Orientalism Studies

ORIENTALISM AS AN IDEOLOGY

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19 June 2020

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to examine the utility of Said's influential notion of ideology for the study of Orientalism. It begins with a survey of his use of the term, "ideology," and finds that he considers ideologies to be unjust, false, and pernicious misrepresentations of reality. A brief survey of broader scholarly investigations into the notion of ideology concludes it is more malleable and pliable than Said's usage suggests. The essay then surveys scholarly uses of Said's approach to Orientalist ideologies and finds the Saidian model functions as a useful but provocative guide for the study of Orientalist ideologies because: (1) it provides students with a clear description of what constitutes Orientalist ideologies; and (2) it is so entirely negative that it provokes a healthy skepticism about its applicability in given cases.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to 1978, "Orientalism" was understood in scholarly circles to refer to the academic study of the Orient and "Orientals," which was conducted by a class of scholars known as "Orientalists". In the realm of aesthetics, it meant sets of exotic, mysterious, and even sensuous styles of art and crafts that represented the "true being" of the East. In 1978, however, Edward W. Said, a Palestinian-American professor of English at Columbia University, published one of the most influential scholarly works of the later 20th century, entitled simply *Orientalism*, in which he argues that Orientalism is much more than an academic field of study or an art style. It is the way in which Westerners have long used sets of stereotypes to think about "the Orient" and it inhabitants, which stereotypes imagine an inferior, deficient East. Benjamin Isakhan (2010) calls *Orientalism* a "seminal text" that demonstrates on the basis of impressive, wide-ranging research that Orientalism is "an ideological fantasy" that has nothing to do with the real world of non-Europeans. Instead, he writes, "orientalism has served to homogenize, demonize and stereotype the non-European world according to fairly reductive and negative terms, so that the oriental was viewed as the 'other'." Not every scholar of Orientalism today will be so fulsome in their praise of Said, but few if any would disagree that he considered Orientalism to be "an ideological fantasy." Few, indeed, would disagree with the larger notion that ideologies are fanciful, reductive, and negative misrepresentations of reality.

It can be argued, in fact, that the most succinct summary of Said's understanding of the notion of Orientalism is that it is an ideology. Everything else is commentary. Yet, Said seems to have simply assumed that ideologies are by their very nature negative and that there is an intimate connection between them and Orientalism, which is not surprising since the use of the notion of ideology to mean false representations of reality or "false consciousness" is itself a long-standing usage that goes back to Hegel and Marx.[1] It is also not surprising because many other scholars share his pejorative understanding of the notion of ideology and assume it in their own research.

Said's notion of ideology is important because, as Isakhan noted, *Orientalism* is a seminal work, so much so that his influence in the study of Orientalism can hardly be overstated. Love him or hate him, his assumptions, arguments, and approaches are pervasive. If Said defines Orientalisms as ideologies and ideologies as false representations of reality, these definitions matter.

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[1] See Maurice Cranston, "Nesting Orientalisms," 6 November 2012. At *Encyclopædia Britannica* (https://www.britannica.com/topic/ideology-society), accessed 5 May 2020.

As we shall see, however, the notion of ideology itself is a complex one, which scholars wrestle with and argue over. It seems wise, then, to consider how Said understands the notion and to investigate how useful it has been as a tool for studying Orientalism. *To be clear, our concern here is not to establish whether or not Said's usage of the notion of ideology is "right" or "wrong" but rather to investigate the utility of his use of it for studying the phenomenon of Orientalism.* And, to emphasize the point just made above, our focus here is on Said because his influence is pervasive in the study of Orientalism not least among those who disagree with him. We will begin, then, by examining his conception of the notion of ideology, then briefly reflect on the possibility of alternative conceptions of the notion, and then examine in greater detail the ways in which scholars are using his approach for the study of Orientalism.

SAID'S NOTION OF IDEOLOGY

In the opening paragraphs of *Orientalism*, Said briefly defines Orientalism as being "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience." (p. 1). He emphasizes that the reality of "the Orient" for Europe is not simply a matter of the imagination. It is, rather, a very real part of "European material culture," and he observes, "Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even *ideologically* as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles." (p. 2, *italics added*). Orientalism is real, and it is embedded in European culture as well as (by the way) European ideologies.

Said doesn't exactly slip the notion of ideology into this opening description of Orientalism, and it is not even an afterthought as it stands right next to culture as being a significant way Europeans manifest their Orientalism in the real world. Yet, it is almost as if Said is working away on Orientalism at his workbench and reaches over and picks up a chisel labeled, "ideology," as one of the tools he needs for his task. In this same somewhat off-handed way, he also associates ideologies with the notion of "discourse," which he borrows from the French philosopher, Michel Foucault, to describe the ways in which the inherited ideas and commonly held beliefs of a culture constrain and largely determine what people think, say, and write regarding a given object—such as "the Orient". According to Foucault, such discourses define what is perceived to be reality, give it meaning, and embody its supposed truth in ways that have little to do with actual objective reality. Those who share a common "discursive reality" are not free to think whatever they like and are instead largely constrained to follow the "party line" on whatever matters are at hand.

While Said may have somewhat off-handedly made use of the idea of ideology in his opening description of Orientalism and doesn't bother to define it, it is clear that for him the notion itself is fraught with meaning and significance. In Foucault and Said's thinking, discourses have a huge amount of cognitive power, which seems to be expended largely to replace the real world with a more-or-less illusory one constructed out of what a discursive community fancies to be true. Ideologies as discourses are thus iron-fisted and mind-shuttering ways of seeing, interpreting, and falsifying reality. They are bad. It is as simple as that.

As Said marshals his arguments, he continues in this almost subterranean fashion to draw on his understanding of ideology and unfolds it's meaning as he goes along. He thus observes that the Orient is a cultural phenomenon and that Orientalism is expressed in ways that connect it to "*ideology*, politics, and the logic of power." (p. 24, *italics added*). As we will see in the following section, most general definitions of the notion of ideology identify it with politics and with power relationships between contending elements of a society. Said's understanding of what defines an ideology, thus, reflects general usage of the term although, as we are discovering, his use is a notably pejorative one. He goes on to make it clear that this connection between ideology, politics, and power is profoundly important for him personally as a Palestinian-American, arguing that there is a broad consensus in the United States that people such as himself have no political reality of their own unless it is as a "nuisance or as an Oriental." He writes that in a larger sense, "The web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, *dehumanizing ideology* holding in the Arab or the Muslim is very strong indeed, and it is this web which every Palestinian has come to feel as his uniquely punishing destiny." (p. 27, *italics added*). It's not just that ideology is "bad" in and of itself, but also

that it keeps company with such cognitive cronies as racism, stereotypes, and imperialism. Said uses the notion of ideology, that is, as one member of a racist, imperialistic, and dehumanizing web of meanings that stereotypes Arabs and Muslims.

