

**ORIENTALISM AND ITS CHALLENGES:
FEMINIST CRITIQUES OF ORIENTALIST KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION**

SAMEHA ALGHAMDI

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

YORK UNIVERSITY

TORONTO, ONTARIO

DECEMBER 2020

© Sameha Alghamdi, 2020

ABSTRACT

Orientalism has shaped conventional Euro-American epistemologies, approaches and thinking towards non-US/European people. Orientalism, as a set of epistemologies, and approaches has enabled the co-production of multiple violence and imperial domination. The production of Orientalist knowledge is not only an archive; but rather it is still inscribed and alive in much of the knowledges produced about a notion of the Arab world. Problematic and violent portrayals and representations of Arab and Muslim women are inscribed in contemporary knowledge systems. This thesis aims to examine how can feminist critiques of the concept/notion/system of epistemes and approaches about the other of Orientalism open up new ways of understanding knowledge production. In what ways do such insights contribute toward decolonizing the dynamics of Eurocentric knowledge and power relations in literature and representation?

This dissertation grapples with a number of feminist critiques of Orientalism in order to theorize and articulate notions of female agency and problematize depictions of passivity, sexuality and dominant gendered systems. Analytically, I concentrate on the work of Edward Said. I draw extensively on different feminist critiques of his work and show how orientalist knowledges and understandings co-construct Orientalism and Eurocentric genealogies of knowledge and power which in turn allow us to understand their role in thinking and understanding Euro-American domination. Feminists have problematized Said's literal inattention to the role of sexuality and gender in Orientalist discourses. However, Said's work has contributed to the discussions about the human of modernity by arguing that this human is a man whose masculinity has been pivotal in domination of others and the other women. Said's work has been important in allowing me to grapple with the debate on women's role in Orientalism and the ways in which Orientalism itself was/is gendered. To examine the saliency of gender in Euro-American discourse and media, I read Edward Said in conjunction with Malek Alloula *The Colonial Harem* (1986), Lila Abu-Lughod *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (2013), Rana Kabbani *Imperial Fictions, Europe's Myths of Orient* (1986)

and Meyda Yeğenoğlu *Colonial fantasies: Towards a feminist reading of Orientalism (1998)* to trace how Orientalism allows for certain notions of domination and become entangled with Orientalist notions of oppression, with catastrophic gendered effects.

Ultimately, I draw on these texts to point to the limits of Said's understanding of Orientalism and stretching it to include deliberations about women and more broadly gendered subjects by pointing to how imperialism depends extensively on sexuality and gender for its viability. I produce a feminist analytic by stretching Said's Orientalism through a reading that points to how Orientalism is a set of complex relations between knowledge (i.e., representations) and power and has concrete material implications on how we think, understand, and organize subjects to challenge the representation of Arab and Muslim women as passive or exotic some representations that have come to be normalized and universalized.

Key words: Orientalism. Knowledge production. Gender. Representation, Feminist Orientalism

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Anna Agathangelou for giving me the opportunity to work on this subject, for her great patience, guidance, and direction throughout the process of my research, which allowed me to successfully complete this project. I am externally fortunate to have two amazing committee members, Prof. Gamal Abdel-Shehid and Prof. Walid El Khachab; I want to extend my most sincere appreciation to them for serving on my committee and for their assistance through this project. I am grateful to them for their constant guidance, support, and the time they have invested to help me improve my work.

Thanks to my sister Shuruq, for being my backbone during the tough times, I am so blessed to have been gifted a sister like you, thank you for everything. Thanks to Sara for being a friend, a sister, and for sticking by me even when it was hard. Thanks to all my friends for their support. Thanks to my wonderful family, for their love and support throughout this entire journey, through them, I have learned that hard work, dedication, and integrity are the keys to success. It would have been a long road without all of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	II
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
INTRODUCTION	1
ORIENTALIST DISCOURSE AS KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND POWER.....	1
RATIONALE: WHY STUDY THE PRODUCTION OF THE DISCOURSE OF ORIENTALISM?.....	3
THEORETICAL CRITIQUES AND APPROACHES TO ORIENTALISM	12
<i>GENEALOGY OF ORIENTALISM</i>	12
SAID'S <i>ORIENTALISM</i>	15
<i>THE FEMININE ORIENT</i>	21
CRITICISM OF SAID'S <i>ORIENTALISM</i>	24
THE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF GENDER.....	27
RESEARCH QUESTION.....	34
METHODS: DISCURSIVE AND TEXTUAL ANALYTICS.....	35
GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE DESSERTATION	41
CHAPTER ONE: THE NEXUS OF KNOWLEDGE AND POWER	43
EPISTEME AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION.....	44
KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND THE DISCRIMINATORY DISTORTIONS.....	49
QUESTION OF DIFFERENCES	57
RACIST DISCOURSE.....	63
CONTRASTING THE NOTION OF SUBJECT.....	67
DECOLONIZING KNOWLEDGE.....	70
CONCLUSION	72
CHAPTER TWO: THE GENEALOGY OF ORIENTALISM	74
SELF AND OTHER: CONCEPTUAL BASIS.....	75
REPRESENTATIONS OR MISREPRESENTATION.....	77
SELF-ORIENTALISM – ASSIMILATING THE WESTERN “TAGREEB”	93
CONCLUSION	103
CHAPTER THREE: FEMINIST CRITIQUES OF ORIENTALISM	105
GENDERING THE EUROPEAN DISCOURSE	106
FRAMING THE “OTHER”: A HEGEMONIC VISUALITY – MALIK ALLOULA.....	108
MORALIZATION OF SEXUALITY-RANA KABBANI.....	125
CONCLUSION	140
CHAPTER FOUR: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FEMINIST ORIENTALISTS	143
UNVEILING AND MODERNITY: MEYDA YEĞENOĞLU.....	144
<i>YEĞENOĞLU AND FEMALE ORIENTALISM</i>	145
<i>MODERNITY / MODERNIZING THE WOMAN</i>	148
FEEL SORRY OR FEEL SUPERIOR: DEPICTIONS OF THE MUSLIM WOMAN.....	159
CONCLUSION	175
DISSERTATION CONCLUSION	178
BIBLIOGRAPHY	198

INTRODUCTION

ORIENTALIST DISCOURSE AS KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND POWER

Orientalism is both a discourse of knowledge and a material practice of power. One of the primary writers to unpack this connection is Edward Said. His book *Orientalism* grapples with the relationship of knowledge and power in the European discourse, focusing on the European representation of Arabs, which amounts to a form of knowledge production. Knowing certain aspects of life, such as modes of reasoning and language, conferred upon Orientalist discourses an authority to manipulate “truth” in a way to benefit both the European and materially affect individuals who are assigned a position of marginality in its hierarchy of power. Therefore, as the understanding of reality characterizes our life experience, the shaping of such an understanding exists as an act of influence (i.e., power). By keeping track of the overlapping of this understanding of reality and the influence necessary to shape it, we can better comprehend the evolution of these connections. In *Orientalism*, Said writes, “To have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it” (Said, 1978, p. 32). According to Said’s interpretation, in order to understand or comprehend an object, it is necessary to claim some form of detachment from and even superiority over it. This, then, lends the “knower” the ability to pose as the center of truth, knowledge, and power.

Orientalism was initially intended to depict the “Occidental West” as civilized in contrast to the “backward and irrational Oriental East”. To establish a sense of superiority, one must completely detach oneself from the “others”. In this sense, a set of fixed meanings is produced to give the European a sense of culture’s and intellectual’s superiority by detaching themselves from the “East”. The processes of detaching necessitate the creation of a binary between “self” and “other”. These processes are achieved through multidimensional societal factors such as culture, religion, history, technological achievement, military superiority, morality, language, race, and ethnicity. Thus, the European created the idea of an

“inferior Orient” in order to subjugate and control it. This necessitated the creation of a hierarchical structure in which the European represented democracy, modernity, progress, enlightenment, and tolerance, while the Arabs stand in the opposite hierarchy as backward, stagnant, barbaric, primitive, and intolerant. The Orientalist, therefore, defines the world in an artificial value hierarchy of the “superior West” and the “inferior East”.

One of the key elements enabling the European (i.e., the Self), in particular to rule over the Arab region (i.e., the other/Arab) has been through shaping a particular understanding of reality. The European was able to define the “East” by typecasting it as an eternally strange place, populated by an equally strange people. One component of the case for the domination of the European over the “East” is the idea that more advanced civilizations should govern less advanced ones, with the goal of rendering them more modern, civilized, or human. Thus, as Said explains, those who produce such knowledge also assist in giving order to it. The act of ordering knowledge lends to advantage particular ways of thinking and acting; it also systematically demeans the Arabs, and thus materially impacts the world (in fact, creating a certain reality) according to the beliefs and principles of those doing the ordering. Hence, to Said, knowledge cannot be seen as unbiased, as “it set up a complex affiliation between Orientalism and its putative human subject matter that is based finally on power and not really on disinterested objectivity” (Said, 1978, p. 148).

Briefly, knowledge is power; those in positions of influence construct systematic knowledge and meanings of reality in order to benefit themselves. As the knowledge produced about the East increases, they tend to grow in importance, and further lend themselves to being used by the European to justify dominating the Arab region. The creation of certain ways of comprehending reality takes place via interrelationships of community formations, narratives, assertions, and organizations. This web of connections guarantees that modes of influence are firmly rooted in the relationship between Arab region and US and Western European.

The way we understand the world is constructed through the creation of narratives which produce a communal status quo which deeply affects our behavior.

Current understandings about the reality of the Arabs affect the present systems of influence. These understandings are troublesome as they ignore the dynamics and interconnections of influence that bring them into being. Constructed narratives about what is true are subject to a sum of ideas that establish the knowledge which is considered to be true at any given time. These ideas provide the substrate for the generation of assertions, which manifest themselves into the declaration of what is true and what is false in order to sustain some type of authority over the existent political order.

RATIONALE: WHY STUDY THE PRODUCTION OF THE DISCOURSE OF ORIENTALISM?

Understanding Orientalism as a modality of knowledge production allows one to challenge the historical legacy of power structures, which perpetuate colonial power structures into the current era. As Said explains, Orientalism is “the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it” (Said, 1978, p. 3). Orientalism has shaped our paradigms towards the region and the peoples of the Arab. A distorted view of the Arab world has been created in a way to fit within this Orientalist paradigm; these misrepresentations may romanticize the region, demonize its people, or otherwise create a distorted depiction of reality. Orientalism produces images, stories, and political discourses, which shape the geopolitical policy directions that countries take. These misrepresentations often serve as justification for Euro-American military and neo-imperialist interventions in the region. Therefore, we must critically analysis the discourse of Orientalism to rectify these misrepresentations and the adverse political choices they inspire. For Said, Orientalist discourses are problematic not only because they fail to capture reality and, in fact, succeed in

concealing it, but also due to how the Euro-American voice presumes to speak for the Arabs and silence their voices. Consequently, understanding Orientalist discourse's production is essential to analyze the transition from colonial era to the current time. Hence, I argue that Orientalists' representations of the Arab region are deeply problematic since Orientalism, as a discourse or knowledge, is entangled with power; it shapes representations of the Arabs, denies the Arabs's voice, and establishes the ways in which Orientalist knowledge production may serve as an instrument of social control. Orientalism is not just about subjugation. Therefore, challenging the subjugation and "East-West" binary is insufficient; we need to expose how and why Arab and Muslim women's discourse was established. The problem with this discourse is that it is not a descriptive discourse; yet, it is a discourse that was selectively produced with a set of fixed meaning. This will enable us to clarify how knowledge and power clearly intertwined in shaping our understanding of the world in a certain way.

Said's *Orientalism* is one of the most influential postcolonial works. It continues to express, and help shapes contemporary thinking about topics such as representation of the "East", European imperialism, and how both of these relate to other concepts, including gender and race. An exploration of Said's *Orientalism* is useful in investigating and dissecting the various ways Western Europeans have viewed the East. In particular, it serves to unpack colonial attitudes of superiority over a "backward Middle Eastern"; it focuses on the erection of various boundaries in cultural depictions of the Arabs, as well as the methods that shape the study of the Arab region. This includes elucidating how European academics, artists, and other creators of cultural portrayals have produced and represented the Arab through a series of specific distortions. These distortions have created a rigid hierarchy between the Arab and the Western European. Religion, culture, and language, each has been subjected to distortions that serve to create arbitrary distinctions between "East" and "West". Said argues that the method for generating and reproducing these distorted discourses has, for centuries, been spared substantial criticism:

Knowledge no longer requires application to reality; knowledge is what gets passed on silently, without comment, from one text to another. Ideas are propagated and disseminated anonymously, they are repeated without attribution;...what matters is that they are there, to be repeated, echoed, and re-echoed uncritically (Said, 1978, p. 116).

Thus, Said unpacks how depictions of the Arab region and North Africa are built on a number of distorting mythologies. These mythologies serve to frame the region as an exotic place; depictions were sculpted to advance particular vested political, economic, and military interests. These distorted mythologies stand in stark contrast to robust academic research that would lead to more accurate and nuanced depictions of the region.

There are political consequences of the distortive mythologies advanced through Orientalist depictions. The perpetuation of the Orientalist vision has, in part, created the current volatile geopolitical situation in the Arab world. Therefore, Said's *Orientalism* offers vital insights that can help us to understand the driving cultural forces, which in turn influence the political, economic, and military actions that have shaped this region of the modern world. Yet, Said consciously or unconsciously overlooked the problematic use of Arab and Muslim women in nourishing the imperialist agenda. As I will further elaborate, illustrating the crucial role of using the notion of women in shaping the colonial projects is necessary when grappling with questions in relation to the nexus of power and knowledge. In fact, earlier Orientalist depictions of Muslim women were used to justify imperial and colonial actions. Notably, those historic colonizers were not the only parties that used Orientalist depictions of the Arab world to justify their actions; for instance, some groups of European feminists also employed the same Orientalist depictions in justifying their actions. In the 21st century, a number of Euro-American feminists have started to use the same Orientalist depictions of the oppression of women in the Arab world to justify military action there; ostensibly to liberate Arab and Muslim women.

