous in indicating the meaning of the East, the word "East" usually refers to the eastern direction, the eastern side of everything, and is also used to refer to the eastern hemisphere of the globe. The word "Orientalism" is mostly used to refer to the countries located east of the Mediterranean Sea. Perhaps this is the reason why the words

"Orientalism" and "Orientalist" were borrowed from it. The terms "Orientalist" and "Orientalism" became common in translating the second word, "Orientalism." Orientalism, because the suffix "-ism" indicates knowledge of things "related to the East," not the eastern part of the earth (Zamani, 2014, p. 3).

As a technical term, it is a science that studies the languages, heritage, civilization, societies, past, and present of the peoples of the East. The study that deals with the Eastern world has been termed Orientalism, and the Westerners who conduct these studies are called Orientalists. They are a group of foreign historians and writers who have dedicated a part of their lives to studying and tracing the heritage, historical, religious, and social topics of the East (Alfayyumi, 1994, p17). This is Orientalism in its broad sense. There is also a specific concept that deals with studies related to the "Middle East," its language, literature, history, beliefs, laws, and civilization in general. Those who conduct these studies are called Arabists (Fawzi, 1998, p. 30). Orientalism in general is a Western science that studies the history of the East and its culture, civilization, sciences, and historical development constitute a field of scientific research in the West. Orientalism officially began in the Christian West through theological studies, with the issuance of the Vienna Church's decree in 1818 CE establishing several chairs of Arabic language in various European universities, including those in Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca. However, there is no precise date for the emergence of the first actual Orientalist movement or the first scholars who took an interest in the East from a practical academic perspective. Nevertheless, some historians of thought trace its origins to the migration of some monks to Andalusia during the golden age of Islamic civilization. These monks studied its culture and translated many Arabic books in the fields of medicine, mathematics, philosophy, and the Quran. When these monks returned to Western countries, they disseminated Arabic culture, translated its books, and transmitted them to their

homelands. (Faisal, 2018, p. 193) Orientalism can be traced back to a number of factors... The prominent motives that drove Orientalists to study and understand the East included the religious and missionary motive, which emerged among monks in the Middle Ages. Some missionaries were spies for their countries, working to create discord and unrest through various methods to enable their European nations to dominate the Arab and Islamic world politically and economically (Fawzi, 1998, p. 32). This reflects Europe's fear of Islam due to its cultural, religious, and military dominance over most of the globe. Europe was unable to withstand this tide. The second motive was colonial, represented by the political, economic, and military ambitions of European countries in the East. This is evident in the relationship between some Orientalists and their European governments, which utilized their expertise and knowledge to control the Eastern countries they studied (Fawzi, 1998, p. 34). In addition, there was the scientific motive, as some Orientalists were driven to understand Eastern civilization and culture with genuine scholarly desire and personal motivation. A personal hobby that developed into a profession for studying Islamic history, such as the Dutchman De Goeje (d.1959), the Englishman Arberry (d.1838), Katmer (d.1852), Casanova (d.1926), and others. We find their names in the book "The Orientalists" by Al-Aqiqi or "The Encyclopedia of Orientalists" by Abd al-Rahman Badawi, and sometimes we find them in the Encyclopedia Britannica. (Fawzi, 1998, pp. 36-37)

2. Orientalism According to Edward Said:

2.1. Orientalism as an Epistemological-Dominational Discourse: Orientalism, as an independent discipline with its own subject matter and methodology, did not emerge all at once or directly. Rather, it was the result of historical interests. The term began as a linguistic description of the Eastern world and as an academic subject of intellectual inquiry. It then evolved into a reality perceived and imagined by the West, acquiring a sense of realism, or it

became the sum of the attributes ascribed by the West to the Eastern world.