Said's *Orientalism* builds on his personal experiences to engage in a critical investigation into the history of the British, French, and American academic study and intellectual understanding of the Orient, which he argues was profoundly infected with a Western Orientalist ideology that imagined Orientals as being essentially and irredeemably inferior to the West. He then goes on to write, "In addition, a great deal of what was considered learned Orientalist scholarship in Europe pressed *ideological myths* into service, even as knowledge seemed genuinely to be advancing." (p. 63, *italics added*). Orientalist scholarship, that is, looked like it was producing real-world knowledge, but in actual fact it was regurgitating discourses that amounted to little more than fanciful lies. As for Orientalist scholars themselves, according to Said even in 1978 they continued to trade in caricatures of "the Orient" drawn from their storehouse of ideologically driven misinformation. They still treated Arab and Muslim peoples simplistically, as if they comprised a single, superficial whole that was best understood by the Orientalist professors themselves. They were still unsympathetic to Asian voices and concerns as they continually warned the rest of the world to beware of militant Arab-Islamic intentions to dominate it. (See p. 108).

The process by which this entire ideological package works in the academic world is clear and straightforward so far as Said is concerned. He states,

> The result for Orientalism has been a sort of consensus: certain things, certain types of statement, certain types of work have seemed for the Orientalist correct. He has built his work and research upon them, and they in turn have pressed hard upon new writers and scholars. Orientalism can thus be regarded as a manner of regularized (or Orientalized) writing, vision, and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and *ideological biases* ostensibly suited to the Orient. The Orient is taught, researched, administered, and pronounced upon in certain discrete ways. (p. 202, *italics added*).

This is, according to Said, how the Orientalist scholars proceeds: they begin with a set of ideological assumptions, which act as guardrails that limit what they learn to what they think they should learn; they indoctrinate new generations of researchers to accept these assumptions as being sensible and reliable; and they build their assumptions into an institutional superstructure that covers everything from the classroom to journal articles to scholarly conferences and everything in between. It is a closed system passed on from generation to generation that is well-crafted to conjure a convincingly realistic-looking body of knowledge about the Orient out of the ideological thin air of European fanciful, imaginary imaginings.

The end product of Orientalist scholarship is what Said calls, "an *invidiously ideological* portrait of 'us' and 'them'." (p. 299, *italics added*). One of the things he emphasizes time and again is the power and persuasiveness of Orientalist ideologies. They have been and continue to be backed by the armed might and massive political power of the great colonial and imperial powers of the last two-plus centuries. And they virtually own the academic establishments of those nations, which churn out vast amounts of "expert" opinions, tracts, studies, and learned works aimed at stereotyping especially Arabs and Muslims but also the other peoples of Asia as well. Said had a particular disdain for Bernard Lewis, the British American historian at Princeton University whose area of expertise was the Arab-Islamic Orient. He observes of Lewis that, "Yet for at least a decade and a half his work in the main has been *aggressively ideological*, despite his various attempts at subtlety and irony." (p. 316, *italics added*). He goes on to claim that Lewis' supposedly learned works are hardly more than propaganda that serve as prime examples of the scandalous nature of Orientalist scholarship, which single-mindedly seeks to demean and discredit the Arabs and Islam. Said cites examples of how Lewis brands Islam as being merely an irrational anti-Semitic ideology and a "fearful mass phenomenon" that rules Muslims through passion, instincts, and hatred. According to Said, Lewis' Islam does not develop; it and its adherents "merely are," and its very essence is hatred of Christianity and Judaism. Thus, according to Said, "The core of Lewis's ideology about Islam is that it never changes." (p. 317).

In the pages of *Orientalism*, in sum, Said defines Orientalist ideologies as being "dehumanizing" as well as "invidious". They are part of a larger web that includes racism, stereotypes, and imperialism. He refers to "ideological myths" and "ideological biases". He accuses Lewis of being "aggressively ideological." Further on he alludes to the way Orientalists characterize Orientals with a "strident ideology" masked by their own scholarly sense of "absolute certainty backed by absolute force" (p. 307). He writes of the "ideological fictions" that shackle Orientalist minds (p. 328). Said's definition of the notion of ideology, then, is that ideologies *are* all of these things: dehumanizing, invidious, strident, and aggressive myths, fictions, shackles, and biases. Nowhere in the book do we find any sense that Orientalist ideologies are anything other than pernicious cognitive webs of meaning that spread falsehoods, slander, and racist stereotypes. They are bad—very bad. And they are bad because they are ideologies.

After 1978, Said continued to turn to the notion of ideology to describe the nature of Orientalism, including especially in an article entitled, "An Ideology of Difference" (1985), in which he examines a key set of Israeli and Zionist ideologies also found among Israel's international supporters including especially Western academics and intellectuals. Jewish Israelis, according to Said, long dealt with the Palestinians by ignoring them almost as if they did not exist. The rise of Palestinian nationalism, however, forced Israel to turn its attention to the Palestinians and to develop policies to deal with them. According to Said, Israel articulated these policies through a set of ideologies that branded the Palestinians as being aliens who must be isolated from Israel itself, and he argues that it implemented policies based on these ideologies so that, **"**Ideology and practice thus support each other." (p. 44) This ideological complex of stereotypes and policies was used to frame Palestinians both practically and racially. Practically, Israel's ideologies of difference and separation framed them as being "a problem" that had to be solved. Racially, it stereotyped them as being essentially terrorists. Said insists that Israelis had no conscious sense that they were actually thinking ideologically. They thought, rather, they were dealing with the "real world" in what seemed to them like a very natural, practical way, which Said likens to an "ideological infection" that has caused incalculable human misery and produced "numerous *inhibiting ideologies* and doctrines, most of them glossed over by fraud, deceit, and utter contempt for the truth." (p. 56-57, *italics added*).

Said here reaffirms his thesis from *Orientalism* that Orientalist ideologies falsify reality in ways that can be profoundly hurtful. But, what is particularly clear in this article is that he also sees them as being pernicious in that those who hold those ideologies are blind to their existence as ideologies. For them, their ideologies *are* reality. In the scholarly world, this is called, "reification," which is the process by which the human mind takes an abstract concept, idea, or belief and imagines it to be really and actually a real-world reality. The abstract is made concrete. Imagination becomes common sense. Hurtful, deceitful, and pernicious ideologies camouflage themselves as reality, which explains the power they have to do so much harm to so many.