Considering the aforementioned role of gender in the discourse about the Arab, my objective in this dissertation is to investigate the work of anti-Orientalist feminist scholars. To answer my research questions, I focus on the scholars who contributed to the body of knowledge and literature which question how imperial and colonial powers operate and how this power stand in opposition to Arab and Muslim women. The focus here is on the systematic representation that define women by framing them within particular parameters. This dissertation combines both of literature and post-colonial mostly of Arab Heritage feminist voices to explore the production of the distorted images of the Arab, especially women. This poses a deliberate challenge to the discourses that have historically oppressed non- European women. The following authors have applied a range of deconstructive strategies that allow the identification and demystification of the European discourses: Palestinian-American anthropologist Leila Abu-Lughod; Algerian writer Malek Alloula; Syrian cultural historian Rana Kabbani; and Turkish-American feminist academic Meyda Yeğenoğlu. I follow in the footsteps of these authors and draw on their works to stretch Said's notion of Orientalism. Abu-Lughod, Alloula, Kabbani, and Yeğenoğlu draw on Said's work to highlight the significance of reading literature through feminists' lens and expand Saidian framework to explain relations of knowledge production and power, as well modernity, authority, and moral judgments.

In Leila Abu-Lughod's book *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (2013), she examines media depictions of gender issues in the "Middle East" to understand how these depictions of female oppression are used to justify Euro-American intervention in the "Middle East". By showing how these Euro-American perceptions of gender issues are constituted through a discourse about the "Middle East", Abu-Lughod allows for the metaphorical curtain to be pulled back to uncover underlying epistemological premises. Abu-Lughod stretches the idea of Said's *Orientalism* by incorporating gender and its effect on Arab and Muslim women. She discusses Muslim women as a distinct group, rather than collapsing them into the broader category called "woman" or a broader category called "Middle Eastern" or "Easterner". Abu -Lughod, like Said, challenges

the discourse of Orientalism; however, her approach is grounded not in a cultural analysis of history but in gender analysis of contemporary Euro-American discourse. Abu-Lughod agrees with Said that the same depictions about the “Middle Eastern men” in the 18th century remain the same in the 20th century. However, to Abu-Lughod, the narrative and depiction of Arab and Muslim women changed from being exotic and mostly naked to being passive/ oppressed and fully covered. Abu-Lughod embraces Said’s definition of Orientalism as a Western-style of thoughts to rule and have authority over the Arab world. From this perspective, Abu-Lughod’s book sets out to expose how the discourse, especially women’s rights discourse, uses gender as a tool in justifying the Euro-American having authority over the Arab. In effect, the concept of women’s rights has been engrained in Euro-American culture to the extent that cultures that do not embrace the Euro-American feminist ideal of women’s rights are demonized as backward and oppressive to women. In order to challenge the gendered discourse about the Arab region, Abu-Lughod’s book is divided into two parts; first, she reveals the hidden truth behind the Euro-American feminist construct of women’s rights into the contemporary era. Second, Abu-Lughod opens the possibility for Arab and Muslim women to speak about themselves to show the diversity of Arab women.

In the *Colonial Harem* (1986), Malek Alloula presents a feminist critique of Orientalism by focusing on the configuration and representation of images. Alloula demonstrates how visual depictions of Algerian women in French postcards represent a form of knowledge production that feeds into the colonial/imperial agenda. Alloula’s work extends the theoretical framework to include reading Orientalism in a perspective of gendered relations between the Arab and the Western European. Alloula expands Said’s ideas of Orientalism by exploring how images, such as photography that represent a mode of Orientalist knowledge production. Alloula’s analysis focuses on the postcard produced during the French involvement with Algeria, while the postcards used for souvenirs, but intimately sustain the Orientalist discourses. These postcards reinforce Orientalist fantasies about Algerian women, thereby sustaining the dominant power structures. His work raises

an interesting question about the role of visibility in the perceived dichotomy. His analysis of French postcards of Algerian women chimes with Said's arguments on the misrepresentations of the "East". These postcards would depict naked Algerian women in Orientalist settings evocative of the slave market or harem fantasies captured in the 18th and the 19th century Orientalist paintings. These images perpetuate the Orientalist fantasy of an "exotic East" characterized by savageness, barbarity, and aggressive sexuality, which appealed to the darker recesses of the European psyche. Therefore, there is an agreement between Said and Alloula that the humiliation and removal of the Arab agency was a political way to have more control over the others. Alloula describes in-depth with analytical methods the way in which these postcards humiliate and take away agency from those women in the postcards. The postcards depicting the naked bodies of Arab women could be bought and possessed by the French; this fulfills the European fantasy of buying a sexually submissive Arab woman in a slave market to serve him in his private harem. Therefore, the European desire to dominate and control is satisfied through the acquisition of an erotic Orientalist postcard.

In *Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of Orient* (1986), Kabbani examines how moral judgments on sexuality developed in Medieval Europe to demonstrate how these judgments, in turn, shaped the emergence of Orientalism. Kabbani stretches Said's concept of Orientalism by emphasizing the sexism of European imperialism and the interdependencies of sexism and Orientalism. Kabbani's book intends to address some of the issues that Said's text highlighted. Her analysis clearly has much of Said's conceptualization of Orientalism. Kabbani's challenged traditional stereotypes of Arab and Muslim women that started as early as the Victorian Era and how it was tied up with creating a moral binary between the "East" and the "West". Kabbani's work is an extension to Said's works, but what Kabbani adds is the exploration of the role of gender. She offers a more detailed analysis of European discourse, including female Orientalists. Following Said's methodology, Kabbani explores how the European world asserts its superiority throughout the Orientalists' texts, not just

economically or culturally, but also morally. Kabbani insists that the depictions of exotic Arab and Muslim women were explicitly subjugated to a male view, which ultimately was a way for European to exercise its hegemony and to mirror Europe as morally superior.

In *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (1998), Meyda Yeğenoğlu explores the overlapping space between feminism and postcolonialism, where she unpacks issues connected to identity; in particular, in relation to sexuality and culture. In her analysis of gendering Orientalism, Yeğenoğlu is critical of Said for his duality between “East and West” and the masculinist tendencies of Said's work. While Yeğenoğlu acknowledges the influence of Said's book, Yeğenoğlu strongly expressed her disagreement with Said in regard to two aspects of Said's book. First, Said's beliefs that the discourse of Orientalism was mostly created by the male, which Yeğenoğlu disagrees with and hence reveals in her book the important role of female Orientalists in constructing the discourse. In fact, female Orientalists not only play a role in constructing the discourse, but their works consciously or unconsciously supported the imperial power of the Western European. Second, Yeğenoğlu challenged Said's analysis of Orientalism, where Said did not bring the gender into his analysis. To Yeğenoğlu, gender is clearly tied up with Orientalism. Hence, Yeğenoğlu proposes to extend the analysis of Orientalism to the role of gender. In her book, Yeğenoğlu stresses out that these discourses are not just a discourse of colonization, but these narratives continue to set out the European at the present age and are ranked at a higher level of humanity. Yeğenoğlu focused on exposing the political representation of Arab women, especially Muslim veiled women, under the name of modernity. Consider the depictions of veiled women as a proof of the presumed oppression by backward Muslim cultures who is in need to be civilized by the presumed modern Western European. In fact, Yeğenoğlu's book helps to create a comprehensive understating of how the hegemonic modernity that was pushed into the “East” is a form of Orientalism, which resulted in maintaining the binary and authority over the “East”.

Reading these authors altogether offers a different explanation of the discourses and draws attention to the normalization of Euro-American intervention. By drawing on a range of works, this dissertation will explore how colonial discourses, like Orientalism (within feminism and other schools of thought), operate as a technique for generalizing others. The aim is to create non- Euro-American discourses that may serve as a form of counter-discourse; in contrast to both Euro-American imperialism and the overall Western literature which still persist in the current Euro-American discourse.

The selected post-colonial authors partially endorsed Said's analysis of the structured knowledge, which carries out all its implications that grant European legitimacy. Focusing on gender through my analysis is an area of weakness in Said's study; I articulate how the structured knowledge was formulated mainly in an imperialist language, which contributed to hegemony and racism upon the Arab and Muslim women specifically. The centrality of Arab and Muslim women in the discourse is obvious and has a long history in the European narratives about the Arab world. Throughout reading the four selected texts, we can find undoubtedly similarities between the European ideology during colonial and contemporary times, where the Euro-American discourse on the Arab remains deeply connected to power structures. The shift has been one of means and methods, not one of the objectives. The European narrative of Arab and Muslim women has shifted in terms of its mode of presentation, but the end objective of imposing Euro-American values on the Arab remains the same. These authors explain the consequences of structured knowledge around Arab and Muslim women which denies women's agency, voice, and imposes an authority over them.

Taken together, these authors' works ought to be considered as part of the general feminist critique of Orientalism, since they serve to challenge Euro-American concepts of the need to “rescue” or “save” Muslim women. These works are critical of the economic, political, and military powers that use gendered imagery to depict the Arab cultures as oppressive to women and view Muslim women primarily as victims

of domestic and political violence. These authors are also critical of Euro-American feminists who to advance the artificial bifurcation of the world into “East and West”. While Said opened a space for us to understand the violence of Orientalism, these authors stretched the concept of Orientalism to explicitly include what Said did not, namely gender. Alloula, Kabbani, Abu-Lughod, and Yeğenoğlu concentrate on decolonizing the racist discourse of Orientalism by challenging the dichotomy that produced it. The European depictions of the Arab and Muslim women reflect on the role of gender in the formation of European representations of the “Orient”.

Hence, by placing these texts in conversation, we will better recognize the forms of invisible violence that articulated subdue Arab subjects that impact women in different ways. Mainly, it helps to understand better the creation of the gendered discourse and its relation to invisible violence during the colonial and post-colonial era. Alloula's work illustrates how violence in the form of forcing women to pose for postcard pictures without offering them the opportunity to express themselves in the process, thus raising the question of an agency or lack thereof. Kabbani's work opens up a space to examine how discourse generates violence based on Arab women supposed moral laxity, who are in turn perceived by European colonizers as little more than sexual objects. One of the significant elements of the gendered discourse is modernity; Yeğenoğlu's book trenchantly examines how violence is deeply inherent in modernity and the call of liberation. To trace similar patterns of this biased discourse in today's world, Abu-Lughod's work enables us to locate the hidden violence in the language of human rights.

I have the perception that modernity and universal human rights are two sides of the same coin; where modernity is implied in the colonial and post-colonial era, the latter is the contemporary concept that has been used in today's world as a humanitarian project. I suggest that both concepts share a similar set of fixed meanings and a political ideology. Hence, we need to challenge these discourse by taking a more in-depth look at the issue of gender which enables us to open new spaces for the study of different

forms of invisible violence and how they come into being. This can be connected to Euro-American domination of the Arab region. In the process, we understand how the Arab and Muslim women find themselves being forced to be labeled in a particular definition and explore this has served to deepen the US and Western European's feelings of superiority and control.

THEORETICAL CRITIQUES AND APPROACHES TO ORIENTALISM

GENEALOGY OF ORIENTALISM

Genealogy, or a “history of the present,” for Foucault, concentrates on “record[ing] the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality” (Foucault, 1977, 139) or a question posed in the present (Foucault, 1988, p. 262). Unlike archaeology, genealogy aims to investigate a problem in the present, instead of a period in history (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 22). Fixed essences or metaphysical finalities are of no concern to genealogy. Where others find continual development, it finds discontinuities, and to disclose the solemn hymns of progress, it records a human’s past (Dreyfus & Rainbow, 1980, p.105). As such, the genealogist realizes that profound hidden meanings, the unattainable heights of truth, and the dim and dark depths of consciousness are all unreal (Dreyfus & Rainbow, 1980, p.105). When exploring history, a genealogist will look at multiple dimensions to understand how the current norms that govern society could arise. This includes exploring the dimensions of power, truth, and ethics. By understanding how these dimensions are structured, insight can be gained into how contemporary societal norms have been shaped (Dreyfus & Rainbow, 2014, p. 259). The objective of genealogy is to understand how the path of the past has shaped the “truth” in the present. This looks specifically at how key societal structures (i.e., cultural superstructures) have been configured through history and the ways in which these cultural superstructures shape contemporary thinking.

The reader’s exploration of truth in the past is not the objective of genealogy; instead, it strives to discover how some types of knowledge have been established as the truth (Bailey, 1993, p.120). To quote

Rose (1996, p.80), “genealogy seeks not to reveal falsity but to describe the constitution of truths”. Besides, genealogy poses questions about the presence of certain historical moments, paving the way for a particular issue to be problematized in connection with the past (Skehill, 2007). To note, Foucault’s genealogical model is based on exploring the complexity of the power-knowledge relation (Koopman,2009). Rather than asking where power is or where it stems from, a genealogist asks the following question: “How does power function and with what impacts?” (Foucault, 1998 as cited in Rahm & Fejes, 2017). On this topic, Foucault states the following:

We should admit... that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault, 1977, p.27).

As I point out, the mere acceptance of the existing “truths” in the world legitimizes them. Hence, when we want to understand power “we should think of power not as an attribute (and ask, ‘What is it?’), but as an exercise (and ask, ‘How does it work?’)” (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p.50).

Genealogy works to identify ways in which one can identify new modes of thinking, which allows for a redefinition of the “truth” through new thought patterns. The strength inherent in genealogy indicates the exact ways our forms of knowledge, power, and ethics have accidentally formed (Koopman, 2009). Foucault’s primary intention is not to demonstrate that our present is formed randomly, but to reveal how we have accidentally formed ourselves to make the materials we require to shape us differently (Koopman, 2009).

I have traced how ideas are constituted and assembled together to reveal the problematic genealogy of ideas; genealogy obliges us to question whether ideas we hold are legitimate due to their inherent worth or are

merely legitimate due to how the holders of these ideas crushed all opposing ideas. Hence, to understand the struggles of the present, one must question the past through this present seems to be constructed (Foucault, 1971). This genealogical reconnection of contemporary practices and bodies to historical power struggles obliges critical thinking about value and meaning. Hence, by understanding the genealogical emergence of phenomena, we can better question them; Foucault argues that “political effects can be produced by historical analyses... the problem is to let the knowledge of the past work on the experience of the present” (Foucault as cited in Garland, 2014, p.373). In this way, the challenge of the contemporary scholar is in understanding that presently, there is an ongoing battle of specific raging ideas, which may now seem perfectly logical to us, because in fact, they only seem sound due to the past conquest and subjugation of other. In constructing a genealogy of the present, focusing on the gendering of Orientalism, the purpose is not to offer a continuous historical account or to highlight these discourses. Instead, this dissertation is intended to capture, over time, what has been expressed in the literature and primarily how gender has functioned within Orientalism.

