THE AUTHOR IN EDWARD SAID'S *ORIENTALISM*: THE QUESTION OF AGENCY

Phrae Chittiphalangsri[1]

Abstract

Edward W. Said's Orientalism *has long been celebrated for its ground-breaking analysis of the encounters between Western Orientalists and the Orient as a form of 'othering' representation. The success, undeniably, owes much to the use of Foucauldian discourse as a core methodology in Said's theorisation of Orientalism which allows Said to refer to the massive corpus of Orientalist writings as a form of Orientalist discourse and a representation of the East. However, the roles of Orientalist authors tend to be reduced to mere textual labels in a greater Orientalist discourse, in spite of the fact that Said attempts to give more attention to the Orientalists' biographical backgrounds. In this article, I argue that there is a need to review the question of agency that comes with Foucauldian discourse. By probing Said's methodology, I investigate the problems raised by concepts such as "strategic formation," "strategic location," and the writers' imprint. Borrowing Pierre Bourdieu's sociology, I critique Said's notion of 'author' by applying the question of objectivity/subjectivity raised by Bourdieu's concepts such as "habitus" and "strategy," and assess the possibility of shifting the emphasis on "texts" suggested by the use of Foucauldian discourse, to "actions" which are the main unit of study in Bourdieu's sociology.*

[1] Lecturer, Department of Comparative Literature, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.

Introduction

The mechanism which Edward W. Said deploys in order to set his concept of Orientalism in motion relies on Foucault's concept of discourse or discursive representation, which allows Said to talk about Orientalism as a body of texts that operates through a network of textual referentiality. Said also relies on Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, to explain power-differentials between the East and the West. Orientalism gains power through the superiority of the hegemonic culture. The subjugation of the East is achieved not only by direct coercion but also by partial representation through a collection of texts—ranging from travel writings, novels, translations, religious tracts and historical documents to laws and codes—whose coherent density is able to claim the power to represent the East and, to a certain extent, becomes sufficient to speak on behalf of the East without the East speaking for itself.

However, *Orientalism* has faced a number of criticisms in recent decades. Some of the major attacks have come from David Kopf (1980, reprinted 2000), who sees Orientalism as lacking historical reality; Michael Richardson (1990, reprinted 2000), who attacks Orientalism for the absence of a reciprocal relationship between the East and the West; and Sadik Jalal al-'Azm (1981, reprinted 2000), who argues that Orientalism tends to essentialise the West in the same way that Said accuses the West of essentialising the East for imperialist ends. Lisa Lowe (1991) questions the lack of heterogeneity in Orientalism with regard to the

difference between British and French Orientalisms.

While many of these criticisms have drawn mainly on various aspects of Orientalism, only a few have mentioned the problem of agency in the methodology Said adopted in theorising Orientalism (e.g. Bové 1986). Therefore, the purpose of this essay is to revisit Said's methodology and its application to Orientalism. I will examine the impact of Said's use of Foucauldian discourse on the notion of 'author,' or in this case the Orientalist agents. I will then explore the problem of agency which becomes manifest as a by-product of the unresolved tension between subjectivism and objectivism defaulted in Foucauldian discourse. In light of Pierre Bourdieu's sociology, I will critique Said's concept of the 'author' through Bourdieu's concept of habitus and assess the possibility of reading Orientalist authors, who can, as I will argue, be treated as active cultural agents and hence their role pertaining to a form of habitus.

While Said did not refer to Bourdieu's work in his *Orientalism*, his explanation of the transferable profession of the Orientalists is similar to the concept of cultural agency advocated by Bourdieu. This paper does not intend to fill in the gap in Said's methodology but rather to shed light on the possibility of reading Orientalism as cultural reproduction. In fact, I will argue that Said's approach to Orientalism, to a certain degree, already lends itself to the theory of cultural reproduction. Bourdieu's sociology, also known as 'generative structuralism,' complements what critics view as a methodological shortcoming by shedding light on a more dynamic sociological approach, as opposed to a usually held 'static' discourse.

Said's approach to knowledge

Like Foucault, Said sees language as a battleground where speakers and societies compete for power and domination. Foucault argues that the formation of discourse is subject to the use of power which yields both repressive and generative effects at the same time. Nevertheless, with the strong influence of structuralism and the cult of the death of the author, to entrust discourse, which is theoretically deprived of agents, with a generative function seems an awkward business. This problem can be seen in Foucault's concepts of "archaeology" and "genealogy." In *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (1969), Foucault explains the repressive control of discourse as a feature of archaeology which we can see in statements that attempt "to mark out and distinguish the principles of ordering, exclusion and rarity in discourse" (Foucault 1969: 234). We understand discourse as a 'limited system of presence' in which only enunciations or the rarity of statements give meanings to discourse and *not* the unsaid. While archaeology refers to the formation of objective structure, Foucault develops another concept called genealogy to account for the generative effects of discourse. In his later essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1977), he explains how his use of 'genealogy' is derived from Nietzsche's view of the development of morals through power. While the word tends to suggest the idea of 'tracing back to the origin', Foucault's genealogy does not seek to establish a linear development of historical events. On the contrary, Foucault uses genealogy to deconstruct that very linearity that is central to the traditional way of writing history—as he puts it, genealogy "seeks to makes visible all of those discontinuities