In an article published near the end of his life entitled, "Impossible Histories: Why the Many Islams Cannot be Simplified" (2002), Said returns again to the role Orientalist ideologies play in shaping reality. He argues that Islam is so historically, geographically, culturally, and religiously complex and diverse that it cannot be treated as a single entity. There is no such thing as a singular "Islam" in the real world. There are, instead, uncountable numbers of "Islams". In the eyes of the West, however, a singular and powerful Islam has become a threat that it cannot ignore. Said recalls,

> In my book *Orientalism*, I argued that the original reason for European attempts to deal with Islam as if it were one giant entity was polemical—that is, Islam was considered a threat to Christian Europe and *had to be fixed ideologically*, the way Dante fixes Muhammad in one of the lower circles of hell. ("Impossible Histories," p. 71, *italics added*)

As he wrestled with the pain and injustice suffered by Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims, Edward Said was deeply impressed by the ways in which Western ideologies were the source of their pain and suffering. In a powerful but devious way, those ideologies could transform the complex realities of Islamic faith into cartoon-like caricatures, which can then be manipulated to enforce their perpetrators' political and military will. These ideologies are also convenient to Western Orientalist

academics and other commentators who pass themselves off as being the "experts" who *really* know what Orientals are *really* like. Such was the nature of ideology according to Said.

All of this seems very grim. From Said's perspective, discursive Orientalist ideologies appear to have almost overwhelming cognitive power to undermine thought and behavior. Still, he acknowledges at the end of *Orientalism* that there is hope else he would not have bothered to write the book at all. He describes two groups of vigilant, self-critical scholars who can escape the clutches of Orientalist ideologies: *first*, there are those who work in fields outside of the mainstream of the Orientalist academic and ideological tradition of whom he observes, "Today there are many individual scholars working in such fields as Islamic history, religion, civilization, sociology, and anthropology whose production is deeply valuable as scholarship." As long as these scholars are vigilant and reject the Orientalist tradition, they can do good work. For example, "An excellent recent instance is the anthropology of Clifford Geertz, whose interest in Islam is discrete and concrete enough to be animated by the specific societies and problems he studies and not by the rituals, preconceptions, and doctrines of Orientalism." (p. 326). *Second*, Said allows that even "…scholars and critics who are trained in the traditional Orientalist disciplines are perfectly capable of freeing themselves from the old *ideological* straitjacket." (p. 326, *italics added*). Jacques Berque and Maxime Rodinson are two examples of whom he observes, "What one finds in their work is always, first of all, a direct sensitivity to the material before them, and then a continual self-examination of their methodology and practice, a constant attempt to keep their work responsive to the material and not to a doctrinal preconception." He mentions examples of other scholars who are "critical readers and students of what goes on in other fields." (p. 327). The antidote to Orientalism, in sum, is scholarly self-awareness, a narrow focus on specific cultures and societies, a sensitive ability to read critically, knowledge of other fields of study, and an utter rejection of stereotypical Orientalist ideologies.

While the thesis that certain classes of scholars can escape the ideological clutches of Orientalist thinking seems hopeful, in truth, it also serves to reinforce Said's sense of the power ideologies have over the human mind. There should be, theoretically speaking, people other than scholars who can also free themselves from the iron grip of their society's ideological prejudices, but we have to assume that such individuals are creative, independent thinkers and thus likely to be relatively few in number. Said, at that, singles out only a finite number of scholars as being capable of freedom, which number he characterizes vaguely as "many". Orientalist ideologies presumably cloud the minds of all others including the general public. His views are thus also more than a little elitist: only wise, critically adept scholars have any hope of gaining a liberated understanding of reality. Such is the debilitating, pernicious power of ideologies over all but a small minority.

It seems that Said did not entertain the possibility that ideologies themselves could in one way or another be of positive benefit or even simply neutral, neither good nor bad. Even if he ever did, the negative manner in which he consistently uses the notion suggests that he would have not taken the possibility of neutral or beneficent ideologies seriously. In another piece published just weeks before his death entitled, "A Window on the World" (2003), Said reflects on how little things had changed in the 25 years since the publication of *Orientalism*, especially in American foreign policy regarding the Middle East. He writes,

> It is surely one of the intellectual catastrophes of history that an imperialist war confected by a small group of unelected US officials was waged against a devastated third world dictatorship on *thoroughly ideological grounds* having to do with world dominance, security control and scarce resources, but disguised for its true intent, hastened and reasoned for by orientalists who betrayed their calling as scholars. (n.p., *italics added*)

In the article, he uses the word, "ideology," only this one time, but there it is, his chisel labeled, "ideology," which he uses one last time to describe how "a small group of unelected US officials" justified the United States' self-serving invasion of Iraq and the pain and suffering that followed. He laments again the role of unscrupulous Orientalist scholars as agents of this ideology. His phrase, "on thoroughly ideological grounds," furthermore, suggests rather clearly that he sees ideologies as having a thoroughly singular nature through and through, and throughout his scholarly career when

Said wanted to name such ideologies he reached into his toolbox for that same "ideology" chisel that he had relied upon from the opening pages of *Orientalism*. Ideology really, actually, and seriously is not a good thing in any way, shape, or form. End of story.

Edward Said, in sum, defined the notion of Orientalism as an ideology, which imagines and constructs Orientals, particularly Arab and Muslim Orientals, as having an essential, shared, fixed, and inferior racial identity. This ideological Orientalism is comprised of sets of complex verbal and behavioral discourses embodied in European languages, cultures, learning, institutions, and values, which the West, including its scholars, use to dominate and exploit Asians. These ideologies have three fundamental characteristic: *first*, they are dehumanizing and hurtful; *second*, they are false representations of reality that have little or nothing to do with the real world; and *third*, ideologies are pernicious, meaning that they have the power, covert as well as overt, to constrain the thinking of those who are infected by them, blinding them to reality.

Stated most succinctly, Said's lifelong understanding of Orientalism was grounded in his understanding that ideologies are hurtful, false, and pernicious, and it is this thoroughly negative notion of the nature of ideologies that informs his highly influential model for the study of Orientalist ideologies. The issue before us, as we stated above, is the utility of this model. As we can begin such an inquiry it is helpful to look at how scholars who study the concept of ideology frame it, and we turn to that task in the next section.

<p align="center">REFLECTIONS ON THE NOTION OF IDEOLOGY</p>

In the writings of Edward W. Said, the meaning of ideology is painfully clear and reflects a long-standing popular use of the term by which there is virtually nothing good about ideologies. Still, his definition is not the only one "out there," especially today, and the fact that there are other interpretations of the notion of ideology has potentially significant implications for the way in which students of Orientalism understand the notion. The question now before us, then, is how scholars outside of the field of Orientalism studies have wrestled with the notion of ideology and what light they shed on the utility of Said's understanding of the notion.