The production of Orientalist knowledge is not only found in archives; it is still alive in much of the knowledge produced about the Arab world. Even after the decolonization, the racist thought systems around the Arab persist to this day in media and culture, as well as in the popular imagination. The thoughts of exoticizing the other continues to lead contemporary governments into foreign military adventures that would not have been out of place in the 20th century. The misrepresentation of the Arab region has a long trajectory. The ideas of challenging the historical notions of the Orient in Orientalism pre-dates Said in the work of Anouar Abdel-Malek. In the 1960s, Abdel-Malek penned the article “Orientalism in Crisis”, aiming to examine how hegemonic European notions. Such a reassessment makes it possible to challenge the historical treatments of the Arabs since, historically, the Arab has been defined by an “otherness”, making it a subject of study (Abdel-Malek, 1963, p.103-107). Abdel-Malek’s aims to challenge the

decolonization paradigm of the inhabitants of the Arab as passive objects (Abdel-Malek, 1963, p.104). Inhabitants of the Arab region were now seen as active agents who would define themselves. By obtaining independence from colonial rule and seeking sovereignty, these people underwent a transformation from “object” to “subject”. Political independence allowed for a movement towards ending objectification by European imagination (Abdel-Malek, 1963, p.110). In addition, Abdel-Malek criticized the relationship of Orientalist knowledge and the colonial institutions that construct the so-called “East” in order to justify the European colonization of the East. Clearly, we can see the impact of Abdul-Malik on Said; yet, what Said did is beyond the work of Abdul-Malik. Said continues the work of Abdul-Malik but in a more detailed and methodical approach. Comprehensively, Said examines the process carried out to support the colonial ideological aspect and the Western European’s ambitions colonization of the Arab region. In essence, the role of Said’s work is to expose the orientalist studies through racist structures and systematic Eurocentric knowledge.

SAID’S *ORIENTALISM*

Edward Said famously explored Orientalism in a book *Orientalism* (1978). Knowledge is what defines the world; the determination of knowledge is an exercise of power and understanding the relationship between power and knowledge allows us to gain a better insight into changes of power relationships throughout history. Power works through networks of social structures, discourses, statements, and institutions, ensuring that elements of power are fundamentally embedded into all social relations (i.e., the relationship between the Arab and the Western European). The discursive process of knowledge production creates our political reality by informing and shaping our actions; power/knowledge mechanisms serve to control discourses, which leads to a self-reinforcing relationship. In his book, Said attempts to challenge the inaccurate knowledge about the “East” produced through European discourses that support the unbalanced relationship of power. It is best

understood to be masculine and superior; yet, the East, conversely, is understood as feminine and inferior. Promoters of historically Orientalist images of Arab people created a distance between the European and the Arabs. Said theorizes that “when one uses categories like “Oriental and Western” as both the starting and endpoints of analysis, research and public policy, the result is usually to polarize the distinction: the “Oriental” becomes more “Oriental”, and the “Westerner” more “Western”, which limits the human encounter between different cultures, traditions and societies” (Said, 1978, p. 402). This propagates extremism and racism, engendering a new series of difficulties. Said views Orientalism as situated within a broader body of European knowledge production, meant to foster, and create its epistemes and methodologies, as well as its self-serving power structures throughout the known world. Said essentially wants to explain “the relationships between the modern metropolitan West and its overseas territories” (Said, 1994, p. xi).

In *Orientalism*, Said puts forward three definitions of Orientalism. While Said discusses Orientalism in-depth, he paints a literary picture that captures the concept as an imperialist zeitgeist. The first definition of Orientalism is an academic one. Said defines it as follows: “[B]y Orientalism I mean several things, all of them, in my opinion, interdependent. The most readily accepted designation for Orientalism is an academic one, and indeed the label still serves in a number of academic institutions” (Said, 1978, p. 2). Second, Said provides a cultural/philosophical definition of Orientalism:

[Orientalism is a style] of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and the ‘Occident’. Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, “mind,” destiny, and so on (Said, 1978, p. 2).

This second definition addresses the way Orientalism permeates the work of tradespeople, like painters and filmmakers, as they take for granted the lower position of the “East” relative to the European in this unequal relationship. These scholars and practitioners take for granted that this definition raises no questions on account of its production and that its retention of the conceptual dichotomy between Europe and Arab poses no problem. Thus, their work continues to advance the production of distortive representations of the Arabs. Indeed, maintaining these divisions is false and morally problematic because it is legitimizing the exclusion of the other and serves to reinforce the legitimacy of imperialism or domination. With the third definition, Said defines Orientalism as how the Europe has historically been able to sustain economic domination over the Arab. Said includes, in this definition, elements of how the Arab or “Orient” is viewed, how it is studied on an institutional and corporate level, to aid the search for profits. Said offers the following observation: “I come to the third meaning of Orientalism which is something more historically and materially defined than either of the other two... Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1978, p. 3). To Said, Western knowledge production about the Arab through Orientalism (i.e., the knowledge production process that produces images of “an exotic and inferior Orient”) served to create European power over the Arab region. As I have indicated, this discourse was produced by those in positions of power; therefore, one can clearly see how the discourse about the Arabs was inextricably tied up with the military, culture, and economic domination of the Arab region. Simplistically, Orientalist discourse is a way in which the European perpetuates a cultural superiority to grant European's authority and power to rule the Others.

Said analyzes Orientalism to argue that European theorists have constructed the European or “Occident” as the progenitor of modernity and the Arab or “Orient” as a sort of “the other”. *Orientalism* is used to reveal the false images, myths, and stereotypes that European imperial powers cultivated to justify the exploitation of Arabs world and cultures (Nikhil, 2002, p. 36). Said problematizes Orientalism by arguing that

the political constructs embodied within the ideas of Orientalism were used during colonialism to benefit the European at the expense of the “East”. Hence, I argue that Orientalism generated a worldview with contingent epistemologies that support a particular pattern of power relationships. The production of Orientalism, then, positions the European to read the Arab region in a way that portrays the Arabs as passive, barbaric, and backward, all to justify European exploitation. This systematic knowledge reduced “Orientals” to the stereotypes of backward, which was crucial to the practices of colonization. In fact, the colonial discourses created a twisted colonial reality in which colonialism is considered as a civilizing mission that ultimately beneficial to the colonized subject who needs the enlightened European to be civilized. However, this was highlighted in the orientalist’s discourses while the racism and the brutality of colonization were overlooked.

To understand this dynamic, one must first delve into the concepts of the “Occident” and the “Orient”. The “Occident”, Said tells us, comes to embody, and represent the European nation-states and cultures. These cultures achieved economic, technological, and military dominance during the 18th and 19th centuries. Euro-American countries are articulated as “Occidental”, with a distinct worldview, which emerged from a particular set of cultural constructs, including the Greco-Roman tradition, Christianity; capitalism; imperialism; language, and European cultural artifacts. The European jingoist rhetoric focused on imperial expansion, the latter resulting in the military conquest and colonization of much of the world by Europe. Europe was the primary mover behind 18th and 19th-century imperialism. The “Orient” comes to be the notion that represents the peoples of North Africa and the Middle East, as well as South and East Asia. Said’s focus tends to be on what we would call “the Muslim world” of North Africa and the Middle East. This encompasses people with a shared ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage. In fact, the “Orient” was of profound personal importance to Said since his heritage is grounded in the Arab world.

Said problematizes European knowledge production on the basis that it influences relations between the “East” and “West” in several ways. Said locates this production within modernity, and, for him, this

connection is essential because it allows us to acknowledge how this kind of construction is entangled with the modern order. Furthermore, it lays out the serious effects of such entanglements on notions of violence connected to particular subjects and regions. Said narrows down the problem with Orientalism to the generalization, in European discourse, of Arab cultural identity and its reduction to a single, caricatured definition. I find this to be an unrealistic narrative due to the vast differences between people and places that exist within that region. The diversity of cultures, religious traditions, ethnic origins, and heritages rules out the possibility of successfully producing, the way Orientalism attempts to do, simple thumbnail representations of entire regional sets of cultures, like the Arab world, are genuinely accurate. However, Europeans caged the “East” in a single, narrow, and pejorative definition: a backward society. I suggest that the Orientalists, in fact, disregarded the pluralism of Arabs people, viewed the Arabs from one angle, and judged them on a single scale in which clarified the limited European vision of the Arab region. Indeed, the very concept of Orientalism is a misleading generalization. The “East” in Orientalism covers cultures from North Africa, the southeastern edges of Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and even into South East Asia. These are all distinctly different peoples; however, Orientalism lumps all these groups into one mod of analysis. However, regardless of the East's diversity, this geography covers several continents and makes presumptions about over a billion people putting them into one unified whole of an “other”.

The explanation of such a generalization would be, as Said explains, that the so-called “Easterner” was never seen as a citizen, but rather as a problem group, which required a special kind of attention: “Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or—as colonial powers openly coveted their territory—taken over” (Said, 1978, p. 207). More accurately, I draw attention to highlight how Arabs were judged as a problem that needs to be disciplined, reformed, and improved to reach European values. The crucial point in this process is that all Arabs were already produced, described, and judged as one unity without moving

beyond a monolithic worldview. Accordingly, the generalized Arabs characteristics-such as being evil, backward, etc. had the effect of marginalizing, humiliating, and distorting the history of the Arab. I argue that this implicit form of violence shapes a hegemonic perspective that views the person as the problem and needs to be excluded and ostracized. Therefore, the process of the mischaracterization of the Arab people has created an image in the public's eye of Muslims Arabs as being problematic, where it is largely anchored in racism and a distorted view of the Arab World.

Representations are formations or deformations; as Said stated, "The Orient as a representation in Europe is formed- or deformed - out of a more and more specific sensitivity towards a geographical region called "the East" (Said, 1978, p.237). The "East" is represented as different from the "West", which is deeply articulated by the Orientalist's discourses. Hence, all the Arabs were defined and represented based on that hierarchical binary. The depiction of the Arabs is not in its nature; it is the knowledge produced and constructed as the Arabs' truth that serves to reinforce a vision of the European's political and cultural superiority. A core issue explored through the works of Said is the problem of representation. Said states plainly: "The real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambiance of the representer" (Said, 1978, p.272). Said questions if representations have never been neutral, or if what is represented is necessarily the truth. To Said, the ideological purpose of representing the Arabs is to dominate it and not to reveal underlying truths (Ahim, 2007, p.15). This issue is compounded by how the Arabs tends to be studied from a European (i.e., Occidental) point of view. However, the problem of representation results in the Arabs being portrayed as inferior or defective; these forms of representation are used to shape political ideology and guide the actions of the state (Machiitova, 2007, p.23-25). To address this problem of representation and knowledge/power, Said uses a series of analytical details of the hegemonic discourse, which returns the

narrative voice about the Arabs to those covered by the term, finally letting the Arabs speak for itself. The decolonized discourse gives the Others a voice to challenge the fabricated and misrepresentation about their region and expose the brutality of such knowledge. Said paved the way for other authors to challenge different aspects of Orientalism, such as gender and sexuality, that was overlooked.

The discourse of Orientalism is Eurocentric; it is ultimately more about the “West” than it the “East”. Said’s problematizing of Orientalism is a critique of the epistemologies, methods, and approaches that produce Eurocentric knowledge. Problematically, we can see how the idea of Eurocentric knowledge positioned the European as the superior civilization, which became significant in producing power and control over the Arab region. This sense of control can even be seen in the nomenclature used to explore the Arabs; for example, it describes the “Middle East” as the “Near East” in relation to its geographic location relative to Europe (Fields, 1981, p.40). This may be an expression of the geolocation of language, which tends to orient itself in its location of formation. Hence, my concern is that Eurocentrism of Orientalism is a tendency for language to situate Europe geographically as the center of the world. Thus, the Orientalist tendency to locate the European as “self/West” and Arab/ as “other/East” may be a continuation of this inherent geolocation linguistic bias.

THE FEMININE ORIENT

Interestingly, Said indeed speaks about the idea of the so-called “feminine Orient”, where he claims that “every one of them kept intact the separateness of the “Orient”, its eccentricity, its backwardness, its silent indifference, its feminine penetrability, its supine malleability. This is why every writer on the Arabs, from Renan to Marx (ideologically speaking), including the most rigorous scholars (Lane and Sacy) and writers with powerful imaginations (Flaubert and Nerval), saw the Arabs as a locale

requiring European attention, reconstruction, even redemption” (Said, 1978, p. 206). I find the idea of the common characterization of the Arabs as womanly, weak, yet altogether threatening to European interests quite confusing. Male-female relationships are anthropological constructs, whereby the one is considered authoritative and the other fragile. This anthropological construct, as we can consider, is a crucial element in superimposing the “West-East” relationship, which gives credence to the idea that Europe is inherently the Arab’s senior in all-important positive qualities.

To better understand the notion of “feminine East” and “masculine West”, I will analyze V. Spike Peterson's discussion of this notion. Peterson (2010) explains the role of “feminization as devalorization”, a process by which “institutionalized hierarchies are naturalized by feminization and thus are effectively depoliticized” (p.17). The reliant and historical “normalization” of gender establishes a systemic code of values, which characterizes and perceives particular qualities as either masculine, such as agency and control, or feminine, such as emotion, passivity, and uncertainty (Peterson, 2010, p. 17-18). Importantly, privileging ones’ self as masculine is undoubtedly devaluing who and what is considered to be feminine. As Peterson explains “the more an individual or social group is represented as feminized, the more likely that their devaluation can be assumed or presumed to be explained” (Peterson, 2010, p.18-19). Recognizing the interdependence of masculinity and femininity leads to acknowledging the “other,” and therefore, to a particular kind of leverage in such a relationship (Peterson, 2010, p. 18). In accordance with Peterson, gender, with its glorified masculinity and denigrated femininity, permeates Orientalist language and culture, where everything Arab is relegated to the domain of the feminine. On the one hand, subordinate members of society are devalued by feminization, characterized as weak, lacking both power and agency, and irrational. On the other hand, the dominant members of society, who define themselves as masculine, must respond to these individuals through masculinized actions that include patronization, disciplinary procedures, and coercive control. Therefore, the subordinated group is devalued due to

feminization, but the qualities they lack are precisely what the masculine group is compelled to enforce and put into practice. This relation contributes to legitimizing the necessity of having one group in society rule, and having another be ruled (Peterson, 2010, p. 20-21).