that cross us" (1977: 162). However, Foucault's notion of genealogy, as David Eick points out, remains a 'hazy' distinction from the concept of archaeology. It is questionable that genealogy really has a generative function that archaeology does not offer, when, in fact, one can argue that archaeology can pinpoint the same problem of historical discontinuity. Furthermore, Foucault does not explain if one needs to venture into the realm of the unsaid, the absent, the unannounced, in order to reconstruct genealogy. If so, it would also call into question the need to inquire into the subjective mode of the absent, which is what Foucault excludes in theorising discourse and archaeology for "[t]he analysis of statements operates therefore without reference to a cogito" (Foucault 2004: 138). Simon During raises the same problem in his article "Genealogy, Authorship, Power":

> Where does this system of constraint end? Where does the positive programme of enabling the "unsayable or unsaid" to speak, begin? To give prisoners, gays, the colonized or the marginal a voice is also to demand of them their "truth," to suppose that they are the originating subjects of a specific, more or less univocal, "voice," and therefore, to some degree at least, to call them into that de-centred centre which constitutes the (post)modern world. (During 1992: 127)

In effect, Foucault's critics, such as Dreyfus and Rabinow, see the concepts of archaeology and genealogy as incompatible, with archaeology encapsulated by the statements and governing rules of discourse and genealogy seeking to trace

the root of power and deconstruct precisely the discursive rules which situate it (Eick 1999: 88).

Following Foucault's archaeology, Said bases his argument on a network of texts which forms a web of interrelated discourse. Orientalism is a concept which works through its textual *re-presence* in which stories, accounts and memoirs re-enact the presence of thoughts and concepts about the Orient as a textual presence, which in turn marks itself as *representation* in written format. Said's *Orientalism*, together with the subsequent book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) which is a postcolonial expansion of his thesis in the former, are an archaeological project that attempted to map out the discursive representations of the Orient and the colonies by the West and the empires. In the Foucauldian manner, Said traces how the images of the West's other are constructed and distinguished through a rarefaction and objectification of statements that provides a ground for investigating the representations of the Orient and the colonies. Wolfgang Iser (2006) notes the strong influence of Foucauldian discourse in Said's *Culture and Imperialism*:

> Edward Said's postcolonial discourse, as developed in his book *Culture and Imperialism*, works as an imposition in the Foucauldian sense on both colonial and anticolonial discourse. These are the "objects" to be charted and it is this tripartite relationship through which postcolonial discourse gains salience. Hence the latter assumes a critical position toward what it operates upon, although it has the same structure as the discourse on which it focuses its power. It is

also marked by the same rarefaction that distinguishes all discourse, which are only differentiated from one another by the motivation that causes their respective restrictions. (Wolfgang 2006: 175–176)

Similarly, in *Orientalism*, discourse is described as consisting of collected statements on the Orient, but Said adds that it operates on two principal concepts which Said calls *strategic location* and *strategic formation*. These two terms, while they rely on discursive formation as a central theoretical tool, reintroduce the 'author' into the analysis of power by incorporating the presence of the author into the formation of texts:

> My principal methodological devices for studying authority here are what can be called *strategic location*, which is a way of describing the author's position in a text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about, and *strategic formation*, which is a way of analyzing the relationship between texts and the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even textual genres, acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large. (Said 1979: 20)

Said deploys strategic location as an extension to discourse: the author is seen as using the text to locate his position vis-à-vis the Orient. By 'locating', Said is referring to the author's choice of narrative styles, themes, images and motifs which are woven into the particular way of presenting the Orient to the audience. This is how Orientalists construct their discourse about the faraway land. The Orientalist narrative which Said explores at great length is the style of two French Orientalist scholars who engaged in Arabic studies in the nineteenth century — Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) and Ernest Renan (1823–1892). Said identifies two themes in Sacy's works and approaches to studying Arabic literature: one is his endeavour to become champion of Arabic scholarship through his various political roles, namely, as resident Orientalist at the French Foreign Ministry (Said 1979: 124), and the other is his 'dedicated sense of pedagogic and rational utility'—the latter theme is derived from Sacy's role as professor of Arabic at the celebrated Collège de France and his utilitarian approach to the selection of Arabic poems in his *Chrestomathie Arabe* (1806). These two themes inform Sacy's position as an Orientalist who strives to make his work useful to the French public through his status as an Arabic specialist. Said argues that Sacy's dedicated and utilitarian approaches to his works can be seen in texts bearing his name.