In one sense, the word, "ideology," is quite easily defined in a sentence or two. The *Cambridge Dictionary* online defines it as being "a set of beliefs or principles, especially one on which a political system, party, or organization is based." Maurice Cranston's *Britannica* online entry begins by defining ideology as "a form of social or political philosophy in which practical elements are as prominent as theoretical ones. It is a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it." *Wikipedia* opens its entry with the observation that, "An ideology is a set of beliefs and values attributed to a person or group of persons, especially as held for reasons that are not purely epistemic." Finally, *Dictionary.com* defines ideology as being, "the body of doctrine, myth, belief, etc., that guides an individual, social movement, institution, class, or large group" and that refers to "some political and social plan, as that of fascism, along with the devices for putting it into operation."

In the aggregate, then, an ideology is a set of beliefs, or a set of principles, or a form of social or political philosophy, or a set of beliefs *and* values, or a body of doctrine, myth, and beliefs. Ideologies reside in the realm of human cognition unrelated to scientific or critical investigation or to objective reality as such. These four definition, furthermore, locate them in socially and politically "contested space." In the *Cambridge* definition, ideologies especially have to do with political systems, parties, and organizations, which puts them squarely in the middle of all that is involved in politics, which by its very nature is about conflicting systems of meanings and behaviors. The *Britannica* definition reinforces the relationship between ideology and politics by defining ideologies as social or political philosophies in which "practical elements" are as important as "theoretical ones," which again identifies ideologies with the practice of politics in the social arena. *Dictionary.com* cites "fascism" as an example of ideology as a "political or social plan." The point here is that where people live together in social systems differences among them matter, and such differences can become political issues that lead to conflict however mild or intense, overt or covert. According to these definitions, social factions and political parties turn to ideologies to manage such conflict and to articulate strategies of "othering" that seem to be a natural expression of their ideologies.

Our definitions do not resolve the key questions, arising from Said, of whether or not ideologies can be helpful, reflect reality, and/or be liberating. These questions are inspired not only by Said's own pejorative understanding of the notion of ideology, but also by the larger popular perception of the notion of which his views are but one example. That popular conception going back to Marx and Hegel sees little or no room for positive uses for ideologies, little or no truth in them, and little hope of escaping their power.

Many of those who study ideology do not accept this negative understanding and variously argue that ideologies can be positive, true, and flexible. Teun A. Van Dijk (2011), for example, acknowledges that "in much of our everyday discourse [ideology] is used in a derogatory way when characterizing the ideas or policies of *others*: whereas *we* have the truth, *they* have an ideology." (pp. 379-380). He argues, however, that ideologies have positive uses that are not necessarily meant to oppress others. They can be used, for example, to resist outside domination, so that there can be anti-racist and feminist ideologies that do not seek to dominate others but, quite the opposite, seek justice and freedom from them. Presumably, such ideologies of liberation also reflect actual social realities of prejudice and injustice. Van Dijk defines ideologies as being "...general systems of basic ideas shared by the members of a social group, ideas that will influence their interpretation of social events and situations and control their discourse and other social practices as group members." (p. 380). He argues that ideologies function in a variety of ways, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. They can be basically self-defining, but they can also be used to force identities on others. They can be used to inspire but also for social control. He concludes, "The legitimatization of the control of scarce resources and other discursive forms of domination are an especially characteristic way of applying ideological control in the public sphere, typically so in terms of alleged 'higher' powers, such as those of Nature, God, Science, Reason or the People." (p. 403). In sum, Van Dijk continues to see ideologies as being, at heart, about control and the exercise of power of some over others—whether it be through attempts to motivate and inspire these others or through actual regulation of them by one stratagem or another. Van Dijk accepts the fundamental premise that ideologies are sets of ideas used to define a group and to control behavior of people within that group.

In his discussion of the form and structure (the "morphology") of ideologies in the political realm, Michael Freeden (2013) describes them as having several features, which taken together give us a workable description of the relationship of ideology to cognition. He observes that there is no political thought without ideologies whether among political elites or the general public, and it is out of these ideologies that we construct our political thought. Political thinking, in a nutshell, is by definition ideological. Political ideologies, Freeden contends, can be flexible, complex, imaginative, inventive, and quite subtle; and we can only speak of them in the plural. There is no such thing as a single, isolated "ideology". He argues that, "...ideologies are strategies, deliberate or not, for managing the underlying pluralism of political ideas in all societies, permitting it in culturally acceptable doses or trying to suppress it publically and artificially." (p. 117). Ideologies provoke political competition with other ideologies, and they are used to impose uniformity of thinking by defeating those other ideologies. Freeden, however, rejects the idea that ideologies are necessarily rigid and can't be compromised. They are fluid, overlapping, and often have indistinct boundaries, and they can be used and even reimagined in a variety of creative ways. He, like Van Dijk, does not rule out the possibility that they can be grounded in reality rather than being fanciful creatures of the human imagination.

In sum, then, Van Dijk and Freeden do not entirely exclude Said's uses of the notion of ideology, but they do place it at one end of a scale, a scale running from defining ideologies as being "good" to being "bad". They are not claiming that ideologies fall entirely at one extreme or another on the scale: they fall, instead, somewhere along the scale and can be put to various uses, good as well as bad. They would fault Said for being so one-sided in his pejorative use of the notion of ideologies but admit that his use does fall on their scale of uses, if at one extreme. Said, that is, is "in the ball park."

Decades of scholarly discussion and debate concerning the meaning of the notion of ideology go back and forth over this same ground as our four definitions, Van Dijk, and Freeden and, taken together, come out in the same roughly place, which is that ideologies are structured ways of thinking and

behaving in the pluralistic, fragmented, and fractured world we live in. We use ideologies to make sense of and to manage social, cultural, and political differences. They give us simple, explicable ways of understanding "others" and ourselves. Ideologies don't have to be about power, control, and conflict but they most certainly can be. They don't have to be caricatures of reality but there is the likelihood that they will be.

We should also note that students of the notion of ideology seem to be on a trajectory similar to that of students of Orientalism in that both have inherited a negative understanding of ideology and in the last few decades have been working, each in their own scholarly lane, on testing that understanding and expanding on it. As is the case with the study of Orientalism, so too scholars studying the notion of ideology usually focus on given cases, thinkers, and subjects in their studies rather than on a global definition of it: they look, that is, at such topics as ideology and music or the law, German ideology, Hume's ideology, and so on. We could go so far to say that Orientalism studies themselves are a fertile and wide-ranging adjunct to the study of ideologies, another opportunity to chew on the nature of the notion itself.