Therefore, Edward Said (1935-2003) argues that Orientalism is not merely an academic subject aimed solely at understanding Eastern culture. It is a field of study encompassing almost all of European culture. It is not a narrow specialization but a comprehensive discourse that provided the West with a specific and particular way of viewing and representing the East (that is, reconstructing and reformulating an image of the East within Western discourse). It appears in European culture, in its novels, in politics, in the visual arts, and in its scientific methodologies. Consequently, Orientalism is not a science. Neutral, rather, it is a discourse representing a system of ideas, representations, and writings produced by the West about the East. As Said states, "Nevertheless, we do not consider any aspect of this East to be purely imaginary. The East is an integral part of material civilization, represented culturally, and even intellectually, by Orientalism as a style of 'discourse' (i.e., thinking and speech) supported by institutions, vocabulary, scientific research, images, intellectual doctrines, and even colonial bureaucracies and methods" (Said, 2006, p. 41). Thus, Orientalism is not merely an academic field or a scientific project for understanding the other, but a broad field encompassing all of European culture and its view of the East. The simplest definition of Orientalism is that it is an academic discipline. An Orientalist is anyone who works in teaching, writing, or conducting research on topics related to the East, whether in the field of anthropology (the study of humankind), sociology, history, or linguistics, and whether it relates to general or specific aspects of the East (Said). (2006, page 44) That is, Orientalism, for him, has a broader and more comprehensive meaning. It is not merely writings about the East, but rather a comprehensive way of thinking based on epistemological and existential foundations, through which the world is divided into a duality: a backward, passive East, and a civilized, rational, and active West. It is a way of

understanding the world based on the absolute separation between the West and the East, considering them as two fixed and unchanging realities. Within this discourse, the East is viewed as a single entity with a nature fundamentally different from the West, as if it does not develop or diversify. Orientalism is not only a science that studies the East, but it is a Western epistemological and philosophical framework, or a Western discourse that determines how the East should be understood. It is a framework that deprives the East of its intellectual and historical independence. It is a kind of dualistic thinking that reinforces the centrality of the West and its existential and epistemological hegemony. Or it is a worldview that assumes that the East and the West are two separate realities that cannot meet, and that the West has the right to define and represent the East, as he says, Orientalism is a mode of thinking based on an existential and epistemological distinction between what is called "the East" and what is sometimes called "the West" (Said, 2006, p. 45).

In short, Orientalist discourse is not a scientific, objective, and neutral discourse that takes the East as an object of knowledge and study, separate from political, ideological, and cultural thought. Rather, it is a discourse politicized and ideologically driven, as Said argues, Orientalism is essentially a political doctrine imposed on the East because the East was weaker than the West, and because it ignored the East's distinctiveness stemming from its weakness (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 321). It is based on a paternalistic and condescending attitude from the West towards the East.

The East is seen as weak and dependent, needing to be ruled. Therefore, the goal of Orientalism is cultural and political hegemony over the East. "In short, Orientalism is a method of dominating, reconstructing, and controlling the East" (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, pp. 45-46). This means that the epistemological discourse of Orientalism transforms into an authoritarian discourse. Orientalism, as knowledge or the

study of the East, was not neutral; rather, it served colonial projects of domination over the East. Edward Said, in his analysis of this epistemological-authoritarian discourse of Orientalism, relied on a set of concepts borrowed from the French philosopher Michel Foucault, through his books "The Archaeology of Knowledge" and "Power and Punishment" (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 46), adopted the concept of discourse from him, which is that knowledge is not merely a reflection of reality, but rather a system of perceptions that determines what can be said and what cannot be said. Edward Said used this concept to show that Orientalism is a discourse, that is, not merely a collection of knowledge and information about the Orient, but rather a coherent intellectual system that produces and reproduces the image of the "Orient" within Western culture. He also adopted from Foucault the relationship between knowledge and power, where Foucault studied the relationship between them, especially how systems such as prison, school, and army were not merely disciplinary and educational institutions, but produced patterns of knowledge about individuals (psychology, criminology, military psychology....) He employed this idea to show that knowledge about the East was not innocent, but was linked to power and colonial domination over these societies (Said, *Orientalism - Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 46). The link between knowledge and power is what "created the image of the Oriental and, from a certain perspective, obscured his existence as a human being. This is not, in my view, a purely academic matter, yet it is a highly significant intellectual issue" (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 80). The relationship between knowledge and power was alluded to by the English philosopher Francis Bacon during the Renaissance when he said, "Knowledge is power," making scientific knowledge and the discovery of the laws of nature a means of controlling nature, and calling for a break with the Church. However, Edward Said employs this idea in the context of the cultural, political, and

military hegemony of the West over the East through Orientalism. (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 85).