As for Renan, Said derives the theme of his Orientalism from Renan's contribution of philology to Orientalist scholarship in France. Renan is identified as the trendsetter who imposed on the study of Oriental languages a scientific methodology, in which language is broken down into units that can be categorised and compared in an objective manner. In this way, Said places these authors/Orientalists in the text, and reads their presence as a *personal imprint* in the text; this is the point at which Said claims to depart from the discursive method of Foucault, to whom he admits being greatly indebted:

> Yet unlike Michel Foucault, to whose work I am greatly indebted,

I do believe in the determining *imprint* of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism.' (Said 1979: 23)

For Said, individual names play an important part in providing 'labels' and links to which other texts can refer. The example that occurs quite frequently throughout his book is how Edward William Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836) became a major reference for writers about the Orient such as Nerval, Flaubert and Richard Burton. Lane's authority can be viewed as indispensable and it gives credibility to whoever cites him in their works. The image of Egypt during the nineteenth century is therefore a product of textual referentiality, in which each text looks to other texts for reference in terms of information and authority, through labels carrying the names of individuals.

Critiquing Said's 'Author' from Bourdieu's perspective

While the author seems to gain more presence in Said's textual analysis than in Foucault's classic discourse, the role of the author is still limited: Said tends to treat authors as being *part* of the text rather than text producers. This points to the problem of the role of agents in relation to structures, which, as Eick points out, is not elaborated in Foucault's usage of discourse or archaeology, and the generative function of Foucault's notion of genealogy remains largely abstract. Bourdieu sees the problem as bringing structuralist theory to an impasse—structuralism is unable to go beyond a treatment of knowledge confined to objective structure alone. Bourdieu also

finds subjectivist modes of knowledge, such as existentialism and aesthetics, to be focusing too much on personal accounts, especially individual understanding, rather than the external conditions which shape or influence public mentality. Having dealt with the problem of this objective/ subjective contradiction, Bourdieu tries to break away from relying on either mode of knowledge. His sociology is a dialectically interactive mode of knowledge production which does not confine itself to either the objective or the subjective but rather integrates functions of both objective structure and experiential production (See Bourdieu 1972, 1990a, 1990b, 1993a, 1993b, 1998). Bourdieu's break with exclusive subjectivism or exclusive objectivism yields a new type of mediation which he calls *practice*—an act which links social agents with social structures. David Swartz (1997: 58) suggests that Bourdieu's introduction of a mediating device called for an epistemological break which resulted in Bourdieu's investigation of two questions. The first is how practice and structure inform each other reciprocally; practices by social agents constitute social structures and, in turn, are determined by them. Such a relationship can be seen in the concept of *habitus* in which Bourdieu combines actions by social agents with structural factors of their society. The second is in the way theoretical and practical knowledge should be handled by social scientists. Bourdieu's sociology is a response to the notion of the 'disinterestedness' of scholars and their so-called 'object of study.' Bourdieu contends that the academic tradition, especially in the social sciences, has become absorbed in a theoretical approach to the point at which theory itself has become the sole narrative of a social event, no matter how varied each single context appears to be. Bourdieu's concern is that

scholars lack reflexive vigilance towards practical knowledge and are likely to subscribe to a type of academic disinterestedness that divides sociological research from practical reality. Yet it is still important for researchers to have a conceptual paradigm which is able to capture and theorise social patterns in a critical manner. From this direction, Bourdieu developed an approach to sociological research which he terms "reflexive sociology," a theory that aims to make scholars aware of the 'scholastic fallacy' of detaching academic tradition from the social world.

Structuralism, especially that of Lévi-Strauss and Althusser, is criticised by Bourdieu as engaging in objectifying social events into reductionistic structures which dissociate the written report from social reality. Sameh F. Hanna points out that such a gap is the result of the objective implementation of clear-cut structuralist binary oppositions, which leads to the omission of agency—the cause of the structuralist scholastic fallacy.

> This neat delineation of the social phenomenon which underlies the concept of 'structure' purportedly provides a tool for describing and predicting phenomena, but in fact it constrains social reality within deterministic patterns by means of which all phenomena are projected as exact actualisations of the structuralist model. To further consolidate the objectivist character of their model, structuralists confine themselves to describing the material reality of the social world, excluding the social agents' representations of this reality. (Hanna 2006: 41)