To put it another way, I argue that while the Orientalists pretend to observe the behavior of the others, they conceive themselves as the center of the world and the object “other” as the inferior. As an example, within the discourses about the Arab region or the so-called East, the European orientalists claimed to observe Arab Muslim men and their behaviors; yet the observation later was collapsed into one notion called “barbaric”. Besides, Arab Muslim men are seen as dominator and oppressor to Arab women. Through the same process of observing Muslim men, those Orientalists needed to look within that society for objectivized objects. This is how Arab and Muslim women were collectively defined as passive/oppressed. My concern is the way European’s used the so-called “the Oriental female” to carry out the notions of intervention and conceal it as assistance, yet the Arab male takes most of the burden of being savage to complete the concept of just cause to assist the Arab world. Ultimately, they needed to merge both images, the image of oppressed women in need of help with the image of barbaric and save Arab men characterized by a violent masculinity. Consequently, Americans and Europeans can justify their intervention to intervene to save those voiceless women. What I find confusing in the notion of “feminine East” is that despite the aggressively masculine characterization of the Arab, the Arab world is seen as temperamentally female; irrational, vulnerable, unable to take care of itself, and needing the rational, protective provisions of Euro-American competence which is in turn held up to exemplify patriarchal tropes of traditional masculinity. However, the reinforced notion of the “masculine West” and “feminine East” raises an intriguing question: how Arab men and Arab culture are usually identified with aggression, but the Arab world is still portrayed as feminine.

CRITICISM OF SAID'S *ORIENTALISM*

Despite its significant influence on the postcolonial theory, Said's notion of Orientalism has also been criticized. Said's analysis of Orientalism lacks scope in failing to interpret the discourses surrounding non-Arab countries. He also spends a limited time examining non-Euro-American imperialism, limits his analysis to male Orientalists, and most importantly overlooks gender issues (which will be discussed later in details in chapter three and four), and their role in producing the discourse around Occidentalism. First, Said tends to focus strictly on Europe's relationship with the Muslim world of the Arab world and North Africa, while largely neglecting to consider in-depth areas such as East Asia and the Americas. Furthermore, Said's work does not do justice to countries impacted by imperial powers other than the British and French, such as the Spanish, Portuguese, Russians, or Germans (Ahim, 2007, p. 11). However, in Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, he admits these limitations and includes non-Arab countries in his analysis. He writes:

[...] Orientalism [...] was limited to the Middle East. So I, too, have tried here to expand the arguments of the earlier book to describe a more general pattern (Said, 1994, p. xi).

Second, when discussing the Orient, Said also largely follows Foucault's tendency to disregard theorizing gender. One must then understand how the issue of gender was marginalized in Foucault's work. We do not live in a gender-neutral society; Angela King (2004) argues that such differences are social in nature and that we seek to "reiterate the polarization of the sexes" through a variety of "techniques of gender" (p. 32). However, Foucault fails to specify the nature of the "bodies" he is discussing, which implies that gender has no impact (King, 2004). However, regardless of Foucault's intention, his gender analysis largely dismisses how women are discursively identified, and it disregards female objectification (King, 2004). The problems are evident in both Said's and Foucault's concepts of "man" upon inspection of these gendered nature. Said acknowledges that there is a relationship between Orientalist imagery and

sexuality, but he does not seek to investigate it. Said writes: “why the Orient seems still to suggest not only fecundity but sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire, deep generative energies, is something on which one could speculate: it is not the province of my analysis here, alas, despite its frequently noted appearance” (Said, 1978. p.188).

However, what I find interesting is that Said’s discussion of Orientalism briefly discusses the way Arab women were constructed in the European discourse. Said covers the concept of representation without grappling with the way women are used in creating a specific representation claiming to represent the reality about the “East”. In doing so, Said does not provide an adequate basis for truly grasping the crucial role of gender in this field. In fact, Edward Said’s disregard of the role of gender in shaping Orientalist discourse was problematized continuously by a number of feminist scholars, such as Abu-Lughod and Yeğenoğlu. For example, Yeğenoğlu challenges Said’s analysis of Orientalism as follow:

The utilization of images of woman and images of sexuality in Orientalist discourses is treated as a trope limited to the representation of Oriental woman and sexuality. In other words, neither the images of woman nor the images of sexuality are understood as important aspects of the way Orientalist discourse is structured (1998, p.26).

I agree with Yeğenoğlu, who argues that gender and sexuality are intrinsically related to Orientalism. Yeğenoğlu also emphasizes that when analyzing the discourse, sexuality should not be forgotten, since it actually “governs and structures the subjects’ every relation with the other” (1998, p.26). One might wonder how postcolonial scholars can, willfully or not, ignore the issue of gender.

Contrary to Said’s reading of Orientalism as an “exclusive male province”, several postcolonial scholars have argued that polyphonic Orientalism was not only the product of male thinkers but also of European women (Yeğenoğlu, 1998; Mehdid, 1993). Yeğenoğlu claims that Said intimates Orientalist discourse as “masculine,” and proper to men, who are responsible for its creation and dissemination.

However, there is an important body of female Orientalist literatures that contribute to the masculine discourse about Arab and Muslim women. (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p.23-25). Eleanor Doumato, a former President of the Association for Middle East Women's Studies, supports Yeğenoğlu's point concerning the role of both female and male Orientalists. Doumato (1996) emphasizes that the "negative perceptions of Muslim women stemmed from the fact that all of the literature about Muslim women was written by European women and men who did not understand or did not want to understand Muslim societies" (p. 12).

In addition, a number of intellectuals-including Arab writers-claim that Said's book reproduces Orientalist stereotypes with an essentialist picture of 'West and East'. According to Aijaz Ahmad, a Marxist philosopher and literary theorist, Said's *Orientalism* generalizes the characteristics of the European Orientalists to define the European world:

It is remarkable how constantly and comfortably Said speaks ... of a Europe or the West, as a self-identical, fixed being which has always had an essence and a project, an imagination and a will; and of the "Orient" and its object - textually, military, and so on. He speaks of the West, or Europe, as the one which produces the knowledge, the East as the object of the knowledge. In other words, he seems to posit, stable subject-object identities, as well as ontological and epistemological distinctions between the two. In what sense, then, is Said himself not an Orientalist - or at least as Sadek elAzm put it, an Orientalist-in-reverse? Said quite justifiably access the "Orientalist" of essentializing the orient, but his own essentializing of "the West" is equally remarkable (Ahmad, 1994, p. 183).

Sadik Al-Azm, a Syrian thinker, was the first scholar to introduce the Occidentalism notion as "Orientalism in reverse", where the Arabs are civilized and moral while the Euro-American becomes the danger. The

goal of Occidentalism would then be, explicitly, the Arab revenge on the Europe for the way it was treated, and its particular manner of returning the favor. However, I believe Occidentalism is the very idea against which Edward Said most fervently protested:

I hope to have shown my reader that the answer to Orientalism is not Occidentalism. No former “Oriental” will be comforted by the thought that having been an Oriental himself he is likely – too likely – to study new “Orientals” – or “Occidentals” – of his own making (Said, 1978, p. 328).

In the above quotation from *Orientalism's* conclusion, Said's brief treatment of Occidentalism asserts that the solution to dominant discourses as constituted by European scholars is not Occidentalism. I argue that Occidentalism is an approach that does not redress the larger epistemological productions of knowledge nor addresses the other's ontological assumptions. Hence, we must go beyond Orientalism and seek to avoid replicating it at all costs. My interpretation aligns itself with Said's school of thought; I critically problematize Occidentalism since I believe the way to challenge the colonizer/dominator is to challenge their discourses rather than producing another racist discourse. I believe Said's conception of Orientalism is not about how one culture observes another culture, but rather the way that two cultures of unequal power observe each other; therefore, the proper issue between them is one of power. This makes *Orientalism* an examination of how a more powerful culture (i.e., European) observes a less powerful culture (i.e., the Middle East).

THE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF GENDER

Orientalism has always been linked to issues of gender. This is true, primarily because any examination of Orientalism cannot fail to reveal how closely interwoven it is with the related ideas of female passivity and male agency. A feminist critique of Orientalism reveals that non-Western women's representation involves

often-conflicting and binary contradictions within Arab and Muslim women's representations. These women are pictured either as naked women, who are exotic or as veiled women, who are oppressed:

Popular myths of the Arab female prevailing in the Occidental world seem to have constantly revolved around dual paradigms, shifting between the image of a silent beast of burden or that of a capricious princess, half-naked odalisque or the shapeless figure of the woman wearing the veil or the Islamic 'Hejab'. Often, the two images overlap as with artistic constructions based on fantasies; the colonial postcard provided such instance by allowing the belly dancer to become, within the same frame of representation and through a special rearranging of objects, customs and decor, a mind, all in one picture (Mehdid, 1993, p.25).

For centuries, Euro-American media have perpetuated this encoding of Muslim women as veiled, conservative, sexual objects dominated continuously by Muslim men. Frequently, the Orientalist depicted women as a sort of demure, passive creature who are awaiting the advantage of a more active masculine presence. In recent years, the most common and dominant Euro-American images of Muslim women have been those portraying uneducated victims of oppression who lack freedom and independence. In these images, Muslim women have been thoroughly and systematically dehumanized and disincarnated (Rahman, 2010, p.50). Through the discourse of Orientalism, or the current Euro-American discourses, Arab women are represented by Euro-American male or female writers as objects of desire and as victims to be liberated and saved by the Euro-American. As an example, Euro-American feminists depict Arab women, particularly Muslim women, as vulnerable, oppressed, and subjugated; clearly, the Euro-American feminism representation of the Arab women have been impacted by the "West-East" dichotomy. As the West represented itself as civilized, some Euro-American feminists believe that the Euro-American model of rights is universal and can be applied to Arab women. For instance, regardless of the other's

religion, the Euro-American feminists call for representing lifting the veil of Muslim women as a way of being liberated. The problem I want to emphasize is that these Euro-American feminists sexualized and objectified Muslim women's bodies as the orientalists did. As Orientalists produced a discourse about Arab women during the colonial period, those Euro-American feminists in today's world force its notions of Euro-American feminism upon.

As I illustrated, weaponizing gender in an above-described manner offers the Eurocentric thought a path to legitimize their pejorative, self-serving beliefs, and interventions. European scholars and politicians, in fact, have demonized and distorted Arabs to this end in representational images of European (and American) colonial subjects. Through postcolonial feminists' critique, one can examine how the "West" has manipulated gender and used it as a tool to strengthen Euro-American identity while representing "the other" as a constant enemy. It has been documented that Euro-American representations and stereotypes of Euro-American women, which persisted through the 20th century to the present day, came to enjoy prominence as a central feature of international politics. This can be seen in the American military interventions in Iraq (Abu-Lughod, 2013; Khalid, 2011). Saba Mahmood raises concerns with regard to the idea of using the concept of gender and liberation for the advancement of US imperialism. She demonstrates that American discourses of purported protection claim not only to liberate and change the heritage of the Arabs but even to free the prisoners of the Islamic religion, as well:

What concerns me most... is the role the tropes of freedom, democracy, and gender inequality have come to play in this story, and the ease with which Islam's mistreatment of women is used as a diagnosis as well as a strategic point of intervention for restructuring large swaths of Muslim populations, if not the religion itself (Mahmood, 2009, p.194).

Her quote suggests awareness toward the cultural impact of the political representation of gender. For

example, the representation of the veil, whether by media or scholars, has become the most prevalent image and symbol of Islam, oppression, and the threat that Islam poses to Euro-American civilization (Ayotte & Husain, 2005; Dreher & Ho, 2009, p.20). In essence, the oppression experienced by Arab and Muslim women is communicated through their daily clothing. As I suggest, this systematic representation of veiled women as subjugated, unenlightened, oppressed, silenced, and subordinated by the Islamic religion and Arab culture, where “women need saving”, empowers the American argument aimed at intervention and domination (Jabbara, 2006; Stabile & Kumar, 2005).

In addition, through the case of America, we can see how the discourses/media have repeatedly used the “brown women need saving” frame to justify its intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq and to act as a greater civilizing force in the region (Abu-Lughod, 2013). Considering the examples/books explored in this dissertation, I assert that the use of gender to justify wars and military intervention clearly demonstrates how gender is intrinsically related to the dominant discourse. It establishes the use of gender as a practice of symbolic politics, which is defined as “the ability to call upon symbols, actions, or stories that make sense of a situation for an audience that is frequently far away” in the situation with Arab and Muslim women, women in international politics are used “symbolically and literally as that which requires protection” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 16). Therefore, the existence of women as objects in the symbolic politics of oppression, which requires both their liberation and protection via the application of Euro-American force, legitimizes the use by of gendered justificatory rhetoric by American and European politicians during military conflicts, even if this is not the primary goal nor objective of the initial intervention (Sjoberg, 2013, p.153).

Postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak summarizes the process of reducing Arab women in Orientalist imagery to better serve imperialist occupation in the following, pithy phrase: “White men save brown women from brown men” (Spivak, 1988, p.93). In other words, Euro-American need to send their

“freedom fighters” to help liberate the backward Arabs and, especially, to protect those “brown women” from their aggressive men and religion (Oliver, 2007, p. 39). To better understand the notion of the protection scenario, I will adopt Susan Jeffords’s:

(There are) three categories that stand in unstable conjunction with one another: the protected or victim (the person violated by the villain); the threat or villain (the person who attacks the victim); and the protector or hero (the person who protects or rescues the victim or promises such aid (p. 204).

I find Jeffords's analysis echoes the contents of colonial texts, which support an artificial binary between “East-West”. Representations of Arabs and Muslim women as passive and oppressed, therefore, favor Euro-American women as more civilized, powerful, modern, and liberated. This scenario, in turn, supports Western civilization's superiority and, consequently, enables Euro-American to define themselves as definitionally superior to the Arab world.