Edward Said argues that the relationship between the West and the East, in its early stages, before the formation of Orientalist discourse, was one of discovery and intellectual curiosity to understand Eastern civilization. It was academic in nature, characterized by the proliferation of research and translations related to the history of Eastern culture and civilization. However, with Napoleon's campaign in Egypt in 1882, it transformed into a discourse imbued with political, economic, and military objectives. Therefore, Orientalist discourse is a dual discourse: an academic, intellectual dimension and a political and ideological dimension (Faisal, 2018, pp. 195-196). Orientalism, then, is a direct representation of Western discourse about the East, not an expression of the relationship between East and West. The West is the agent, having produced the discourse, while the East is the passive recipient, the focus of the discourse. It is a relationship of power and hegemony, a discourse based on racism, where the Westerner views the Arab or Muslim as inferior or as a being fundamentally different from the European, whether in their mental structure, behavior, or values. It is a discourse based on cultural stereotypes, a perception of... Through this lens, Western culture portrays the "East" as a space of laziness, inferiority, and irrationality an image that recurs in Western literature, art, and science. This discourse is based on an ideology that dehumanizes humanity, stripping Arabs and Muslims of their humanity and transforming them into objects of study and domination, instead of recognizing them as free subjects.

This discourse is also rooted in political imperialism. These perceptions did not remain confined to the realm of thought; they were used to justify Western colonial control over Arab and Muslim countries. This means that portraying Eastern peoples as backward or

incapable of self-governance led the West to see itself as their guardian. As Said states, (Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 79). Edward Said cites an example The British occupation of Egypt in 1882, and how Lord Arthur James Balfour (later British Foreign Secretary) delivered a speech in the Commons, the main chamber of the British Parliament, in 1910 using a logic that clarifies the relationship between knowledge and power. Balfour does not justify the British occupation of Egypt on the grounds of economic interest, but rather because the British know the Egyptians better than the Egyptians know themselves. The Egyptians are weak, incapable of governing themselves, politically immature, lacking rationality and organization, and deserving of guardianship from a more rational and advanced power. Therefore, British rule over Egypt becomes a civilizing duty, and thus Western knowledge of Egypt is not a neutral description but a rhetorical tool to affirm Western superiority. He says, "Knowledge, for Balfour, is the investigation of the course of a civilization, from its origins to its flourishing to its decline, and it naturally implies our ability to do so. Knowledge means rising above the present moment and transcending the self to reach the distant foreigner (the subject of knowledge, the East, is subject to meticulous examination due to the weakness of its nature... therefore, it must be stable)." Essentially, and even existentially, possessing this knowledge represents this thing, meaning controlling it or imposing authority over it (Said, *Orientalism- Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, pp. 85-86).

Institutions (universities, the press, parliaments, etc.) can be reduced to this idea in the following equation: Orientalist knowledge = a discourse of superiority. Colonial power = the practical application of this discourse. Knowledge produces power, and power reproduces knowledge—a concept he adopted from Foucault. Edward Said argues that Balfour's speech did not explicitly state that Egyptians were inferior and that the British were biologically and