While Foucault is generally associated with structuralism, we may hold that he 'narrowly' escaped the objectivist approach that dominates structuralism in that he was aware of the genealogy of discourse through the generative effect of agency as we can see in the works after *The Archaeology of Knowledge* such as "Discourse on Language" (1971), *Discipline and Punish* (1975), *The Will to Knowledge* (1976–the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*). However, while Foucault tried to trace the genealogy of ideology, power, sexuality and explain the 'history of the present,' the motivation of those agents or carriers of these values were 'left out' and this has subjected Foucault to a great deal of criticism. Charles Taylor, one of his severest critics, attacked Foucault for an 'unintelligible' account of history which fails to recognise the 'purposeful actions' of agents whose roles in shaping discourses cannot easily be dismissed (During 1992: 137). Said is aware of the importance of the experiential mode of production and the problem of academic disinterestedness, for, as he states in the introduction to *Orientalism*, his life as an Arab Palestinian living in the US *does* make him a part of the whole project of Orientalism, as someone living with the impact of Orientalist discourse. This has allowed him to incorporate his personal belief into his academic pursuit:

> My own experiences of these matters, in part, made me write this book. The life of an Arab Palestinian in the West, particularly in America, is disheartening. There exists here an almost unanimous consensus that politically he does not exist, and when it is allowed that he does, it is either as a nuisance or as an Oriental…The nexus of knowledge and power

creating "the Oriental" and in a sense obliterating him as a human being is therefore not for me an exclusively academic matter. Yet it is an *intellectual* matter of some very obvious importance. I have been able to put to use my humanistic and political concerns for the analysis and description of a very worldly matter, the rise, development and consolidation of Orientalism. Too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically, innocent; it has regularly seemed otherwise to me and certainly my study of Orientalism has convinced me (and I hope will convince my literary colleagues) that society and literary culture can only be understood and studied together. (1979: 27, original italics)

Said does not deny his ideological agenda when theorising Orientalism. His status as an Arab Palestinian informs his perception of the Western discourse on the oriental, especially Islam, and, to be fair to Said, he does not pretend to assume a neutral, academic position as an 'extreme' structuralist would. Said's unhesitant adoption of such a position is derived from Gramsci's notion of "inventory" in his *Prison Notebooks* (1929–1935). Gramsci's inventory refers at the same time to an individual's stocktaking of his or her consciousness and the record of one's accumulated history: when one starts with critical observation, one cannot escape one's own historical traces which imbue one's identity "without leaving an inventory" (Said 1979: 25). Said's personal history as an Arab immigrant may serve as his starting point, but he himself views his life in the West as deeply influenced by the political tension between the East and the West since the 1950s, when the East was seen as political threat. The rise of socialism and communism in Russia, China and South East Asia prompted the US to establish area studies programmes in universities, and Said's Orientalism project aims to trace this kind of political construction of the East which has been conducted under the dominant light of Western imperialism. It is not Said's intention to decide whether such an act should be considered as an attempt to rewrite, or produce, an "inventory" (1979: 26): his goal is, rather, to enunciate the unexamined discourse which permeates his life culturally and politically.

Like Bourdieu, Said is aware of the need to deploy both subjective and objective modes of knowledge: he relies on discourse as a basis on which textual representation gains shape and density; Said also adds the authorial perspective on discursive formation which allows him to understand the relationship between text and author. Yet, in my view, the text-author connection receives insufficient theoretical elaboration from Said. This problem can be analysed in two steps.

Firstly, in conforming to the discourse model and establishing Orientalism as a network of interconnected texts, it is inevitable that Said should follow the line of approach established by Foucault which makes him treat discourse as mere *representation*. The emphasis on representation as an object of study is a result of his attempt to avoid labelling Orientalism as 'truth'. Said argues even more fervently in his 1994 "Afterword" that Orientalism is necessarily 'outside' the Orient, and that its representation, mainly in the form of written documents, is *not* the Orient itself in all its reality.

Such exteriority is what enables Orientalism to circulate as a symbol which stands for the Orient. Yet *Orientalism* was widely misread by the academic and general public as a 'true' account of the West's hostile sentiment towards the East, a claim which is strongly denied in Said's "Afterword." The indispensable function of representation and the exteriority of discourse, nevertheless, cause a kind of theoretical glitch in which the consideration of individual experience cannot be properly integrated. Said could only reduce agency and subjective experience into what I call the *textual presence of the author*. The life and works of many Orientalists are treated by Said as *text*, which is arguably nothing more than a 'representation' of the author. Such is the case with Sacy and Renan whose life and work are treated by Said as textual imprints in the discourse of French Orientalism. Their presence is perhaps too readily assumed as texts, from which we, after all, do not know why and how they came to gain the position they occupied and from which they spoke. This problem points to Said's lack of elaboration on the process which Orientalists need to go through in order to gain the power to speak for the Orient and also to his overemphasis of representation, or the end product, which forms the Orientalist discourse. This tension between upholding discursive exteriority without omitting the author's textual imprint has become the weak point on which Said's attackers often pick, of whom the most severe was Michael Richardson in 1990, when he accused Said of "situating his critique in the realm of ideas divorced from concrete relations of living" (Richardson 2000: 209). David Kopf criticises Said's methodology from a historian's perspective, arguing that the way in which Said studies Orientalism belongs to literary hermeneutics and that his Orientalist discourse is *ahistorical*, since it treats different historical events with the same logic (Kopf 2000: 199). These criticisms are made on the basis that there is no clear distinction between the structure of discourse and the agent's subjective involvement, as well as between Said's own interpretation and historical fact. Hardly any critique credits Said for his attempt to incorporate the experiential aspect of agency into the structure of Orientalist discourse.