It may be concluded, then, that while Said's notion of ideology is "in the ball park" it does not comport with what seems to be a widely accepted scholarly conclusion concerning the notion itself: ideologies and their uses are more malleable and flexible than the popular, Saidian negative view of them would allow. Ideologies do not necessarily have to be oppressive, false, cognitively coercive representations of reality.   They can be flexible, reflect realistic ideas about the real world, and potentially contain within themselves counter-strategies and antidotes for even the worst of ideologies. What we will find below is that not a small number of scholars in the field of Orientalism studies have, to one degree or another, come to this same conclusion, namely that the notion that ideology is malleable and that ideologies are not so uniformly dangerous and dehumanizing. These scholars have usually started (more or less consciously) with Said, but they have ended up in a different place.

<div align="center">ORIENTALISM AND IDEOLOGY</div>

To anticipate what follows, it can be concluded provisionally on the basis of our discussion in the previous section that Said's negative conception of ideology has proven itself useful but it has also shown itself to be problematic. In terms of its utility, a massive body of research carried out over the last forty-plus years clearly and persuasively documents beyond reasonable doubt that Western scholars, political leaders and policy makers, writers, artists, and the Western public at large have for centuries employed a range of hurtful ideologies to imagine an inferior and deficient Asia of their own making, which they articulate with sets of well-worn stereotypes that construct a fanciful but to them a seemingly "real" Orient. These ideologies are dehumanizing, false, and pernicious representations of Asia and Asians that amount to nothing more than a self-serving "pack of lies." Among other things, the European colonial powers used these stereotypes to justify their seizure and exploitation of much of Asia in the age of European colonialism. In sum, Said's approach and his assumptions about the nature of ideologies have in and of themselves proven useful.

That approach, however, has also shown itself to be problematic. In some cases, scholars have discovered Orientalisms that do not seem to fit the Saidian profile at all. In other cases, they identify Orientalisms that demonstrate a mixture of traits that are partly but not entirely ideological in the Saidian sense. In still other cases, scholars have gone back to Said himself and found that he has mischaracterized or overlooked key considerations. The conclusion that Said's approach to the study of Orientalist ideologies is both useful and problematic is hardly surprising—if not exactly obvious either.

It is useful, on the one hand, precisely because it offers scholars of Orientalism a clear, simple, and direct guide to what they should be looking for in their research. There is nothing "messy" or tentative about it. And that, on the other hand, is what makes it problematic as well as clear: the real world is messy and usually lacks clarity, and for those scholars who are neither blind followers or haters of Said, such an absolute measure of the notion of ideology is a provocation, which works like this: a scholar selects a given field or subject to study, say Spanish Orientalism, and conducts research investigating the phenomenon of Orientalism in Spain. She or he seeks to discern whether or not there is evidence of unjust, false, and/or pernicious Orientalist ideologies and, if so, to what

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degree they fit the profile. Scholars differ, of course, and some will approach their research seeking to prove the existence of Spanish Orientalist prejudices while others will be skeptical that they do exist or that they fit the Saidian profile. The point, perhaps obvious but still important, is that Said's approach provides a guide for what to look for but does not determine, when used critically, what is found. In the real world of scholarship, all too often scholars do in fact find what their own pre-judgments encourage them to find. In the real world of scholarship, however, often enough scholars are also able to shelve their assumptions to a degree, engage in critical research, and sometimes find things entirely unlooked for. The Saidian model of what constitutes an Orientalist ideology, in sum, is a guide for what to look for, but *not* an invitation to impose one's foregone conclusions on the data. That's up to the individual student. Truth be told, contemporary scholars of Orientalism frequently find Said provocative, and the result has been a good deal of creative, insightful scholarship. What follows is a survey of how the Saidian model and its pejorative understanding of the notion of ideology have actually worked out as a provocative guide to research.

In many cases, Said's approach, as we have noted, works very well and has generated an impressively large body of research demonstrating the nature and impact of Orientalist ideologies especially since the late 18th century. Equally to the point, it also works in instances that expose the reach of Orientalist ideologies, which lurk in all manner of unexpected places. Carina Ren and Can-Seng Ooi (2013), for example, describe a set of "micro-Orientalisms" embedded in the Danish pavilion at the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, which were crafted to demonstrate Danish superiority in an Asian context. Or, again, Hugh Gusterson (2004) has coined the term "nuclear Orientalism" to describe the ways in which American and Western European policymakers, riding the waves of popular public support, seek to obstruct the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Islamic and Asian nations out of fear of those nations, which they imagine to be essentially irresponsible, irrational, impulsive, and treacherous.

Another measure of the utility of Said's approach is how well it works beyond the usual Western European-North American arena of Orientalist ideologies. Take, for example, the sub-genre of Orientalism research that applies the Saidian model to regions of the world outside of Asia. Milica Bakić-Hayden's (1995) ground breaking study of Orientalism thus describes how European peoples generally imagine Western Europe to be the measure of what is "truly European," which means that the European nations of Central and Eastern Europe are imagined to be less truly European on a sliding scale. Central Europeans, thus, imagine themselves as being more nearly what it means to be European than the peoples of Eastern Europe, who are thought to be less civilized and more Oriental-like. Russia and Yugoslavia (in its day) were seen as being the most Asia-like and thus the most inferior. Bakić-Hayden calls this phenomenon, "nesting Orientalism," which involves Europeans imagining (Orientalizing) other Europeans with the usual set of Orientalist stereotypes about Asians.

Bakić-Hayden begins her study by citing Said, and she observes that since the publication of *Orientalism*, the study of Orientalism "is much more of a project than a place." (p. 917). The project she mentions, we would argue, is the project of identifying and describing hurtful, false, and pernicious ideologies in places other than where Said himself looked for them while still very much following in his footsteps. Bakić-Hayden herself finds such hurtful, false, and pernicious ideologies operative in intra-European cultural stereotypes of each other.