Historically speaking, I find proclaiming a crusade save “brown women” is not a new strategy, used only in recent years; it has been historically used over centuries. In the 1880s, the reason given for the British invasion of Egypt was Islam's degradation of women in that country, and the role of Christianity in liberating Muslim women from their male counterparts (Ahmed,1992). Lord Cromer, who oversaw the Egyptian invasion, believed the solution to this problem was straightforward: Egyptians needed to “be persuaded or forced into imbibing the true spirit of European civilization,” which could solely be achieved through the occupation of Egypt (Ahmed,1992). Egyptian postcolonial author Lila Ahmed lays out the case for Cromer's misogyny in fighting so energetically for women's rights in Egypt while simultaneously suppressing them in England: “This champion of the unveiling of Egyptian women was, in England, a founding member and sometimes president of the Men's League for Opposing Women's Suffrage” (Ahmed, 1992). Similarly, the French military's actions in Algeria through the 1950s offer another apt

example. The French identified Algerian women, in this case, as being oppressed by their religion and stripped of their rights (Oliver, 2007, p.39). Sadly, France's occupation resulted in the commission of crimes against Algerian women, which ran directly contrary to French promises of “saving women” from falling prey to the barbaric Algerian male.

Linking the past and the present, after the infamous terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, Bush administration officials began to invoke the agenda of “saving brown women” to justify the military invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). Said puts it thus:

So from the very same directorate of paid professional scholars enlisted by the Dutch conquerors of Malaysia and Indonesia, the British armies of India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, West Africa, the French armies of Indochina and North Africa, came the American advisers to the Pentagon and the White House, using the same clichés, the same demeaning stereotypes, the same justifications of power and violence (after all, runs the chorus, power is the only language they understand) in this case as in the earlier ones (Said, 1978, p. XX).

Following al-Qaeda's attacks on the United States, United States media began to focus on the state of women's rights in Afghanistan where American politicians relied on images of veiled women to support American intervention. As a result, dangerous escalations were justified which ended with the dropping of bombs and ground invasion (Stabile & Kumar, 2005). However, the attention given to women's liberation in Afghanistan was a tool to sell American intervention to the domestic audience in the United States (Stabile & Kumar, 2005). Through media, discourses, and narratives, we can recognize the way United States' represented Afghanistan as a place where women are “given away” in underage marriages, suffer rapes, oppression, and deprivation of education, and are generally victims of male domination.

Therefore, this facilitates the American scheme to portray itself as a natural saving force for Muslim women (Mitchell, 2013). I suggested that while fancying themselves claiming to be “freedom fighters,” United States came to characterize themselves as the saviors of Muslim women, mentally framing the occupation of Afghanistan as a moral duty. Consequently, oversimplification of the conflicts in this region is extremely dangerous, since it reduces the scope for a critical analysis of American intervention and assumes that Afghans welcome and praise Euro-American involvement (Mitchell, 2013), which is untrue. I have a perception that the case of Afghanistan exists as a clear example of the fact that restoring human rights in the Arab world was never a priority for United States governments, but a tool for geopolitical objectives and economic exploitation of the occupied region.

These historical events, as I previously mentioned, provide a unique opportunity to critically examine the central role of gender in American and European discourse, as well as how the invocation of gender affects world politics. A significant body of literature has analyzed the relation between military intervention and gender, including the inaccuracy of the Euro-American rhetoric about the Arabs in depicting the reality of Muslim women. This analysis underscores the importance of examining Euro-American discourse through a feminist lens. A feminist critique of how Arab and Muslim women are depicted focuses on the ways in which Orientalist modes of representation appear to create, in the mind of a given audience (especially a Euro-American one), a sense of fear about the Arab world. Additionally, feminist critiques open a space for a more in-depth insight into the question of how issues of sexuality allow us to understand imperialism. Through the works of feminist critique of Orientalism, one can note how the European leverages the power of gender to create a specific and persistent image of the Arab, one in which woman is generically represented in specific elemental ways. Thereby, the contribution of Arab feminist authors serves to decolonize the academia and political life in the Arab region, as well as correct the widespread misrepresentations of Arab/Muslim women in multiple (or almost all) venues.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This dissertation will consider the following research questions: How can feminist critiques of the concept of Orientalism open new ways of understanding knowledge production? How do such insights contribute toward the decolonizing dynamics of Eurocentric knowledge and power relations in literature and representation?

I ask these questions in order to articulate a genealogy of the production of Orientalism and its co-constitution with a Euro-American dominant political order. Through my readings of several authors, I problematize this representation of both the Arab world and Arab and Muslim women. Such a negative stereotypical representation mirrors the complex and intertwined relationships that are the foundation of the constructed hierarchy between Europe and Arab. In exploring these questions, I trace how Orientalist paradigms become constituted to consider how to leverage indigenous contributions of thought to advance this field of study beyond its historically European roots. Decolonizing such thought systems demands that we bring into the picture authors who have already problematized these Orientalist paradigms. Therefore, my dissertation focuses on the work of Edward Said, along with the critical works of Rana Kabbani, Lila Abu-Lughod, Malek Alloula, and Meyda Yeğenoğlu, each representing an indigenous voice from what has become constituted as the Arabs. This approach will yield the best results if the goal is to expose information about what it means to constitute and speak about the Arabs at present. This represents a shift towards a more globalist movement, in which the Arabs is not the “Orient-other” nor is the European the “Occident-self”.

A number of scholars have addressed the relationship between Euro-American discourses and gender; however, the existing modes of knowledge production about the Arab women remain the same. Despite the amount of literature that has been devoted to the topic of gendering Orientalism, there remains much work to be done in order to increase awareness of the Euro-American misrepresentation of the Arab

world, the use of Arab women to further the cause of imperialism. This dissertation offers a critical analysis, which interrogates the main myths and misconceptions surrounding Arab and Muslim women, the articulation of these myths in Euro-American discourses, and how these myths have become powerful enough to go virtually unchallenged over time. One of the main objectives is to grapple with feminist postcolonial scholars who demonstrate the need to discuss and deconstruct stereotypical images of the “other” especially the representation of Arab and Muslim women. My analysis of selected texts poses a direct challenge to the pre-existing definition of the Arab and Muslim women, and Euro-American depictions of women in the Arab world. These have consciously been embedded deeply into the Euro-American literature. At the same time, this dissertation is meant to respond to the body of literature that has historically presumed to speak about and for the “other”. Therefore, it is vital to discuss how feminist voices have flourished and how their voices have navigated Euro-American discourses.

METHODS: DISCURSIVE AND TEXTUAL ANALYTICS

One of the limitations of this dissertation is that my primary focus will be on Edward Said’s texts. Notwithstanding, seeking to answer the research question, I have decided to rely on Said’s conception of Orientalism as the authoritative definition of the matter, because it is one of the most comprehensive theories in the field of postcolonial theory. Moreover, the works of Abu-Lughod, Kabbani, Yeğenoğlu, and Alloula revolve around the relationships between Orientalism and gender and their consequences. These authors offer interpretations that complement Said’s analysis of Orientalism. A number of other postcolonial feminist authors could have been easily selected for this dissertation, but the insights provided by the selected authors amply answer to the research question, in my view. In this dissertation, each of the following chapters engages with various perspectives. However, by considering them all together, reading texts of the selected authors can

provide real wisdom about the deeply interwoven relationship between gender and knowledge produced in different forms about Arab women.

Second, I am aware of my own limitations in this research, given my multiple identities as an individual fitting neatly into the categories of Arab, Muslim, and woman, and also given my ongoing research about Orientalism and gender. As an Arab Muslim woman, I am categorized as an “other,” in opposition to the “Western” self, and as an “insider” in relation to my domestic culture. However, being the “other” implies a special kind of knowledge; one is expected to innately and intimately understand certain bodies of knowledge related to one’s own cultural and ethnic background. As a researcher from the Arab world and a Muslim, I exist within the confines of an inescapable identity. The knowledge produced about my culture has been homogenized and systematized through the creation of a binary image of the “inferior East” in opposition to the superior European. Notwithstanding the limitations of my existence as an Arab woman, it is a strength that would be considered as I bring Arabic and Euro-American theoretical frameworks to tackle gendered Orientalism. Having been exposed to both cultures, it is a strength that would be added from my background, where I merge theories from both worlds (East and West) to have a comparatively unbiased view of Orientalism.

Categories such as the “West/Occident” and “East/Orient” have been socially constructed in institutions and discourse in order to have dominant power over the others. These categories do not reflect the nuance or the realities, complexity, and the diversity of the lived experience of Arabs or European. In the case of Arab and Muslim women, these institutions produce and re-produce the categories of “passive Eastern women” through American and European discourses which contributed to a dramatic effect on women's lives in certain geopolitical sites and generally material effects on people's lives. There is a serious need to be aware of fluidity and instability of these classification “East-West” and more importantly to challenge it and not take it for granted. My dissertation aims to challenge the symmetrical

knowledge that are still affecting the present as well as to open the space for marginalized voices who are eliminated in such discourses to define themselves.

Moving on to my research method, this chapter is based on social and political theory and the works of feminists who grapple with how the Arabs is constituted by postcolonial perspectives. Alloula, Kabbani, Abu-Lughod, and Yeğenoğlu challenge how these European misrepresentations are accepted as the reality of Arabs and especially Muslim women. Their texts are essential sites of production of discourses that problematize the forms of domination of Eurocentric power. Profoundly, studying the issue of gender in the European/US discourse and its relationship to Muslim women enables us further to illuminate the interactions between Euro-American actors and Arabs subjects. Analyzing and incorporating the views of these authors raises questions around the gendered histories of Orientalism. Of course, these thinkers also challenge the hierarchies of power between the “East and the West”.

The central focus is the way women were shaped and constituted in Euro-American discourse; I examine how Euro-American discourses constructed Arab and Muslim women in a way to insist upon hierarchies and legitimize the dichotomous relationship between the Arab and Euro-American. Through the analysis of discourses taken from the Victorian era until the 20th century, these authors explore issues of the Other, Orientalism, and gender with regards to representations of non- Euro-American women. To demonstrate how stereotyped constructions of the Arab region remain continuous over time, this dissertation discusses works that spans from the colonial period to the current discourses about the Arabs where the Euro-American becomes the universal norm, and the Arabs remains inferior.

The methodology of this dissertation relies on interpretive modes of reading texts and discourses. The textual analysis of the four different works will necessarily be focused on the exploration of European/US misrepresentations of Arabs and especially Muslim women in diverse areas of literature, including media and poetry. This assessment will be conducted through different lenses offered by scholars regarding the notion of

gendering Orientalism and postcolonial feminist literature exploring Euro-American and Arab relations. Here, I focus on the main idea of centering the voices of postcolonial feminists. This approach allows me to read the nuances in Orientalist knowledge creation, which will, in turn, illuminate my research question. These readings will explore how Said's *Orientalism* works to unveil the relationship between Orientalist knowledge production and European powers' imperial ambitions in the Arab world. Said's exploration of the concept of Orientalism has served to inspire and empower a number of other authors to explore these relationships further.

Bringing together concepts from anthropology, cultural history, and literary criticism, I have selected readings from authors such as Rana Kabbani, Lila Abu-Lughod, Malik Alloula, and Meyda Yeğenoğlu to provide the perspective of indigenous Arab voices on both Said's *Orientalism* and the underlying concept of Orientalism itself. In order to problematize the present representation of the Arab region, I have chosen these books based on their focus on Orientalist knowledge/power production and representation, as well as their examination of the complex and intertwined relationships associated with gender. Drawing on their theories, I examine how the use of gender has contributed to the misrepresentations that exist in the spaces between Arab and Euro-American. These texts cover representations, from the medieval era to the present, to interrogate not only the histories of sexualized representation but, in fact, the use of women as a site of colonial rhetoric that lives in European political and scholarly discourses.

One needs to understand the relation between gendering and authority over the other and how these notions (men, women, masculinities, and femininities) are used in dominant discourse. The dominant understandings of the world are reliant on gendered assumptions of masculinity and femininity, where the former is privileged over the latter (Khalid, 2014). For example, the case of Euro-American discourse is constructed based on dichotomous representation of the masculinist Euro-American men and liberal Euro-

American European women comparing with the barbaric Arab men and oppressed Arab women (Khalid, 2011; Khalid, 2014). Hence, gender can be considered as “a set of relations of power; it demonstrates the function of gender as discourse, in terms of its power to (re)produce and naturalizes particular (dominant/hegemonic) notions of what it means to be masculine and feminine and to attach them to sexed bodies” (Khalid, 2014, p.636). This suggested that gender is interwoven into the political discourse where women’s situation is used to reinforce power relationships to inherent authority. Ultimately, this allows for the normalization and acceptance of violence; the Euro-American is given moral legitimacy to use violence against the so-called “barbaric Eastern men” who do not respond to reason, and the so-called “oppressed Eastern women” who need to be liberated. That emphasizes the necessity to go beyond Said to investigate through a feminist lens how women were framed in the European discourse as oppressed, subjected, and in need of help. Hence, this dissertation traces how gendering Orientalism shapes the hierarchical relationship between the “masculine West” and “feminine East” that leads to control over the Arab militarily. I discuss how we can understand that misrepresentations of the Arab region intersect and interact with the authority that tends to control attitudes toward the Arab region.

This dissertation involves an in-depth analysis of these texts to probe these selected works to better identify, from their perspectives, any remaining traces of the issues of gendering Orientalism. I will analyze certain texts which grapple with Said's *Orientalism*. Furthermore, I will expand their investigation into the interconnected roles of gender and sexuality. In each case, having read through the entire text, in search of answers to my thesis question, I have collected themes, perspectives, and opinions of interest for this study. In analyzing these texts, I focus on how the colonial representations continue to shape Arab and Muslim women’s present-day images. I further identify and explore the effects of Orientalist knowledge and power production in relation to the Arab world and direct attention to the role of gendering Orientalism. In addition, I will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of their respective approaches. The

works of the selected authors serve as a form of intellectual resistance to the continuation of European hegemonic power. This process involves the deconstruction of the dominant assumptions about the Arab region, which came into existence centuries ago. My dissertation is a critical attempt to challenge the representation; for a long time, it has been normalized and universalized that the Arab and Muslim woman is a passive or exotic creature.