Secondly, the absence of a concrete theorisation of the objective/subjective dialectics shows that Said does not sufficiently explore the notion of the Orientalists' *legitimacy* which enables them to speak for, or on behalf of, the Orient. While he does present the connection between the status of Orientalists and their affiliation to political and academic institutions, this relationship is rather treated as a *given* and still leaves one wondering how Orientalists come to possess enough power to legitimate or certify their knowledge of the East. The underdeveloped rationale of the relationship between the author and his environment raises the problem of the origin of power and legitimacy, for which discourse alone cannot provide the appropriate analytical tool. Paul A. Bové also voices his concern about the lack of analysis of the social reality surrounding Orientalists:

> The problematic nature of the "author" rarely leads Said away from critical tactics that themselves rest upon the presumed coherence and identity of the "subjects." He rarely analyzes in any detail the constitutive material and institutional realities in which

these "authors" work. As a result, when Said claims that individual writers modify the tradition, he is, like [T.S.] Eliot, [2] whom he follows on this, weakly echoing some form of a "genius" or "great man" theory of history. (Bové 1986: 27)

The problem of such an unexplored relationship between the author (agency) and discourse (structure) can be seen in Said's over-reliance on Foucault's model of institution and discipline. In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973), Foucault traces how those in the medical profession gain power over the public through their medical gaze, which allows them to observe and talk wisely about the human physical condition; Foucault argues that the public perception of doctors has been constructed through this 'gaze' and statements perpetuated around this profession, which, purportedly, explain how doctors maintain their power through the establishment of medical discipline and the clinical institution. Similarly, in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault explains how legal punishment in the modern era has given rise to professions connected with the act of disciplining, such as psychologists, programme facilitators and parole officers.

While it is rational to see a connection between the rise of the West's interest in the Orient and the birth of Orientalism as a career, Orientalism does not completely fit into the discipline/institution model set out by Foucault. The problem may well be resolved by a reassessment of the role of institutions in a specific socio-cultural context, in order to avoid lumping the

whole Orient together in one single 'discipline', as well as by rethinking the relationship between social agency and institution. In fact, Said develops a concept similar to that of Foucault's institution, which he mentions in *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983). It is the notion of *affiliation*, which entails the status of writers (in this case critics) and texts, together with their relationship to the social conditions of the societies in which they live. Affiliation is "what enables a text to maintain itself as a text and this is covered by a range of circumstances: status of the author, historical moment, conditions of publication, diffusion and reception, values drawn upon, values and ideas assumed, a framework of consensually held tacit assumptions, presumed background, and so on and on" (Said 1983: 174–175). This meaning of affiliation, Randal Johnson remarks, seems to be similar to Bourdieu's model of field, *habitus* and trajectories since it places writers and their texts at the centre of a complex system of cultural relationships. However, Johnson also points out that although "at first glance similar to Bourdieu's model, Said's formulation is largely intuitive and ultimately vague, and it never really inquires into the socially and historically constituted institutional framework which, in fact, sustains literary practice. Nor does it ever inquire into the objective position that criticism itself— and therefore the critic—occupies in the field of social relations" (Johnson 1993: 18–9).

It is therefore necessary to turn the intuition and vagueness of such a relationship into a systematic framework which focuses on the question of *legitimacy*, a property which enables us to question why agents come to have the power to speak for or represent something,

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[2] Bové here refers to T.S. Eliot's notion of "Tradition and the Individual Talent."

where or who is the source of power which is able to grant legitimacy to agents and how that legitimacy is maintained and passed on to the next generation of agents. To put these statements into the context of Orientalism, we may ask: what quality enables Orientalists to carry out their work as legitimate cultural reproduction [3] and what imbues their studies with the authority to represent the Orient in the target culture? This is where Bourdieu's sociological model can provide answers to these agent-related problems.

The textual presence of the author and the orientalist's *Habitus*: the break with discourse and representation

As discussed previously, Said introduces 'the imprint of the author in the text' to his analysis of Orientalist discourse, with particular reference to Silvestre de Sacy and Ernest Renan. While returning the author to the text shows Said's awareness of the individual's contribution to discourse, the theoretical framework that he borrows from Foucault's discourse restricts his object of study to only the exteriority of representation, which does not allow him to go beyond the boundary

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[3] I use "cultural reproduction" by following Bourdieu's use of the term in his book *La Reproduction*: *Éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement* (1970) and his article "Reproduction culturelle et reproduction sociale" (1971). The word "reproduction," as used by Bourdieu, has a strong association with the systematic production of both cultural goods and the very parameters that determine the mode of production itself. Reproduction, in this sense, refers to the propagation of both the products and their conditions, which suggests an ongoing process rather than an enclosed event.

of text. The insistence on exteriority places emphasis on the 'end product' rather than tracing back to the process. This is the point at which I seek to offer an alternative analysis of the role of the author in Orientalism by borrowing Bourdieu's concept of agency and social structures.