Other scholars have exported the Saidian approach to other still more distant regions of the world. David Arnold (2006), for example, has coined the term, "tropicality," to describe the ways in which Europeans have imagined the tropics as being essentially dangerous, snake-infested, and disease-ridden and constructed tropical peoples as being lethargic, backward, lacking in initiative, and therefore worthy of being colonized "for their own good." Arnold himself sees the notion of tropicality as differing from Orientalism in several ways, but his argument that Europeans imagine the tropics and tropical peoples as having fixed, essential, and inferior identities is very much in line with Said. Other scholars have applied Said's model to still other geographical areas of the globe, Gisli Pálsson's (1996) notion of "arcticality" being a notable example. Few have taken Said's approach and his assumptions about ideology further afield than Donna Haraway (1989) whose research steps across the boundaries between species. Drawing on Said, Haraway investigates the scientific ideologies embedded in the academic field of primatology and finds that, "Without

stretching the comparison too far, the signs of orientalist discourse mark primatology." (p. 10). She coins the term, "simian Orientalism," to describe the ways in which primatologists stereotype other apes and erect rigid boundaries between themselves and the simian "Other". Sarah Salih picks up on Haraway's arguments, particularly in terms of race, and writes, "…simian orientalism is a thoroughly racialized discourse, in which the boundaries of a gendered, white western self are secured through the construction of a dark, furry, ape 'other.'"

Still another measure of the utility of Said's notion of ideology is that scholars have used it to identify Orientalisms that at first glance seem counter-intuitive. Thus, for example, students of "feminist Orientalisms," "homoerotic Orientalisms," and "neoliberal Orientalisms" have each identified a common pattern: modern-day Westerners of good intentions can be just as infected with Saidian-like ideologies as were the European colonialists of the 19th century. [2] It's simply that their dehumanizing, fanciful, and pernicious ideologies are masked by their good intentions. On closer examination, that is, Western feminist activists, homosexual activists, and neoliberal reformers are overtly devoted to "helping" Asians but covertly, still imagine them as being essentially and chronically indigent, downtrodden, and helplessly lacking in basic human rights. "They" need help, and "We," their Western benefactors, know what's good for them and how to help them. "We" set (control) the agenda. In these cases, the subtle, pernicious nature of Orientalist ideologies is particularly evident.

In all of the above examples, scholars take the Saidian model as they find it to guide them in their own research and discover that in many given cases that model exposes real-world ideologies that are just as Said describes them: unjust, false, and pernicious. They are based on the premise that We are essentially different and clearly superior to the Other, which gives Us an advantage over the Other. The model, thus, is a legitimately useful guide even in its unrelenting negativity because Orientalist ideologies themselves often enough trade in cognitively brutal lies that can be difficult to ferret out.

In other cases, however, scholars accept the premise that Orientalisms are ideologies in the pejorative, Saidian sense, but they feel that Said himself did not explore important ramifications of his own research. An early and important example is Sadik Jalal al-`Azm's (1981) response to Said's *Orientalism* in which he affirms Said's insight that Orientalism is an ideology but goes on to point out that he overlooked two important implications of his thesis, namely: *first*, that just as the West imagines the Orient as having a single, unchanging, and essential identity, so too do Westerners imagine themselves to have an essential, unchanging identity, one that is the opposite of the Orient: The (Oriental) Other is deficient and inferior, and We, by the same token, are sufficient and superior. S*econd*, al-`Azm argues that Asians have learned from the West to imagine themselves as having an essential, unchanging identity, but one that is superior to the West. He calls this second insight, "ontological Orientalism in reverse," which later scholars have shortened to read simply, "reverse Orientalism". If al-'Azm is any measure, from the very beginning, Said provoked critical appraisals of his thesis, which appraisals accepted his approach and used it to reexamine his own work from new and different angles.

In all of the cases surveyed thus far, Said's notion of ideology has in and of itself proven useful as it stands. Another measure of its utility, however, is evident in those cases where researchers challenge the notion itself as being inadequate. A key example is the study of the history of the historical development of Orientalist ideologies over the centuries. Taking the Saidian model as a guide, scholars have critically investigated the degree to which those ideologies are evident going all the way back into ancient times, and what they have found is that the further they go back in the European past, the more difficult it is to identify full-blown examples of Saidian-like ideologies. Most (but not all) scholars have concluded that the Saidian template does not work very well for ancient Greece and Rome although there is evidence of "proto-Orientalisms" in their respective attitudes toward those races living to the East, such as the Persians and Parthians. Students of Medieval

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[2] See the entries for "Feminist Orientalism" (2nd Usage), "Homoerotic Orientalism," and "Neoliberal Orientalism" in the **Glossary of Orientalisms** found in this website (orientalismstudies.com).

European Orientalism, meanwhile, describe more of a mixed picture, which in some ways reflect the properties of Saidian Orientalist ideologies and in other ways do not. Thus, for example, European disdain for "the heathen Turk" was mixed in with a good deal of genuine appreciation for Islamic learning and civilization. By the later 18th century, Western Europe's Orientalist ideologies begin to fit the Saidian profile much more snugly, but even here scholars have argued that German Orientalists, for example, expressed great admiration for the Aryan East. So it is in our own post-9/11, post-modern world: many scholars find that contemporary Orientalisms are as ideological as they were in the colonial past, but they are expressed in different ways and address different contexts that don't precisely fit the Saidian profile. There is, for example, a greater propensity for modern-day Orientalists to mask their same old prejudices and stereotypes with a superficial positive Orientalism that says "nice things" particularly about Arabs and Muslims. The historical picture that is emerging is that "proto-Orientalist" ideologies have been a part of Western thinking to one degree or another virtually from the beginning, but they did not emerge as full blown Orientalist ideologies until some two hundred-plus years ago.[3]

Scholars, thus, sometimes (often, actually) find that the application of the Saidian measure for what constitutes an Orientalist ideology in a given field of study reveals a mixed picture that fits better with what a more "malleable" understanding of the nature of ideologies. And sometimes they find that Said's notion of Orientalist ideologies actually doesn't work very well at all. "Celticism," a notion that is a cognate of Orientalism, offers a good example.[4] Drawing on Said, scholars use this term to describe ways in which the English, Celtic peoples themselves, and others have historically looked on "the Celts" (variously defined) as having their own essential ethnic and cultural identity. Celticism, in fact, shows many parallels with Orientalism including its having been something of an academic field of study in the 19th century. Of particular note here is the fact that, historically, the term has been used both pejoratively to assert the essential backwardness and inferiority of "the Celts" and positively to assert their essential superiority as a people supposedly more spiritual, mystical, and "natural" in a romantic sense.