intellectually superior. Rather, it framed its argument in a civilized, ethical manner. Balfour acknowledged Egypt's historical greatness, considering it a great nation with an ancient civilization. However, he used this acknowledgment to justify its current backwardness, claiming it required the intervention of an external power. In other words, Egyptians were great in the past, but now they are weak and need the British. Here, Balfour presents colonialism as a service and benefit to the colonized peoples, not merely an interest of the conquerors. Edward Said reveals a rhetorical trick employed by Balfour: racial superiority. The argument is not about the common good or the colonial duty, as he says... Balfour, in his speech, thus transforms knowledge into a tool for producing colonial power, and power, in turn, feeds and reinforces this knowledge. (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 87). From Balfour's preceding speech, Edward Said concludes that Orientalism has a collective dimension, namely "the whole West" in confrontation with "the East." He justifies hegemony with grand necessities. When he says "for the sake of Europe as a whole," he elevates the occupation from a local British interest—economic or political—to a universal mission linked to progress and civilization, because he does not recognize the Egyptians' right to self-determination. He connects British colonialism in Egypt to the whole of the West; it is not a British decision, but rather part of a mission. A shared European civilization, because he uses the first-person plural pronoun "we" to indicate that he represents not only himself, nor only the English, but Europe as a whole or the civilized world. He also embodies the weight of status and power, the superior Western man who possesses knowledge of the East. As Said says, "Because Balfour plays and represents various characters, the first of which is, of course, the character of 'the Englishman,' and he uses the first-person plural pronoun 'we' to refer to him, and he carries the full weight of the status of the powerful, prestigious man who feels he represents an expert who embellishes the history of

his nation. Balfour can speak on behalf of the civilized world, and on behalf of the West" (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 89).

Balfour's discourse is based on "knowledge" that is, we know and understand the Egyptians better than they understand themselves to justify power and domination over them. He then expands this discourse to make occupation a historical inevitability to protect Europe from Eastern chaos and to serve humanity. Therefore, Orientalism was not merely an academic or scientific discourse about the East, but a political and cultural structure that links knowledge. The understanding of the East through the lens of power (domination) over it, for the common interest of the West, namely protecting Europe from the Eastern people, and for the service of humanity. (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 88).

In addition to the British experience and its occupation of Egypt, Edward Said presented a model of the French experience, represented by Napoleon and his campaign in Egypt (1810-1798). This is another model that embodies the relationship between Orientalist knowledge and colonial hegemony. Napoleon did not only come with a military army, but also with an army of scholars and Orientalists who established a comprehensive, objective scientific project to study Egyptian society, its land, history, and language. The French occupation of Egypt, which was based on the fusion of science and politics, represents a model of modern Orientalism. It represents the stage that began during the latter part of the 18th century and the early years of the 20th century, where precise and systematic knowledge about the East was used to justify control over it and facilitate its subjugation. French control over Egypt represents a model of the connection between academic and scientific research and the colonial project, where Orientalist such as Ernest Renan ; and Edward William Lane emerged in the field of Islamic studies. (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 312). Edward Said goes on to distinguish between two types of Orientalism:

2.2- Latent and Overt Orientalism:

- **Latent Orientalism:** This refers to the sum of ideas ingrained in the European mind that separate Easterners from developed nations. It is the deep reservoir of preconceived images and ideas about the East that has accumulated in the European imagination over the centuries. It represents a set of fixed patterns and perceptions of the Eastern man, portraying him as backward, incapable of self-promotion, possessing a sensual inclination towards pleasure, shallow in thought, with a deviant mentality, and deficient. It serves as the Western cultural unconscious regarding the East. This differs from classical Orientalism, which was driven by intellectual curiosity. The Orientalist aimed to understand the ancient Eastern heritage, particularly in relation to linguistic and textual studies of the Quran, Arabic literature, jurisprudence, and tradition. Classical Orientalism focused on the past, isolated from social and political realities.

It is argued that latent Orientalism fostered a particular patriarchal perception, portraying the Western man as dominant and masculine, in contrast to the Easterner as a weak, subservient being deserving of guardianship. It is a fixed, rigid, and inflexible perception, as he says, "But latent Orientalism had other benefits (for Westerners). If these ideas allowed one to separate the Orientals from the advanced nations with their civilizing mission, and if the old 'classical' Orient justified the Orientalist's work and his disregard for modern Orientals, then latent Orientalism also encouraged a particular (if not hateful) masculine perception of the world" (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 326). This masculine perception evolved from a mere implicit idea about the Orient into a critical cultural and intellectual perspective used in literature, philosophy, and the study of religions. Islam became a central focus of this perception, with some thinkers, such as Leopold von Ranke and Jacob Burckhardt, launching attacks on Islam (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of*

the Orient, 2006, p. 327), considering it an embodiment of weakness. The East, incapable of progress, and the religion of backwardness—here Orientalism appears in its most blatant form.