The first point to be considered is that Said's conceptualisation of the author's textual presence does share something with Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. Said points out that, during the rise of imperialism, Orientalism became a profession and the Orientalists's career was defined, certified, endorsed and transferable from one generation to another through a social system which maintained the validity of Orientalist cultural reproduction. The Orientalist profession, argues Said, was realised through the continuous process of lexicographical and institutional consolidation; a set of terminological choices was created to cater for Orientalist usage in the same manner as scientific terminology and Orientalist lexicography was adopted by members of Oriental Studies institutions as part of academic tradition. To adopt Orientalism as a career was to take up impersonal usage of Orientalist academic traditions, and it is precisely this impersonality of the discipline which allowed Orientalism as a career to be transferable and capable of being passed down to successive generations of Orientalists (Said 1979: 156).

As for Bourdieu, the key terms for his definitions of *habitus* are "durable, transferable dispositions," which refer to the way agents internalise social structures and form a *habitus* as the result of an interplay between subjectivity and objectivity. The concept of habitus was

modified a number of times by Bourdieu himself. The defition that is most frequently employed can be found in his *The Logic of Practice* (1990b):

> a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. (1990b: 53)

While Said and Bourdieu recognise the objectivity and transferability of social positions, the way Said explains how Orientalists approached their new-found position is a far cry from Bourdieu's complex characterisation of *habitus*. The key differences, apart from Said's discursive/textual approach, are the notions of the consciousness and internalisation of external social structures. For Bourdieu, *habitus* is necessarily a "disposition," a term which, as Swartz suggested, combines two fundamental components, namely *structure* and *propensity*, which imbue *habitus* with the reciprocal capacity of "structuring structures" and "structured structures" (Swartz 1997: 103). *Habitus* is a form of mental habit derived from and conditioned by the surrounding social structures. It also shapes structures through social actions conditioned by the agent's perception of the world; one may see it as a structure with a generative function—hence Bourdieu's occasional reference to his

sociology as "genetic structuralism."[4] The reciprocal interplay of subjectivity and objectivity in *habitus* lies in the notion that agents internalise the social patterns deemed relevant and the act of internalising becomes habit-making through inculcation. These habits, then, argues Bourdieu, are no longer consciously selected but rather 'predisposed' or 'prereflective' habituation (Swartz 1997: 101).

The question of internalisation and consciousness receives a rather different interpretation from Said. In *Orientalism*, the discursive framework to Said's project assumes that the subjective experience of the Orientalists is already incorporated into their texts. Let us take the case of Edward William Lane, which Said uses as an example of how Orientalist academic traditions, such as impersonal terminology, can be detected in Orientalist writings, and explains how Lane incorporated his own narrative into a work in which the author generally presents himself as a scientific observer. Said describes *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836) as striving to provide "immediate and direct, unadorned, and neutral description, whereas in fact it was the product of considerable editing" (Said 1979: 159). This is, as Said argues, the typical Orientalist narrative style which is the result of a predominantly scientific

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[4] In the interview with Cheleen Mahar in 1985 Bourdieu identified his sociological approach as 'genetic structuralism' which combines the concepts of field and *habitus*—the two components that enable the cohabitation of an objectivist and subjectivist structure of knowledge. The term 'genetic' comes from the subjective creation of knowledge through *habitus*, while 'structuralism' refers to the field, or the objective conditions wherein knowledge is generated (Mahar 1990: 33).

mode of study. For a work to be accepted and circulated in the scholarship of Orientalism, Orientalists need to adopt an impersonal, objectivist mode of writing which is believed to endow their work with scientific reliability. The irony that places the desire to present the Orient as a purely objective and untouched entity as the result of disguised efforts in editing, is one of Said's motifs that he uses to illustrate the ambivalent nature of the scholarship. While the Orientalists' end-products appear unadorned and devoid of personal voice, the whole process used to produce this effect involves a high degree of *conscious choice*—a kind of *subjective determination* which causes Orientalists to sit patiently before their works, carefully editing in order to make 'their' Orient appear transparent.