A close reading of these texts from a feminist and non-European sensibility allows us to interpret texts in ways that allow us to not only problematize dominant readings but to also identify gaps in terms of ideas, notions, and concepts, and also point to some of the ruptures that are there. During my reading of these texts, I pay close attention to the following issues: position, and potential vantage points through which the author reads; the author's positions on the underlying concepts; and the supporting evidence that the author holds up to corroborate his or her assertions. A close reading of these texts reveals how they promote a deeper and more profound understanding of the concept of Orientalism. In conducting my analysis, whenever suitable, I will include supporting quotations from the texts. Through this approach, I intend to illustrate how to unpack the interlocking nature of discourse, knowledge production, and representation, and open spaces for an agency.

This introduction aims to consider the stakes of rethinking these debates and then examine the genealogy of Orientalist discourse to enable a better present-day analysis of these issues. In approaching such questions, we must reconsider what decolonization means. This includes interpreting the impact of Orientalist knowledge production on how we know the other, how the other knows himself or herself, and how the other is denied agency and possibilities for contributing and even merely being in the world. This will involve a highly focused analysis of postcolonial feminist criticism around Arab Muslim women's representation in both colonial and postcolonial discourses and challenges these false representations.

GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE DESSERTATION

The dissertation is organized into four chapters, each with a number of sub-chapters.

Chapter One - The Nexus of Knowledge and Power: This chapter will explore how the concept of Orientalism, as shown by Said, aligns with the episteme concept articulated by Michel Foucault. The relationship between Said and Foucault will be further explored through ideas related to discourse, representation, and the silencing of authentic indigenous voices by the processes of Orientalism. This section will explore how Orientalist knowledge production reinforces colonial power relationships. In many cases, the colonial power relations established by Orientalism continue to exist in postcolonial states. In order to understand this, one must first grasp the concept of Orientalism. Moreover, one must also understand how knowledge production can lead to the creation of distorted knowledge, which in turn shapes both attitudes and actions. Hence, examining both Said's Orientalism and Foucault's knowledge/power nexus helps to ground the works of Abu-Lughod, Alloula, Kabani, and Yeğenoğlu following chapters.

Chapter Two – The Genealogy of Orientalism: Chapter Two maps out Said's analysis of Orientalism. In particular, it specifies and explores themes such as self/other, representation, and self-Orientalism. A reading of *Orientalism* will consider how it sits within broader concepts of representation and knowledge production. This chapter will also explore how Orientalist thought divides the world into the "Occidental-self" and the "Oriental-other". Building on these concepts, one can then consider processes of "self-Orientalism", a process by through those constituted as some Arabs engage in deliberate or inadvertent processes that serve to further "other" themselves from Euro-American cultures. Importantly, the use of gender in these discourses (representation and self-Orientalism) will be explored to emphasize the differences between feminist critics and Said as well as to challenge and confront colonial domination.

Chapter Three - Feminist Critiques of Orientalism: There is a relative lack of feminist studies of Orientalism, providing postcolonial scholars with the opportunity to expand their knowledge about the

phenomenon of Orientalism from a feminist perspective. In particular, chapter three will shed light on the treatment of women as passive objects and the moralization of sexuality within the discourse of Orientalism. I will fundamentally question the politics of representation of Arab women by covering Malek Alloula's work *The Colonial Harem* (1986) as a springboard for exploring ideas connected to visual depictions of women in the Algeria. His work is both a response to the existing misrepresentation of women during the French and Algerian war and a detailed explanation of what it entails. I also pay careful attention to Rana Kabbani's 1986 work *Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of Orient*, which promotes a real awareness of how European writers make themselves complicit in Orientalist distortions and resulting imperialist ventures. I intend to use these works to unpack Orientalist depictions of women as "exotic yet passive," which serve to catalyze action in protection with colonial discourse.

Chapter Four – Critical Analysis of Feminist Orientalists: In Chapter Four, I will take the argument one step further, particularly by investigating the historical role of feminist Orientalists in constructing the European discourse. I will discuss Meyda Yeğenoğlu's 1998 work *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*, which directly presents a feminist reading of Said. Her theoretical approach informs and shapes how specific European sources articulate their story about the "East"; in other words, any erroneous depictions that they have might impact readers today. Moreover, I will explore the work of Abu-Lughod entitled *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (2013), which challenges dominant American and European stereotypes about Arab Muslim women and discusses how they fail to capture the reality of Muslim women's lives. Finally, I will consider Abu-Lughod's analysis of the language of women's rights or universal rights and its relation to reinforcing the dominant Euro-American discourses.

CHAPTER ONE: THE NEXUS OF KNOWLEDGE AND POWER

“Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (Foucault, 1990, p. 95).

Edward Said's *Orientalism* is one of the central texts of the postcolonial canon. Said follows Foucault's lead in refraining from any separation of knowledge and power. Said's central thesis, drawing on Foucault's theory of discourse, revolves around the Orientalist connection between knowledge and power. In his book, Orientalism is explained as a set of knowledge, imagery, and style produced by the West to bolstering the idea and representation of the self and the other. Hence, Orientalism produces knowledge about both the “Oriental other” and the “Occidental self”. The knowledge was produced in such a way to have material effects on people's lives; afterward, this knowledge was later used for colonial and imperial purpose.

In this chapter, an analysis of the role of the nexus of power and knowledge in the discourse of Orientalism will be explained. Although knowledge and power have historically been understood as separate, Foucault and Said eliminate this distinction. Following Foucault, Said's work unhesitatingly emphasizes how knowledge and power are indeed entangled. Therefore, an awareness of the way that knowledge and power come together when treating the Arab subject is essential to generating an understanding of the Arabs that is far more complicated than the simple dichotomy put forward in Euro-American narratives. In other words, when knowledge and power come together, they produce notions, epistemologically and ontologically, about the self and the other (“West-East”). This knowledge production takes place via different devices and means, including art, media, and academic discourse. Accordingly, in reading *Orientalism*, one finds it to be a deeply nuanced discourse, which is linked to a similarly nuanced understanding of power.

The racialized discourse can be analyzed as a discourse of difference that heavily based on the division of peoples geographically and racially (i.e., the Arabs). In the contemporary moment, the constitution of orientalism has not been abolished. Instead, its newer forms embodied in a Western spatial imaginary as the ideal order that depends on the difference between the West and those bodies and territories produced as the other (Agathangelou, 2019). This spatial imaginary, or what Said called Orientalism, operates on multiple levels and different spheres, with deeply negative consequences for those who cannot conform to the ideal. This is especially true in a context where universal rights have been invoked to exclude a set group from the rights and privileges of the dominant power. In the present context of globalization, we must understand how such hierarchies of differentiated subjects, as bodies and minds, are produced through a variety of discourses to advance the dominant Western project (Agathangelou, 2019). In this chapter, I employ a conceptual and historical-geographical perspective to demonstrate that while Said's Orientalism has opened space to understand these dominant constitutions and entanglements of discourses and power, it has limited us from understanding the role of gender.

EPISTEME AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

In *The Order of Things* Foucault offers multiple examples of the way in which epistemes focus our attention on specific ways of knowing the world; this knowledge necessarily marginalizes “other” knowledge. Foucault developed the concept of “episteme” to represent “the systems of possibility of discourse” (Olssen, 2014, p. 30). The concept of “episteme” refers to the metaphorical rules of discourse that dictate the ways in which ideas are explored and studied. To Foucault, an “episteme” refers to the following:

(T)he total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices (...).

The episteme is not a form of knowledge (...) or type of rationality which, crossing

the boundaries of the most varied sciences, manifests the sovereign unity of a subject, a spirit, or a period; it is the totality of relations that can be discovered for a given period, between the sciences when one analyses them at the level of discursive regularities (Foucault, 1972, p.191).

In effect, “episteme” is the sum total of all the ways in which ideas are assessed to be true (or false), what arguments are relevant (or irrelevant), and what is reasonable ground to accept (or object to) an idea (Olssen, 2014, p. 30). Thus, the episteme defines what can be said or known, included, or excluded from possibility, within a specified period. Foucault invented the term “episteme” in the context of his archaeological research and activities, which he described in the following way: “The episteme is the ‘apparatus’ which makes possible the separation, not of the true from false, but of what may from what may not be characterized as scientific” (Foucault, 1980, p.197). The concept of “episteme,” remains a powerful way of understanding knowledge production. The primary importance here is the fact that we regularly call “knowledge” what is, actually, a single “knowledge,” the dominant one in our society, which defeated other knowledge in a struggle for survival (Lončarević, 2013). In other words, episteme is understood as the total body of knowledge within a particular cultural context which produced and reinforced what can be known, according to Foucault,

In any given culture and at any given moment, there is always only one 'episteme' that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in theory or silently invested in a practice (Foucault, 1970, p. 168).

An “episteme” amounts to the sum of all knowledge or discourses in a given cultural context. The discourse establishes the parameters around possible thoughts and words concerning an object because it generates power; hence, Foucault gives the name “discourse” to the resulting convention that develops, over time, from these statements of reality and knowledge as stated:

We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation... it is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined...Discourse, in this sense, is not an ideal, timeless form that also possesses a history; the problem is not therefore to ask oneself how and why it was able to emerge and become embodied at this point in time; it is, from beginning to end, historical—a fragment of history, a unity and discontinuity in history itself, posing the problem of its own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality (Foucault, 1972, p. 117).

In other words, discourse is a system of statements, which the superior or the holder of power in society deploys to constitute the truth by producing certain knowledge. Ultimately, this discourse shapes reality, as a social formation, for the superior and inferior societies. To overpower the colonized, the colonizers needed to have or produce more knowledge about the inferior as Foucault explained the importance of the knowledge.

Relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourse (1980, p. 93).

It becomes apparent that owing to imperialist practices in the study of history and geography, according to Said, a punitive kind of knowledge produces what comes to be called “the Orient”. Thus, I also look at how the European knowledge functioned to create the Arabs for European scholars. I would stress that this discourse cannot be understood as a neutral fact of life. Without a doubt, because knowledge is a direct product of power, it supports different forms of power and domination where the system in which knowledge is produced maintains the power. Indeed, power as well as reproduces knowledge to maintain

and justify the colonial power and exercise of mastery. As an example, the constructed knowledge produced by a powerful institution to control the truth and how the object can be perceived and known explain how the relationship between knowledge and power is “*inseparable*”. As Michel Foucault writes, knowledge and power have always been intertwined:

We should admit ... that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These power/knowledge relations are to be analyzed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power/knowledge and their historical transformations (Foucault, 1977, p. 28).

The momentum of such a discourse, not the ingenuity of any individual, generates new texts, and contributes to the overall canon. Foucault further explains how knowledge enables the holder of the power to not only have the authority to reproduce knowledge, but also categorize it as true. As Foucault explains that:

Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true.' Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation, and the disciplining of practice. Thus, 'there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations (Foucault, 1977, p. 27).

What is fundamental here is that, in Foucault's understanding, power results from the connection between ideas and people, which establishes boundaries around acceptable behavior and thought. One cannot see any existence of knowledge without its connection to power. I stress that power and knowledge go hand in hand; production of a set of discourses (i.e., knowledge) about the Arabs generates power; this power then forms the basis for a number of forms of control as colonization. Therefore, we must reveal how the knowledge was produced by the holder of power generates or resulted in colonialism. Historically, Europe developed a sense of superiority by creating a system of dominant terminologies that was always attributed to describe the others' behaviors and characteristics. This collective knowledge tends to paint an image that constitutes a problematic narrative and reinforces stereotypes on how others are perceived and viewed. For instance, consider how the Arab man was portrayed as barbaric in arts, poems, and literature; it resulted in forming a generalized belief that all Arab men are barbaric and needed to be controlled and civilized. Undoubtedly, the language that was used reflects not only the need to invade the “evil” others, but it morally justifies the goodwill of colonialization as a civilizing mission where it brings modernity to the colonizers' world. The idea of the goodwill of the colonizer is reflected in Rudyard Kipling's poem “The White Man’s Burden”, where he expresses:

Take up the White Man's burden -
Send forth the best ye breed -
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild -
Your new-caught sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child (Kipling, 1899, p.290).

The exhortation is one that the process of colonization is a profound sacrifice for the West, who sacrifices the best of its sons to educate the “sullen Easterner” who is “half devil and half child”. In this sense, colonization and imperialism are not seen as forms of invasion, but rather a burden, a duty the West owes to the rest of the world to spread modernity and civilization. Kipling's poem clarifies how the authority was given to Kipling to reproduce a fabricated reality of the goodwill of the invasion. In this light, it proves the intrinsic role of power and knowledge in producing biased discourses.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND THE DISCRIMINATORY DISTORTIONS

The discourse represents forms of knowledge production that allow for the construction of ideas on any given topic. Likewise, Said claims Orientalism sets the boundaries around possible thought and verbal expression concerning the Arabs, once again, because of its power. One can use the concept of “episteme” to gain added insights into the ways in which Said explores the knowledge production processes of Orientalism. Said explains the concept as “a political version of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, us) and the strange (the Orient, the East, them) (Said, 1978, p. 43). Thus, Said argues that the concept of Orientalism is “a whole episteme developed over multiple centuries,” which dictated how the West would think about the East (Desmond, 2013, p. 37). In effect, what Said calls Orientalism would be what Foucault calls “episteme”; whether one calls it “Orientalism” or “episteme,” in either case, it represents the “overarching structure of authoritative knowledge” (Guhin & Wyrzten, 2013, p. 236). In effect, Orientalism created a certain way of talking about the Middle East, which in turn dictated how knowledge was produced about this region. Then, it becomes apparent that this distorted knowledge, in turn, fueled systemic violence through the mechanisms of imperialism and colonialism, as well as a sectarian division based on knowledge production. Finally, by understanding Orientalism as a sort of system that defines the possibility of discourse, as an “episteme”

we gain new insights into the ways Orientalism fueled problematic knowledge creation. Orientalism is problematic not because of the accuracy or inaccuracy of the data it contains but also because of how it is used. Taken as a whole, we must interrogate and criticize some of the ways that knowledge about the Arabs broadly, and Arab region in particular, was produced. When doing so, we need to deeply examine who produces the knowledge, how the knowledge was used, and its purpose, how knowledge operates within the power to subvert/tell the truth, and, most importantly, how true is that knowledge?