-Manifest Orientalism: is the direct, clear, and declared discourse that expresses this perception in the form of Orientalist theories, policies, writings, or administration. It is an expression of, and stems from, latent Orientalism. Among the texts Edward Said uses is that of Lord Evelyn Baring Cromer (British High Commissioner in Egypt, 1883-1911), in which Cromer illustrates overt Orientalism. This translates into stereotypical ideas and a direct colonial discourse, portraying the Egyptian (and the East in general) as incapable of rational, abstract thought, unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, or between sound and flawed logic. His judgment and political participation are deemed unreliable. It is a blatant political discourse that portrays Egyptians in an essentially negative light, characterized by shallowness, incapacity, and irrationality. At the same time, the West presents itself as... As the possessor of logic, reason, and knowledge an argument used as a pretext to justify British control over Egypt Cromer continues his argument, saying, "If the Egyptian, due to his intellectual shallowness, is unable to grasp that French logic is based on some kind of falsehood, or if the Egyptian shows a tendency to superficially like the Frenchman, preferring him to the unattractive seriousness and activity of the Englishman or the Frenchman" (Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2006, p. 332). This discourse is part of constructing a colonial stereotype; it is not neutral. It portrays the Egyptian as a superficial, emotional being, influenced by appearances rather than substance, in order to demonstrate European superiority. The Frenchman appears as the attractive civilized one, the Englishman as the strong and composed man, while the Egyptian is merely a recipient of this image, lacking an independent stance. This leads to the creation of psychological and cultural

classifications of Egyptians and Easterners in general to justify their subjugation.

Finally, it can be said that the latent Orientalism is like a deep cultural repository, and manifest is its practical and political application.

3. The Impact of Edward Said's Critique:

1.3 Arab and Western Reactions to His Thesis: Edward Said's thesis on Orientalism as a cognitive-authoritarian discourse provoked Arab and Western reactions. The Orientalist debate between Arab intellectuals, on the one hand, and Orientalists, on the other, cannot be understood except within its general framework, which is the ongoing conflict between East and West. This is because discourses are an expression of the entity from which they originate. Arab-Islamic discourses express the views of Arabs and Muslims, just as Orientalist discourses express the views of the West, its interests, and its privileges. War is not always waged with firearms or through economic and material means; it can also be waged through verbal discourse, which can sometimes become a more effective and lethal tool than actual physical weapons. (Others, 2000, pp. 7-8) Regarding Arab reactions, the thinker Sadiq Jalal al-Azm is considered one of the first to respond to Edward Said's book "Orientalism and Orientalism Reversed" (1981). Although he agrees with Said that Orientalism was not innocent and played a role in the colonial project, he criticizes it from within Said's own critical project. Al-Azm argues that the myth of fixed natures, which represents the metaphysics of Orientalism and is based on two absolute propositions—East is East, and West is West, each with its own essential nature and distinctive, fixed characteristics—undermines the fundamental objectives for which Edward Said conducted his critical study. This is for two main reasons: first, because it implicitly returns us to a mode of thinking and reasoning based on the silent acceptance of fixed natures and permanent characteristics, the very myth against which Edward Said declared total war; and second, because it transforms

Orientalism, in its metaphysics, transforms relative geographical designations into absolute and necessary categories, lending them a kind of credibility and validity. Said's aim, however, was to definitively abolish the categories of "East" and "West" in the metaphysical sense of the term, and to transcend these divisions, laden with racism and supremacy, to a higher level. (Others, 2000, p. 10)