Said further argues that this sort of consciousness also explains why Orientalists always remain *outside* the Orient even though some Orientalists, Edward Lane included, made the Orient their residence. He points out that choices made by Orientalists regarding the Orient are *always* a separate consciousness; the Orient can *never* be internalised into the consciousness of a European; no matter how much the Orientalists try to make it appear lucid and logical to the eye of the West, it still remains a detached entity. Said illustrates this argument by pointing out the dilemma of Western writers travelling to the Orient in the nineteenth century:

> Moreover, there developed a fairly large body of Oriental-style European literature very frequently based on personal experiences in the Orient. Flaubert comes to mind immediately as one prominent source of such

literature; Disraeli, Mark Twain, and Kinglake are three other obvious examples. But what is of interest is the difference between writing that is converted from personal to professional Orientalism and the second type, also based on residence and personal testimony, which remains "literature" and not science: it is this difference that I now want to explore.

> To be a European in the Orient *always* involves being a consciousness set apart from, and unequal with, its surroundings. But the main thing to note is the intention of this consciousness: What is it in the Orient for? Why does it set itself there even if, as is the case with writers like Scott, Hugo and Goethe, it travels to the Orient for a very concrete sort of experience without actually leaving Europe? (Said 1979: 157, original italics)

For Said, the Orient is a kind of structure that never gets internalised by the consciousness of Orientalists, even though these Western writers reside in the very Orient they write about. Said cites an example from Lane's account of the Egyptian marriage tradition, which held that Egyptian men of suitable age must seek matrimony, otherwise they will be deemed disreputable. Lane then briefly recounts his personal experience relating to marriage in his work about the Egyptians—his Egyptian friend, on noticing that Lane was not married, offered to arrange a *mariage de convenance* for him, which in turn put Lane under pressure. Lane terminates his narrative abruptly with a period and a dash

(Said 1979: 163). Said interprets Lane's personal narrative as an Orientalist's self-conscious detachment from the Orient. His hermeneutic reading of Lane's positioning of himself vis-à-vis the Orient represents an instance of *strategic location*, which, as discussed earlier, is Said's attempt to marry discursive exteriority with experiential knowledge. While it is interestingly provocative to read Lane's narrative style as belonging to the Orientalist scientific tradition, it is questionable to interpret Lane's reference to his personal account as a conscious determination to separate himself from the Orient. My opposing view is threefold. Firstly, Said risks 'essentialising' the West. To say that the West remains a consciousness apart from the Orient in turn shows that Said needs to assign a certain quality, in this case 'scientific detachment,' to the West which is an essential quality that allows the West to distance itself from the Orient. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that the distance between the East and the West exists both in geography and social attitudes, and Said has proven quite substantially that the textual representations of the Orientalists' attitudes towards the Orient are governed overwhelmingly by their scientific academic environment. Yet it is due to the requirement of discursive coherence that Said needs to use Orientalism as a portmanteau in order to hold a number of statements together and thus gain the power of textual density. Secondly, while Said's explanation for the distance is solid, considering the strong academic tradition of scientific impersonality in the nineteenth century, it cannot be denied that his reading of the Orientalist's personal experience is arbitrary; Said's rather ironic assessment of Lane puts him in the same position, where he is always conscious of drawing a line between the Orientalist and the Orient. Lastly, the arbitrariness of his interpretation can jeopardise the solid exteriority of discourse that he claims to maintain as his object of analysis. Exteriority, or representation, is crucial to Said's thesis because it keeps him safe from being criticised for being an 'essentialist,' or making personal judgements about historical utterances. Going beyond the text by talking about 'consciousness,' in this case, risks falling from 'critical' to 'judgemental,' and once again makes us wonder, as David Kopf has remarked, whether Said's hermeneutics can be used to analyse historical discourse (Kopf 2000: 194–6).

Said's attempt to combine discursive structure with experiential mode may not be successful but his concept of *strategy* is clearly an interesting move. Said, like Bourdieu, recognises the importance of strategy as perpetuating social actions. Said sees strategy as a 'bridge' between discursive exteriority and the individual's textual imprint. He uses *strategic location* to explain how authors position themselves in relation to their works on the Orient, while *strategic formation* deals with the way in which texts are linked and grouped together and how referentiality among texts gains them power at the larger cultural level. Said's use of the term "strategy" can be viewed as a way of incorporating the individual's comments on, or criticism of, events or texts with the structure of discourse–and strategy is necessarily goal-oriented, since it requires the devising of a stratagem that leads to an expected outcome. For Said, actions–either personal or collective ones–pertain to the formation of Orientalist discourse as the combination of a calculated political agenda, or "manifest" Orientalism, and an internalised perception about the Orient, or

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"latent" Orientalism. In this way, strategy for Said is twofold: it aims at carrying out a well planned and well developed project in order to achieve imperial causes and this project is maintained by a 'positive unconscious' which keeps the European imperialists believing in the imperial project.