Said acknowledges that “positive knowledge” could be created through Orientalism (Said, 1978, p. 52). Said writes:

Even the mammoth engagements in our own time over such essentializations as ‘Islam,’ the ‘West,’ the ‘Orient,’ ‘Japan,’ or ‘Europe’ admit to particular knowledge and structures of attitude and reference, and those require careful analysis and research (Said, 1978, p. 52)

This knowledge became problematized not because it was wrong, but because it fed into the larger structures of colonialism and imperialism. Thus, Orientalism is problematized since it fundamentally embraces knowledge as a weapon to oppress the people. One can see how the necessity to dehumanize and demonize colonized peoples drove the political motivations to shape European views of the Arabs. The ideas advanced by Edward Said relate directly to a concept that Foucault names the knowledge/power nexus.

In *Orientalism*, Said takes Foucault’s definition of discourse into account when he articulates his notion of Orientalism, as stated “without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period” (Said, 1978, p. 11). Said employs Foucault’s notion of discourse

to explain Orientalist texts focusing on the Arabs, given that the latter do more than simply produce knowledge, but also create the reality they seem to depict:

Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poet, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate accounts concerning the Orient..... the phenomenon of Orientalism as I study it here deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient, despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a “real” Orient (Said, 1978, p. 3).

One cannot ignore the fact that political language shapes how we formulate our political beliefs and actions. Thus, it is critical to stress that when a certain group controls the discourse, they will also control and create dichotomous relationships between groups; where, it is possible to encode specific lasting thought patterns into one’s subject. Therefore, as Said explains, this political knowledge enabled the relatively uncomplicated and gainful control over the East by the West because knowledge grants power and an increased measure of power demands an increased measure of knowledge. A dialectical process is thereby initiated, which serves gradually to expand on existing European reserves of information and power.

Texts of this sort are made up of “pre-existing units of information” (Said, 1978, p. 94) as the manner in which an object has already been treated cannot but influence how it is subsequently considered. An iteration of this takes place in the academic world, where one author borrows elements of his or her conceptual analysis from those who came before (El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017). Foucault summarizes: “All manifest discourse is secretly based on an ‘already-said’” (1972, p. 25). Similarly, Said also noticed that Orientalist discourses were primarily based on preceding accounts of European authors on the subject of

the Arabs. The idea of using existing units of information and generating portrayals of the Arabs that correspond to past representations explains why the view of the Arabs among Orientalists is so utterly uniform, regardless of location (e.g., Syria, Egypt, Turkey, etc.) (El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017). In Said's words:

Every writer on the Orient... assumes some Oriental precedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies (Said, 1978, p.20)

Through these sets of discourses, the Orientals were constituted as alike, regardless of geographical location or other potentially distinguishing features, leading Said to conclude that Orientalism was responsible for the production of an inaccurate representation of the Arabs, which left it frozen in time, as it was (El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017). We need to keep in mind that the Orientalist writers' contributions can be seen as a key where those authors sway the thoughts and can produce new dynamics in the existing systems of power. An obvious example is the employment of Orientalist discourses to rationalize European intervention in the Arab region. Therefore, we need to question how the producers of such discourses claim to possess the ability, based on their experiences in the Arabs, to pronounce conclusions that include vast oversimplifications, which then form the basis for an extension of the colonial project; it is a system of power which renders what academics produce as pure fact. Said wanted to "reveal the dialectic between individual text or writer and the complex collective formation to which his work is a contribution" (1978, p. 31).

While Said applied Foucault's theory of knowledge and power, he denounced Foucault's denial of the role of authors in crafting discourse. Foucault pegs the author as a secondary force, whose actions and beliefs are wholly determined by the discourse itself (El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017). On the other hand, Said gives more weight to the influence of the author, whom he estimates has a real impact on the more

significant “discursive formation” that is Orientalism; he points out that the reason there is such remarkable unity in the vast body of literature where those writers rely on one another for content: “Orientalism is after all a system for citing works and authors” (Said, 1978, p.23). Contrasting his views with those of Foucault, Said writes:

Foucault believes that in general the individual text or author counts for very little; empirically, in the case of Orientalism...I find this not to be so (Said, 1978, p.23).

According to Foucault, there exists a self-perpetuating feedback loop that involves both the creation of knowledge and the augmentation of power. To Foucault, this involved two courses of development: the first, an “epistemological ‘thaw’” which modified the relationships of power; and the second, which increased the impacts of power via the creation and addition of additional knowledge (Foucault, 1977, p. 224). Through a Saidian lens, the discourse of Orientalism was repeatedly produced to obtain a more in-depth knowledge of the Arabs and sustain European authorization over the Arabs. As Foucault tells us:

The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power...It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power (Foucault, 1980, p. 52).

Power and knowledge cannot be separated; they empower each other and bestow more authority to one group over the other. The discursive processes of knowledge production create our political reality by laying out specific information and shaping our actions.

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive

network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression (Foucault, 1980, p. 119).

Thus, to Foucault, knowledge is not the unbiased result of intellectual exercise. Knowledge, once formed, generates a social discourse that shapes how people act, as it essentially determines right from wrong. This form of power works through “networks of social structures, discourses, statements and institutions,” which means that all social relations are fundamentally inscribed with elements of power (Kirecci, 2007, p.30-31). Moreover, power/knowledge mechanisms serve to control discourses leading to a self-reinforcing relationship: in effect “(p)ower then produces rationality and truth; rationality and truth, in return, produce power” (Kirecci, 2007, pp.31). I embrace Foucault's concept that there is no pure truth in discourse, taking into consideration that discourse is mainly controlled by the holders of power who legitimize a certain discourse to be presented as the truth regardless of the reality. Foucault explains his idea of the truth of discourse as follow:

Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. ‘Truth’ is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements. ‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with the systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which induces and extends it. A ‘regime’ of truth (1980, p.131).

As Foucault tells us, it seems that the holder of power formulates the truth and what should be represented as true or false. Foucault’s definition of truth varies significantly from the conventional view,

which fails to take into account the significant number of power relationships that underlie its creation and existence; in few words, those who are in power also influence what is considered “true”. These relationships work together in a circular fashion, forming a self-perpetuating feedback loop; the system determines what is truth, the truth hardens and solidifies the system, and goes. The question arises, then: who has the authority to determine what is or is not true?

Such discursive assertions are unquestioned, and therefore fittingly appear in European Orientalist narratives. As El Aidi and Yechouti put it: “(T)he more these statements appear in a text, the more credible the text becomes” (El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017. P.1068). Conventional and recognized modes of knowledge and factual reality, therefore, make up power. Said’s understanding of Foucault’s concept of knowledge and power leads him to grasp how this power is employed against the East via the vehicle of “knowledge”.

Therefore, I would stress that producing a hidden dominant knowledge about others is precisely an exercise of power where they construct the subject and define themselves within that. If knowledge, as Foucault and Said emphasis, is used to make one group more powerful; then, we need to pose an essential question, whether knowledge would represent the authentic truth of the less powerful group.? In fact, the answer is no; the holder of power when producing knowledge can systematically construct the so-called “reality of the others” that will assist them in maintaining their power/ superiority. To put it another way, knowledge synthesized in accordance with the interests of the dominant power structures. This statement reflects Said’s statement about the truth of knowledge, which I heartily concur that there is no such truth representation.

Thus, Orientalist narratives result from existing entanglements of power. The purpose of knowledge is not a comprehension of subjects, but rather to constitute what the East is and control it. There exists an interconnection between knowledge and power, which is characterized by one hegemonic group applying its power to subjugate another subservient group. Said illuminates the ways in which

people establish the nature of truth, as well as the impacts on the broader community and the issues under discussion.

Said's analysis of Orientalism relies on Foucault's definition of discourse for much of its "unity and coherence" (El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017). Discourse, according to Foucault, refers to specific methods of constituting knowledge about an object. Likewise, for Said, Orientalist discourse is a manner of thinking grounded in "an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said, 1978, p. 2). Both Foucault and Said agree that discourse is more than merely a linguistic construct, as it features any number of assertions that generate new possibilities for interpreting a subject. Foucault writes:

We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation (Foucault, 1972, p. 117)

Discourse both incites and regulates what possessors of knowledge express on any given matter, and, in this way, the creation of new knowledge relies on the reinterpretation of old concepts. Thus, rather than being the true creators of knowledge, academics are merely the "holders of the knowledge which discourse produces". This lines up with the Saidian thesis that Orientalists create no new knowledge, but rather act as the "bearers of the knowledge" generated through the Orientalist discourse (El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017). Discourse is not limited to a single statement; instead, it introduces a group of statements that Foucault claims, "all belong to (...) 'the same discursive formation'" (as cited in El Aidi & Yechouti, 2017).

Apparently, one major concern is that while the discourse around the East contains several identifiable statements, they all take part in the same overall movement to negatively portray the East and thus share the same elementary origin and purpose. In fact, the system of possible statements about colonies, colonized peoples, colonizers – and the relationship between all of these – is colonial discourse.

The act of colonization occurs within the system of knowledge and beliefs that colonial discourse provides. Said explores Orientalism as a collection of ideas that have worked well to promote Western hegemony, which attributes Arabs with a number of characteristics, enabling Westerners to interact with them as a known quantity under the rule of a controlling agenda (Said, 1978). However, what made the Arabs knowable had nothing to do with the Arabs' identity, but with the variety of well-informed administrations employed by the West to define it (Said, 1978). For Said, what constructs everything “Oriental” is “knowledge of the Orient,” as this knowledge is borne of power. Said makes the case that because Orientalism, fundamentally, relies on emphasizing the discrepancy between European supremacy and Arabs mediocrity, over time, it tended to render this difference ever more substantial. According to Said, European domination over “Eastern peoples” takes on the cachet of scientific truth; the European identity being greater than the Arabs one, it was always necessarily able to infiltrate, confront, and interpret the inferior “Eastern” entity (Said, 1978).

Orientalism has resulted in a multi-century knowledge production process that has coincided with Imperialism, as there has been a political need to demonize the Arabs to justify imperial violence. In effect, the knowledge produced through Orientalism produced an argument that the Europe was justified in using brutal violence against what it assumed or constituted as the Arabs in response to the violent savagery of its backward inhabitants.

QUESTION OF DIFFERENCES

One can see that Orientalism is, in a way, a form of Eurocentrism that treats the West and Europe as central. As one can observe that, while certain “bodies” are racialized as superiors, others are racialized as inferiors. Hence, my concern here is when the world is divided into these two Manichean categories,

this division assists the colonizer in dominating the colonized. In understanding the assemblage of Orientalism's discourses, one key element for consideration is that portrayals of the Arabs originate in European supremacy. Said problematizes the notion of a binary power structure between colonizers and colonized, which justifies European territorial conquests and political, military, and overall cultural domination. European imperialists, as an example, granted themselves a superior ontological status and, therefore, a license to dominate the globe based on their masculinity and, especially, their white skin (Said, 1978, p. 226). In line with Said, my argument is that Orientalism bifurcates the East as inferior and West as superior; Orientalism is, thus, a form of Western knowledge production that tends to exclude and ostracize people. Fundamentally, Orientalism is not problematic because the West has been privileged to define and reconstruct the Other. It is problematic because knowledge production enables a certain discourse to dominate how we imagine, think, and understand the subject. Historically speaking, the European took for granted both “Oriental inferiority” and the need for European measures to reform the Arabs and Arab region. Through the process of Orientalism, the knowledge produced about the “Other” (i.e., the Orient) continues to be discriminatory. As Said explained;

The major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness (Said, 1978, p. 150).

European society adopted wholesale the prevailing power system wherein the “Occidental self” “sees itself as worthy, cultured, and the singular owner of factual reality. European are possessors and producers of ideas such as Orientalism, which can be interpreted as a form of power and, as such, they decide what should be represented as true or false. As Ashcroft explained, “There are certain unspoken

rules controlling which statements can be made and which cannot within the discourse, and these rules determine the nature of that discourse” (1998). Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin ask the following question concerning the rules allowing one set of statements to be made and not another: “Which rules order these statements? Which rules allow the development of a classificatory system? Which rules allow us to identify certain individuals as authors?” The discourse both allows and restricts knowledge about the world, which is then classified, ordered, and distributed according to these rules (Ashcroft et al., 1998). The rules around who is included versus those excluded are based on the premise that “the colonizer’s culture, history, language, art, political structures, (and) social conventions,” are superior to those of the dominated peoples. This premise works in tandem with the article of faith that “the colonized (must) be ‘raised up’ through colonial contact” (Ashcroft et al., 1998).

A potential explanation is that knowledge of the inferior subjects enabled them to be properly ruled so that their defective character could be corrected via Western intervention and control. No historical accounts of the causes of this supremacy were required in order to justify white European domination; white men owned the truth, and therefore all its linguistic and ideological components. The situation is best understood as the European who defined Arab as “Orient”, just as white European men, alone, wielded the privilege of labeling others “non-white”. European presumed to decide how to rule the “Orient”, on account of their superior status. Prior to the production of explicit discourses most proto-Orientalists had already developed they preconceptions and fantasies about the Arabs and held implicit views about the “Orient” versus the “occident”, as well as their right and ability to generate knowledge about the Arabs. Notably, the conception of the European as superior was significant in that it colored how certain subjects were discussed and served as the central principle guiding a structure of power. In effect, through controlling the narrative, the European has been able to manipulate power structures to maintain its historical stranglehold on global power by perpetuating a system of global separation and

colorist apartheid. As Said explained it as a “corporate institution for dealing with the Orient-dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it” (Said, 1978, p. 3). Said’s argument regarding the dynamics of power/knowledge relationships teaches us that colonial ties are anything but unidirectional.

Said developed this notion of imaginative geography in relation to orientalism. He uses Foucault's idea of discourse to the operation of power/knowledge that produces the “Orient” as a “geographical field” (Said, 1978, p. 50). This “Orient” is first a “textual universe” (Said, 1978, p. 52). By “discriminating and taking note of everything, arranging and placing everything” in a particular position, order, or “economy of objects” is made possible for a particular logic reign. What is essential is that the objects, places, and times so located only “acquire objective reality after the assignments are made” This is especially true, Said suggests, for “relatively uncommon things, like foreigners, mutants, or 'abnormal behavior'” (Said, 1978, p. 54). These objects and the acts of spacing them produce significant objects as discrete and arranges them in a particular order, have particular reference to establishing frontiers between “us” and “them”.