We have already seen in the previous section that scholars of the notion of ideology are often critical of simplistic pejorative definitions of the notion and have raised the possibility of "positive Orientalisms," which can be benign, more or less truthful, and not pernicious. They are, however, still ideologies. Celticism in its positive version thus still imagines that the Celtic peoples share a common, essential, and enduring racial and cultural identity. A number of scholars over the years have identified what they consider to be "positive" or "affirmative" Orientalisms such as Celticism, which imagine an admirable Orient that deserves respect. They have argued that historically American Transcendentalists, for example, articulated just such an ideology as did a class of 19th century German scholars, and they also cite admiration for East and Southeast Asian economic success after World War II as another positive Orientalism. Vincent E. Burgess (2011) cites three scholars who have called into question Said's one-side, pejorative understanding of the notion of Orientalism. They are: Richard G. Fox and his notion of "affirmative Orientalism," Richard King, and Ronald Inden. Citing Fox's work, Burgess particularly describes the ways in which "Gandhian discourses" in India articulated a set of affirmative stereotypes of that nation, which imagine historical India as being an exemplary civilization that offers an antidote to modern Western material civilization. He observes that in the notion of affirmative Orientalism Gandhi offered India and the West an "idyllic East" that is essentially superior to the West.[5]

Perhaps no one group of scholars has advanced arguments for positive Orientalisms further than those who study the history of Western women's fashions from the later 19th into the 20th centuries. They have found that European fashion designers originally imagined Oriental women's clothing to

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[3] See the entries for "Classical Orientalism," "Enlightenment Orientalism," "Greek Orientalism (Ancient)," "Medieval Orientalism," "Modern Orientalism," "Neo-Orientalism," and "Roman Orientalism" in the **Glossary of Orientalisms** found in this website (orientalismstudies.com).

[4] See the entry for "Celticism" in the **Glossary of Orientalisms** found on this website (orientalismstudies.com).

[5] See the entries for "Affirmative Orientalism" and "Positive Orientalism" in the **Glossary of Orientalisms** found on this website (orientalismstudies.com).

be exotic, sexy, and skimpy costumes, which were appropriate only for female performers in burlesque shows, circuses, and the like. They were artifacts of Western Orientalist ideologies à la Said. However, eventually Western women began to play with their own identities by wearing adaptations of "Oriental" fashions that were thought to be more daring, bolder, and more exotic. They, in a sense, put on the Orient, clothed themselves in it, and in the process of doing so sought to escape the chains of socially and culturally imposed expectations by redefining their self-image and their relationship to their own body. This "sartorial move" is arguably ideological, but it is not Saidian because it was not "aimed" at Asians or any "Other" as such, and it emerged from a search for justice. All of this has led Adam Geczy (2013) to question whether or not the wearing of Asian-inspired fashions today has anything to do with Orientalist ideologies at all. "Oriental" fashions that began as skimpy ideological constructs, that is, have been laundered of their sexist stereotypes over the course of generations of mixing and matching with Western fashions.[6] This is not how Saidian ideologies work.

Nowhere has the question of the efficacy of Said's notion of ideology been more hotly debated than in the larger field of "aesthetic Orientalisms," of which fashion design is but one instance. The study of aesthetic Orientalisms is particularly suited to serve as an arena for this debate since the broad field of aesthetics and Orientalist ideologies share a common characteristic: they both are based in the human imagination. Artists imagine paintings. Ideologues imagine Orientals. And ideologically motivated artists paint vivid, exotic portraits of the East. It seems all but inevitable that these two products of the imagination would become intertwined and that Orientalisms are expressed not only as printed political manifestoes but also on stage and in the art gallery.

Women's fashion design is but one expression of this intricate ideological dance of the imagination. The study of "architectural Orientalism" provides another example, one in which scholars have again been pushing at the boundaries of the Saidian notion of ideology. Although some 19th and earlier 20th century European buildings, such as the seaside Royal Pavilion at Brighton in England, were built in an Oriental style, Western architects for the most part only drew on what they imagined to be exotic Oriental elements and decorations, which they patched into designs that were otherwise "normal" Western ones. John M. MacKenzie (1995) argues that for this reason it is hard to gauge the ideological impact of Oriental styles on European architecture because they for the most part represent the Orient only indirectly. He suggests that while the motifs may have themselves been ideological in content it is not clear that those who saw them in piecemeal fashion actually observed anything ideological. Mackenzie also notes that European architects engaged in a good deal of critical debate about their use of Orientalist styles, suggesting that those styles may well have lacked the pernicious covertness that is a key mark of Saidian ideologies. Mark Crinson (1996) adds a further wrinkle to these issues in his study of British colonial architecture in India, which was developed out of something of a dialogue between European designers and the Indian cultural context by which British colonial buildings were designed to appear to be indigenous in deference to an Asian rather than European audience. Angie Jo (2013) goes a step further in her study of "neo-Ottoman" architecture, which saw late Ottoman Empire architects copy European designs for buildings and monuments to create what they imagined to be authentic, indigenously appropriate Ottoman structures. This "neo-Ottoman" architecture, that is, repurposed European images of the exotic East to embody a sense of Turkish identity that was imagined and constructed to be authentically Asian.

Neo-Ottoman architecture is particularly interesting because only Asians are involved in the transformation of originally European colonialist, exotic architectural designs into something indigenous that is neither exotic nor colonialist. The agenda of the British architects in India was still overtly colonial and thus ideological. Western architectural Orientalisms more broadly still intentionally drew on images of the exotic Orient. But, neo-Ottoman architecture seems to be much closer to Geczy's notion of "Transorientalism," the cleansing of Asian styles of Orientalist exoticism. Turkish architects, that is, employed European images to create a positive self-image of what it

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[6] See the entry for "Transorientalism" in the **Glossary of Orientalisms** found on this website (orientalismstudies.com).

means to be Ottoman. It is difficult to see how such an artistic enterprise is inherently hurtful or deceitful, leaving us again with the possibility of positive ideologies.

That aesthetic Orientalisms can be positive is not a new idea by any stretch of the imagination. Scholars of the arts and art critics have, in fact, long recognized an artistic style called "Orientalism," which is supposed to be legitimately representative of the exotic, changeless grace and beauty of the Orient.[7] They have also long believed that the art world abounds in cheap, degraded fake imitations of true Oriental aesthetics, and the task of the art critic and the scholarly commentator is to ferret out what is bogus in an opera or a Disney movie, for example, name it, and condemn it for what it is: a false representation of what is truly Oriental. This task of separating false from true representations of the Orient has over the decades generated a vast critical literature that began long before Edward Said. Nicolas Slonimsky (1931) in a critical review of Rimsky-Korsakov, as but one example, laments the composer's "false Orientalism," which he claims "can survive only on American radio-stations," while still praising the musical quality of Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral works. The point is that there exists a critical and even scholarly literature that concerns itself with discerning the quality of artistic works and that implicitly assumes that these works are ideological-like expressions of the imagination but does not assume that they are negative. They are, in fact, good *if* they correspond to the archetype of what constitutes "true" Oriental aesthetics and negative only in as much as they diverge from the archetype. Naji B. Oueijan (1998) carries this positive notion of Orientalism over into the world of scholarship by bringing Edward Said back into the picture and arguing that he has gotten things very wrong. What he calls, "Orientalism," is really "fake Orientalism," which according to Oueijan certainly exists but does not represent what he calls the "authenticity" of the Orient.