But actions are not really Said's unit of analysis. What Said studies is *text* and he detects strategies by analysing the Orientalists' and European writers' "style, expertise, vision," as we can see in a section dedicated to Orientalism's worldliness (Said 1979: 226–254). The way he detects such strategies is by his interpretation of the writers' styles, which, he further claims, reveal their vision of the Orient and their native countries. One of the examples is his analysis of E.M. Forster's narrative style in *A Passage to India*, in which Said argues that the sympathetic narrative that Forster assumes in order to portray the British prejudice against the Indians is meant to bring the Orient closer to the West, but only for a brief moment, after which that narrative is undermined by an anticlimactic ending. The last lines of the novel conclude with Aziz and Fielding, both declaring their friendship, and yet—

> the horses didn't want it…the earth didn't want it…the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as they issued from the gap saw Mau beneath: they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, "No, not yet," and the sky said, "No, not there." (cited in Said 1979: 244)

The irreconcilability of East and West in Forster's novel is for Said another instance of strategic location, which he consistently argues throughout his book, showing the Orientalist's attempt to understand the East, while remaining outside it. The paradoxical inside/outside strategic location occurs as an overruling pattern which governs Said's interpretation of narratives about the Orient—a kind of "master narrative" that structures the discourse of Orientalism. The strategy relies hugely on hermeneutics—the relationship between the Orientalist and the East is only possible through an interpretation and convergence which make the Orient appear sensible to the Europeans. The following quotation is Said's explanation of this master narrative:

> The second method by which Orientalism delivered the Orient to the West was the result of an important convergence. For decades the Orientalists had spoken about the Orient, they had translated texts, they had explained civilizations, religions, dynasties, cultures, mentalities— as academic objects, screened off from Europe by virtue of their inimitable foreignness. The Orientalist was an expert, like Renan or Lane, whose job in society was to interpret the Orient for his compatriots. The relation between Orientalist and Orient was essentially hermeneutical: standing before a distant, barely intelligible civilization or cultural monument, the Orientalist scholar reduced the obscurity by *translating*, sympathetically portraying, inwardly grasping the hard-to-reach object. Yet the Orientalist remained outside the Orient, which, however much it was made to appear intelligible, remained

beyond the Occident. (Said 1979: 222)

By viewing that the relationship between the Orientalist and the Orient as essentially hermeneutical, Said makes interpretation the means by which Orientalists locate themselves vis-à-vis the Orient. Yet this narrative of inside/outside strategic location can be criticised as arbitrary; it is not easy for everyone to agree on the extent to which the Orientalists 'commit' to remain 'outside' the Orient or to what extent the Orientalists need to do this in order to be considered 'inside' the Orient. This criticism echoes Eick's observation of Foucault's discourse as a grand narrative rather than a tool. Furthermore, the 'hazy' distinction between the generative role of agents and the objective formulation of structures in Foucauldian discourse, as observed by Dreyfus and Rabinow, are reflected in the uncertain location of inside/outside in which the Orientalists situate themselves. While being 'outside,' the Orientalists are able to 'objectify' the Orient from a neutral, scientifically acceptable position and yet they are always motivated by the desire to grasp the 'essence' of the Orient—that is, to experience the Orient from 'inside.' But it is hard to say where the 'inside' ends and where the 'outside' starts, as there seems to be no clear distinction between the generative function initiated by the desire to capture the 'inside' of the Orient, and the attempt to represent the Orient objectively from the 'outside' position. The vagueness of the inside/outside location is therefore open to interpretation by scholars. In this way, Said's view of 'translation' as the Orientalists' act of mediating between 'inside' and 'outside' partakes of the 'haziness' of the distinction between the two locations. Translation as mediation is, therefore, an act that requires

agency and subjective interpretation implied in what Said refers to as a 'hermeneutical' relationship. This is where we can start to view Orientalists as agents who *made choices* according to their habitus. They are not simply a textual presence belonging to Orientalism's master narrative in which their actions and personal experience are flattened into a coherent and well-surfaced discourse.

Conclusion

Said's *Orientalism* has long been regarded as inaugurating the fields of cultural studies and postcolonial studies with its grand-scale analysis of East-West encounters. Following the dominant mode of criticism at that time, Said manages to explain the history of the representations of the East by arranging the relevant statements into a unified discourse.While his arguments are convincing and, to a large extent, 'ground-breaking', his notion of the 'author' seems to lack a proper ground on which it can be adequately developed. Orientalists are viewed as a textual author who left their imprints on history rather than agents who actually experienced the East, made sense of the encounters and finally produced influential cultural records. This is not sufficient if we want to pursue the issue of Orientalism further since discourse may not be able to explain certain aspects such as why the Orientalists are conditioned into remaining 'outside' while desiring to understand the 'inside' and what process makes their works a legitimate representation. Bourdieu's sociology, as discussed in this article, has strong potential in explicating what Foucauldian discourse fails to deliver. While another detailed analysis of the application of Bourdieu's theory on Orientalism is needed, it can be said that concepts such as *habitus* and *strategy*, as

discussed in this article, could be promising concepts that shift the object of study from texts to actions, which means Orientalists can be studied as 'players' and not just 'labels.'

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