Sadiq Jalal al-Azm also rejects Edward Said's notion that this Orientalist perspective is deeply ingrained in the European mind since antiquity, from Homer to the contemporary Orientalist Gustav von Grunebaum, passing through Daniel, Flaubert, and Karl Marx, because it blindly perpetuates the myth of a fixed, essential Western or European nature. (Others, 2000, page 11) Dr. Hashem Saleh believes that Edward Said raises a complex problem that is the relationship of knowledge to power, or between the will to knowledge and the will to power, and he presents it based on the idea of "Foucault." But does this theory mean that there is no knowledge without power, and is knowledge power and power knowledge, or that truth does not exist innocently and free from all relations of power, hegemony and authority? These are complex and intricate questions that require both the epistemology and sociology of knowledge. Furthermore, Foucault was not an Orientalist; rather, he specialized in critiquing the foundations of Western civilization, exposing its archaeological roots, and examining how it was formed in the classical era of the 17th and 18th centuries. (Et., 2000, p. 12) He argues that if Orientalism, as a discipline, accompanied colonialism, and if Jewish settlement in Palestine constitutes the largest gradual colonization process in modern history of an entire land and its people, then we cannot blame Edward Said for his anti-Orientalist stance. What we do criticize him for is his extreme application: considering knowledge merely as an obedient servant of power, and denying any independence between them. (Others, 2000, p. 14)

Some researchers, such as Aziz al-Azmeh, Abdul Nabi, and Sadiq Jalal al-Azm, accused Edward Said of being overly subjective and emotional. They argued that Said sacrificed the truth in scientific research to appease the emotions of the Arab and Muslim masses (even if those emotions were legitimate). They considered this sacrifice not to be the best way to engage with history, and that framing problems in this manner signifies the triumph of ideological discourse over epistemological discourse (Bouharish, 2021, p. 63). Therefore, we find some dissenting thinkers who accused Edward Said of approaching Orientalism from an ideological perspective. His book "Orientalism," which dealt with Middle Eastern issues to the exclusion of other regions, served political purposes. Critic Haitham al-Nahi argues that many Westerners, such as Maxime Rodinson and Jacques, considered Said's thesis to have rendered Orientalism something contrary to and shameful for academic scholarship. Burke, William Montague Watt, Bernard Lewis, Ijaz Ahmad, and others accused Said of focusing on the racism and hostility he found among Orientalists against Arabs, and of not giving importance to their humanitarian achievements. (Others, 2000, p. 23)

The oldest and most widespread accusation against Orientalism, put forward by Edward Said, is that it was the tool and facilitator of European colonial penetration of the East, and of the Islamic world in particular. According to this view, the Orientalist was always the vanguard explorer who preceded colonialism and paved the way for it. As an ally and technical advisor to the European merchant, politician, or exploiter, he was one of those responsible, if not the primary one, for the evils that befell Eastern peoples as a result of colonialism. However, this should not be exaggerated or generalized, because there has been scientific exploration of Eastern civilizations in the past, and this exploration has contributed to revealing the extent and value of these civilizations' contribution to general history. Generalizing here is a condemnation based on confusion and fallacy. Indeed, there were

some Orientalists who acted as agents and tools of colonialism, including consuls, ambassadors, merchants, missionaries, military personnel, and technicians, who could be tried if necessary. But there were also a considerable number of Orientalists who distinguished between their scholarly interests and their objectives. The political goals of their countries, and indeed they stood against the political goals of their countries. (Al-Siba'i, *The Absence of a Year of Publication*, p. 25)

It must be acknowledged that many Orientalists had a dubious scholarly objective: to cast doubt on the authenticity of the Prophet's message and its divine origin. The majority of them denied that the Prophet was a divinely inspired prophet, and thus they floundered in interpreting the manifestations of revelation. Some attributed them to epilepsy that afflicted the Prophet from time to time, others to hallucinations that filled the Prophet's mind (peace be upon him), and still others interpreted them as a mental illness (Al-Siba'i, *The Absence of a Year of Publication*, pp. 26-29).