In 2003, Erin O'Connor published an article in which she takes exception to what she sees to be a hostile takeover of the study of Victorian literature by Saidian postcolonial scholars by which that literature is attacked for being a species of Orientalist ideology, which she perhaps tongue in cheek labels as "Victorientalism". The Saidian critics of Victorientalism, she argues, fail to understand the true nature of Victorian literature, which is much more complex, diverse, and creative, than they appreciate. Six years later, Nick Ottens (2009) called on O'Connor's Victorientalism to argue that the science-fiction genre of steampunk, which draws its stories from the Victorian age to create alternative universes, was also being threatened by an ideologically driven political correctness. He argued that authors are able to avail themselves of elements of the Victorian world without bringing the Orientalist baggage with them. Asian American authors and bloggers, such as Deana M. Pho (2012), fervently disagreed and argued that the Victorian world was inherently racist and that images and themes taken from it cannot be magically cleansed of that racism. Orientalism is Orientalism, and it inevitably asserts white privilege and superiority in the world of steampunk.

Again, we set aside the contentious issues of who is right and who is wrong regarding the pervasiveness and utter negativity of ideologies to make the point that the utility of Said's notion of ideology offers a clear guide as to what ideologies are and then provokes just the kind of dissent we hear from Ottens, O'Connor, and Oueijan. In some cases, those who object reject Said's pejorative notion of ideology entirely, while in others they simply reject its unbending, uncompromising absoluteness. Their opponents, meanwhile, contend that all Orientalist ideologies are hurtful, false, and pernicious distortions of reality. Said's approach sets the terms of the debate and guides the thinking of the protagonists as they make their various arguments.

The significant thing about Said's pejorative notion of ideology, we note again for emphasis, is that among critical scholars it provokes a healthy skepticism about any one-side understanding of Orientalist ideologies, negative *or* positive. We have already indicated that the best scholarship in the field of Orientalism studies is not that which swallows Said hook, line, and sinker nor is it the utter rejection of all things Saidian. The best scholarship is that of the "yes, but" scholar who investigates the real-world manifestations of Orientalist ideologies with as healthy skepticism regarding one-side definitions. This is an important point especially when considering the possibility

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[7] See the entry for "False Orientalism" in the **Glossary of Orientalisms** found on this website (orientalismstudies.com).

of non-Saidian, positive Orientalisms. Being ideologies, they still treat Asia stereotypically as having an essential, timeless, and virtually continent wide shared "being". As ideologies, positive Orientalisms are still created out of the human imagination and are very much inclined to see only what they want to see. The notion that Orientals are somehow essentially spiritual is a sterling example of the way in which positive Orientalisms can also be false and pernicious. They also often imply, unjustly, that there is a deficient, inferior "Other" that is the essential opposite of a sufficient, superior Orient: for example, spiritual Orientals are contrasted to materialistic Occidentals.[8]

It so happens that the operative guide scholars have for their study of Orientalist ideologies is Said's impressively negative one. In theory, an impressively positive one that defines ideologies as being helpful, truthful, and liberating would be just as provocative because the problem is not that Said's notion of ideology is negative but that it comes across as all but absolute. It is that absoluteness that sparks the skepticism, which to close the circle is what makes it a useful guide for the study of Orientalist ideologies. It is time to bring things to an end.

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

So, then, what do we conclude? *First*, we conclude that in his study of Orientalism Edward Said articled a clear understanding of the notion of ideology that defines ideologies as: (1) being oppressive in their stereotypes of "the Other"; (2) offering overwhelmingly false representations of reality; and (3) being powerfully coercive in their ability to shape both scholarly and popular attitudes, values, and behaviors. They are unjust, false, and pernicious misrepresentations of reality. This definition has largely been taken for granted by most of the company of scholars that have followed in Said's footsteps, whatever they have thought about him themselves. The simple fact is that in the study of Orientalism there is no viable, widely accepted alternative to Said's concept of ideology, which means that it is *the* authoritative guide for the study of ideological Orientalisms. Its authority resides in part in Said himself, in part in the fact that most other scholars accept it, and in part in the fact that it is straightforward, clear, and useful.

Second, we conclude that the very clarity and absoluteness of Said's notion of ideology, however, offers more than just a guide to the study of Orientalist ideologies: it is a *provocative* guide. For one thing, it inspires skepticism among not a few scholars that ideologies actually function in the real world in such an absolutely negative, clearly defined manner. For another thing, its absolute clarity also leaves almost no room for alternatives, which simply does not comport with what many scholars have found "on the ground" when they have begun to dig. Yes, many Orientalisms are fully Saidian in their racism, their sexism, and/or their ethnocentrism. No question. Still, scholars find that there are a great number of other Orientalisms that demonstrate a more partial, malleable, and permeable ideological profile. There are Orientalist motifs that may not be inherently ideological and, even if they are, that does not mean that they are oppressive, powerful, or pernicious. We have seen that in certain circumstances, such as in women's fashions, some in the West have used Orientalist stereotypes to gain for themselves greater freedom from oppressive social conventions and attitudes. We have observed scholars wrestling at the ideological boundaries over whether or not Orientalisms can be cleansed of their cognitive infestations and appreciated in other contexts in ways that transcend ideology. Students of Orientalism, more generally, frequently begin with the question of whether or not their subject—ancient Greece or Enlightenment Europe, for example—fits the model of Saidian Orientalism. There is in all of this an inherent tension between the Saidian model's negative notion of ideology and the malleable, conditional, shifting, and permeable nature of ideologies themselves, which is the engine that drives the modern-day study of Orientalisms conducted in the shadow of Edward Said.

This, I would argue, is Said's legacy and that of the great company of scholars mentioned above who have been laboring for over four decades now seeking to understand the natures, functions, uses, and dangers and possibilities of Orientalist ideologies. It is a legacy that continues to provoke an inherit tension between a set of methodological assumptions about the real-world, the real world itself, the

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[8] See the entries for "positive Orientalism" and "Occidentalism" in the **Glossary of Orientalisms** found in this website (orientalismstudies.com).

scholarly search for truth about this world, and the ultimate goal research into Orientalist ideologies, namely a more just world. It is in all cases a matter of utmost importance, in sum, that those who study Orientalist ideologies keep before them the historical reality that while such ideologies are not evil in all cases, they have been time and time again sources of vast injustice and pain. Our motivation in their study is not simply knowledge: it is ultimately a more just world free of hurtful, false, and pernicious ideologies. Amen.

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