As for the critics who were influenced by Edward Said and adopted his thought, there is the Syrian critic Rana Qabbani, who was so inspired by his ideas that her dissertation (doctoral thesis) was titled "European Myths about the Orient," in which she expressed all the ideas that Edward Said addressed in his book **Orientalism**, after spending many years in the libraries and publications of Cambridge Library, drawing from its Victorian sources, to culminate the fruit of these years in a doctoral dissertation in 1978, a dissertation of utmost importance, and she says that it was Edward Said who inspired her to undertake it. The investigations indicate that Edward Said was viewed with hostility by that university because his thought was political, and also because he was Palestinian. Despite this, she risked her own position to champion Said's ideas and support his just humanitarian message, due to her strong belief in the efficacy of his thought. (Bouharish, 2021, p. 63) Edward Said's

supporters are numerous, and this article cannot include them all.

. 3,2-The Impact of Edward Said's Research on the Emergence of Postcolonialism: His book "Orientalism" (1978) is considered a foundational text for the emergence of postcolonialism, a critical field that studies how the impact of colonialism persists in culture, knowledge, and identity after its political end. Edward Said laid the groundwork for this field by deconstructing the discourse of Orientalism and revealing the relationship between knowledge and power.(Al-Akhdar,2024, P557) This opened the door for many thinkers to expand the discussion, such as Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Bill Ashcroft, Garrett Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, Anya Loomba, Jo Amsel, Jack Moore-Gilbert, Leila Ghandi, Fakhri Saleh, Subhi Hadidi, and Kamal Dib. All of them contributed to shaping the field of postcolonialism, building upon the ideas of its true founder, Edward Said (Bhabha, 2004, pp. 103-104), and Frantz Fanon, who wrote "The Skin of the Colonialists." "Black and White Masks" and "The Wretched of the Earth" focus on the psychological impact of colonialism, and how it generates an inferiority complex among the colonized. Homi Bhabha, in his book "The Position of Culture," sees Fanon as representing a radical thought and an agent of violated truth, rejecting the colonial experience based on the dualities: black/white. Colonizer/colonized, self/other—these dualities create a sharp division in identity and human experience, forcing the human self into a painful conflict. For colonized peoples, the self or identity is torn between its original language and culture and its assimilation into the colonial culture. This is what is called a distorted self, self-alienation, or internal schism. Homi Bhabha, in this book, argues that Frantz Fanon, despite his genius, remained captive to this binary division. For Fanon, this division is not merely a predicament; it carries a dramatic and enigmatic sense of change. The tension between black/white, self/other, can create new spaces for transformation and the blurring of identities. Identity is not fixed or rigid. Through

this conflict and incomplete duality, a "third space" emerges, where the self and identity are reformulated in a new, hybrid way.(Baba, 2004, pp. 104-105). The conflict between colonizer and colonized, their exchange, and their imitation all contribute to the formation of a hybrid identity—a "Space Third" or "Hybridity." Homi Bhabha reinterpreted Frantz Fanon's concept of the alienated self in her own country, a concept Fanon developed while working as a psychiatrist in Blida (Algeria), and reinterpreted it from the perspective of the hybrid self. He broadened the discussion to encompass postcolonial cultures and identities.

Conclusion: From the above, we can conclude that Orientalism is not merely a neutral and innocent academic field of knowledge, but rather a discourse in which the epistemological and the political intertwine, based on an authoritarian vision that produced images. A negative stereotype of the East was challenged by Edward Said's critical project, which sought to expose the link between knowledge and hegemony, highlighting the two faces of Orientalism: the latent, which constitutes the deep-seated Western mental framework toward the East, and the overt, which manifests itself in direct political discourse. His critical project had a wide-ranging impact, both in the Arab world, where it revived awareness of the mechanisms of Orientalist representation (despite some opponents who argued that it was an ideological project that conflated science and ideology), and in the West, where it opened up the debate on the limits of objectivity in the humanities. This critique also played a role in paving the way for the emergence of postcolonialism, a movement deepened by thinkers such as Fanon, Homi Bhabha, and others, through their examination of the relationship between colonizer and colonized, identity, and alienation.

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