“They are not like us, and for that reason deserve to be ruled” (Said, 1978, p. xi). Said also examines this phenomenon, whereby European discourses describe the Arabs as evil, mystical, seductive, immoral, and uncivilized, needing to be ruled and controlled. Like Said, I argue that these Eurocentric discourses depended heavily on the use of stereotypes and discriminatory distortions. Various depictions of the Arabs through the knowledge creation process have created a particular view of the Arabs in the minds of the European. I want to expose how there is a certain mindset possessed by European imperialists and the colonial administrators that followed them. Through the lens of Eurocentric Orientalism, the people of the Middle East are viewed as backward, violent, immoral, and savage. In assessing the history of Orientalism in the East, as Said observes, that white men stand as constant observers, at a self-imposed

distance from the Oriental “other,” whom he purges of individuality and other exceptional attributes that might challenge the dominant stereotypes and historical discourse concerning the “Orient”; As Said stated

The Orient suddenly appeared lamentably underhumanized, antidemocratic, backward, barbaric, and so forth.... Orientalism as a profession grew out of these opposites, of compensations and corrections based on inequality, ideas nourished by and nourishing similar ideas in the culture at large (Said, 1978, p. 150).

The Arab, initially represented as mysterious, is fashioned into a convenient and governable entity through Orientalist discourse. This enables it to fit colonial possessions into an orderly catalog of known phenomena. In this way, Orientalist knowledge of the Arabs boasts both a taming and a domesticating effect. Given the intricacy of the East, in reality, orientalism achieves an impressive feat by condensing its history to a series of rigid categories. Therefore, Orientalist narratives yield broad contrasts, such as the “moral European” man versus the “immoral Oriental” one.

To give an example, the legacy of 19th century Orientalist paintings continued in 20th-century film which is explored in Shaheen’s “Reel Bad Arabs,” which considers media representations of Arabs. Films like “The Sheik” starring Rudolf Valentino, or even the caricatures in children’s cartoons, presented persistent archetypes and stereotypes of Arabs throughout the 20th century. This thinking persists today with themes from Orientalism emerging in entertainment media focused on the Middle East – for example, the portrayal of Muslim men as potential terrorists, and Muslim women as oppressed. A good example is television programs such as Homeland or 24. Hence, whether scholarly, religious, legislative, or administrative, individuals and official bodies can always augment their standing by relying on these narrative accounts. Said claims such discursive products take part in the creation of knowledge and even shape reality itself. As Said explains in his book, the process of such narratives where the European speak for the Arabs “in the sense that what they might have to say, were they to be asked and might they be able

to answer, would somewhat uselessly confirm what is already evident: that they are a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves” (Said, 1978, p. 34).

Said concentrates on the origins of “the Orient” as an artifice of Western discourse. The resulting process essentially merges knowledge and reality, establishing a convention (i.e., what Foucault called discourse) through which these representations, in their very being, acquire the authority to serve as a foundation for subsequent materials, which in turn adhere and contribute power to this broader discursive movement. Said claimed hundreds of years were required for “the absolute demarcation” to spring up between “Occident and Orient”, which was accelerated and compounded by commercial ties (1978, p. 39). In other words, continuous representations have the ability to create a sense of truth when depicting the Arabs.

Said describes the treatment of the Arabs where “The Orient was viewed as if framed by the classroom, the criminal court, the prison, the illustrated manual. Orientalism, then, is knowledge of the Orient that places things Oriental in class, court, prison, or manual for scrutiny, study, judgment, discipline, or governing” (Said, 1978, p. 41); this, as I suggest, delineates the boundaries that contain the ideology of Orientalism; the tree can be identified by its discursive fruit. Problematically, this converts “the Oriental” into a mere object – of judgment, scholarship, correction, and artwork – apt for easy definition and depiction. That is to say, on the subject of religion, the “Occident” tended to be religiously Christian, but took steps to inject secularism and hyper-rationality into its agenda. European views would still tend to have a secular understanding of democracy or institutions, which would inform and shape their views. By contrast, Arab societies (i.e., in North Africa and the Arab region) tended to keep political/legal structures closely intertwined with religion, with the usage of Sharia law being a default. Thus, I concur with Said's argument that throughout history, the world was divided hierarchically into a

secular/Christian society and a barbaric/ Muslim religious society. Filtered through this secular Christian lens, the Arab world was constructed through a contrast to Christianity, where it produces normative judgments grounded in religious ideology.

RACIST DISCOURSE

Racist discourse is a system of vocabulary based on race, color, or religion aimed at presenting individuals differently based on their race or skin color. This discourse is driven from the aversion from the others and discriminated beliefs in the society. According to Grosfoguel, racism is a hierarchy of domination, distinguishing between “superior” and “inferior” humans; this artificial hierarchy can be marked by different forms (2012). “Westernized,” third world is ruling elites, whether African, Asian, or Latin American, reproduce racist practices aimed at specific ethnic or racial groups, who are thereby “inferiorized,” ensuring a position of superiority for these elites over colonized people (Grosfoguel, 2012). Individuals who are defined as “others,” based on their race, then, are painted as the persecutors of and catchall threats to the racist. In this instance, then, the racist deserves protection from racial others (i.e., his racial “inferiors”), and these racial others deserve punishment (Hook, 2004). As Pennycook (2002) summarizes: because Europeans considered colonized people lacking in history, culture, religion, and intelligence, they saw it as their duty to “step in and save the day” (p.50). By these emotional and “logical” leaps of faith, the racist then becomes the victim of the racial other who poses a threat to his or her existence.

In his article, *Fanon and the Psychoanalysis of Racism*, Derek Hook asks the following question: why do racists feel the need to continually repeat and reinforce their racial superiority, as well as the other’s inferiority, when then these are supposedly settled matters? It seems to indicate a lack of confidence in the proposition to be constantly in need of reasserting it. Therefore, as Hook explains,

because the anxiety of this type cannot be thought of as springing up from within the person of the colonizer, it is labeled mentally as a realistic response to the dangerous threat posed by the colonized peoples (2004). In this optic, the premise is not that the colonizer lacks a certain positive quality, but instead, that the colonized person has, or colonized people have, a negative and dangerous quality in excess.

Said explanation of biased discourses might be complemented by Fanon's discussion in *The Wretched of the Earth*. It explores how French colonial authorities tended to view Algeria's black and Arab residents as backward, lazy, and stupid. These attitudes are shaped in part by orientalism, and also serve to reinforce the sense of cultural and racial superiority necessary for a colonial project to continue. The superiority that came with the European identity provided them with the basic validation for colonial occupation was of a discursive (relating to “knowledge” of East) and not primarily of a military or economic nature. Rather it is Western knowledge-superiority that allows for the use of knowledge of language, cultures, and customs to sustain political power. Fanon profoundly problematizes Eurocentric knowledge objective to claim Western superiority as a way to gain a license to dominate the others. I have considered Fanon's argument that indigenous populations, especially under colonialism, are essentially dehumanized:

The native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is, let us dare to admit, the enemy of values, and in this sense, he is the absolute evil. He is the corrosive element, destroying all that comes near him; he is the deforming element, disfiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality; he is the depository of maleficent powers, the unconscious and irretrievable instrument of blind forces (1963, p. 41).

The resulting knowledge production reveals an imbalance in the relationship between inherently superior colonizers and inferior colonized. The myths of the “bad Arabs” and the evil black person are false representations, not true ones, and can be seen as a political discourse meant to justify the actions of white colonizers. In *Black Skin White Mask*, Fanon describes the binary in a racist discourse as a phobic reaction wherein a person exaggerates the potential danger of an object. They mentally turn it into something with thoroughly evil intent and imbues it with a range of threatening powers that promise to cause “me” damage; we then respond to the phobic object with fear and hatred and with paranoid anxiety (Hook, 2004). Similar to the process of constructing the black and “negro”, the European produces the Arabs as evil, and “assigned the lowest value” (Fanon, 1967, p.189). I agree with Hook on the fact that these representations are not true, based on a series of genetically inherited blueprints, or widely disseminated archetypes of blackness as evil, but instead a social and political system of representations and values (Hook, 2004, p. 125). Fanon concluded that by defining themselves in opposition to fabricated representations about others, Europeans inferiorised others in order to achieve a sense of superiority. As we can see, the holder of this knowledge thereby acquires authority:

The colonist is right when he says he “knows” them. It is the colonist who fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonized subject. The colonist derives his validity, i.e., his wealth, from the colonial system (Fanon, 1963, p. 2).

As these lines suggest, the Other is not real but a European creation that was needed to validate how Europeans view and acted upon the Other. The binary and representation of a non-realistic image of the other remains alive and ingrained in the discussion about the East, where the West still uses Orientalists' gaze. In fact, Said draws on Fanon's work in his book *Culture and Imperialism* to show how the dominant discourses of the Arabs constitute the Arabs and pit one civilizational pole against the other, in a situation that does not offer any hope for reconciliation. There exists a hard distinction between the colonial “self”

and the conquered “other,” abolishing any possibility of either dialectical evolution or hegemonic assimilation. These two solitudes work systematically against each other and can never do otherwise.

The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity.... The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute (as cited in Said 1978, p. 49)

The colonizers exclusively possessed power and, furthermore, the very legitimacy of that power depended on their rules. Legitimacy flows from the colonial authority to the colonized natives. By this, we mean that formal knowledge production produces a normalizing effect and establishes dependable social control mechanisms. In this way, the more knowledge the European has of the Arabs, the European claims the more authority. Briefly, as Said puts it; “knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on, in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control” (Said, 1978, p. 36). Therefore, through decolonizing biased knowledge, we need to keep in mind that the importance of fully seizing on the messages built into discourses that produce the non-Europeans as the enemy. Ultimately, a key lesson from the study of orientalism is that we need to be more aware of the distortions that appear in the material that we read or see.

CONTRASTING THE NOTION OF SUBJECT

Orientalism is ultimately subject to criticism as it allows for certain problematic discourses to dominate how the subject of Orientalism is constructed and represented. Hence, I am concerned with the West's construction of the subject; the discourse of Orientalism actively participated in producing the subject's ideas as passive/active, which is a form of violence, not just a creation of binary. This implicit violence rooted in the narratives is reflected where the Arabs are constructed with certain characteristics and denied a voice. For this reason, we need to understand how knowledge and power are exercised simultaneously in relation to the production of the subject, systems, and institutions, where the subject is shaped and reshaped by the distortive images of hegemonic powers. Clearly, the West operates within a power structure that provides them with agency, voice autonomy and power. In order to better understand the construction of the subject I will adopt Yeğenoğlu's concept of the subject.

To Yeğenoğlu, through linguistic devices, the “Orient” was discursively erected as inherently retrograde. The subject thus exists as a linguistic construction, which by rejecting the fact that it depends on the existence of the other, produces the impression of self-sufficiency and liberty (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 5-6). It is clear that the subject and the object need each other deeply; one, in fact, simply cannot exist without the other. In order to be a superior self, there must necessarily be an inferior other. The subject is the human “self” at the core of his or her experience and, as such, is causally responsible for his or her behaviours (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 4). To Yeğenoğlu the subject is revealed in various analysis to be a structure produced historically to represent exclusively European, white, bourgeois males as she explains:

The construction of the subject requires another term or condition from which the subject distinguishes itself; this “other” term remains repressed, and its “forgotten” or repressed presence is the very condition of the autonomy and universality of the subject. This is why

a critique of the subject can only be conducted from the point of view of this other term
(1998, p. 5-6).

I suggest that, for the artifice of the subject to survive, an outside firm is also required, which is the other. Hence, we must recall that the subject's very self-sufficiency and universality depend on the inhibited, subjugated, and overlooked status of the "other," whose perspective offers the singular vehicle for reviewing the self. We can see that humanism, thus, offers a series of narratives that can be shown to "otherize" women via labels such as emotional, feeble, fragile, crazy, and helpless, leaving "Man" to hold the space as the universal human norm where woman is therefore seen as a "natural deviation" from this norm (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p.6). It is a structural rule that the other is made up of qualities that are contrary to those that make up the subject; the other is comparable to the self, in certain ways, yet exists as a fundamentally dissimilar entity. I completely agree with Yeğenoğlu's argument that in this humanist worldview, the "other" is deficient, in that she wants all the positive qualities attributed to the subject; however, she also poses a menace to him by the fact of her basic variance from his nature (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p.6)

In the case of Orientalism, I find that the relationship between power and knowledge allows us to gain a better insight into changes of power relationships throughout history; particularly, the production of knowledge through the lens of Orientalism has emerged out of modern European ideology. To Said, the "Orient" is largely juxtaposed against the "Occidental" self-image of modernity and rationality, where Europeans (Occidentals) think of themselves as rational people with logical solutions for political, technological, and social problems. This view is in stark juxtaposition to the Orientalist view of the other as backward and unsophisticated.

The entanglement of knowledge and power in the concept of modernity prevents us from understanding relations globally, including the separation of the East from the West; such productions are

necessary for the erection of hegemonic power. Another way of formulating this is that modernity depends on the relationship of knowledge and power in order to produce an order and construct the other. One of the major epistemological principles of modernity/orientalism is that the modern subject is assumed to be the Man, who always possesses rationality and agency. Likewise, the Western discourse concurrently claims that, on the other hand, the “Eastern” being is irrational, primitive, and backward. Epistemologically, the idea of dichotomy creates an inescapable frame for the Arabs. Hence, there is a need to move beyond this dichotomy, given that it makes the epistemology of orientalism possible. The problem is that only the Western subject is advanced and wants to modernize or create progress, as opposed to the “Eastern” subject, who stands in opposition to these characteristics. This preserves the status of colonial knowledge and powers by dichotomizing the world, which promotes the assumption that one part of the hierarchy is superior to the other. This can be seen as an epistemological problem. Ultimately, it is the relations and ideas established with colonialism that have become inextricably linked to the ideas of modernity.

In some cases, European knowledge production marginalizes people by seeing them as problems, due to the gap between their current situations and European conceptions of modernity. As a result of this perceived gap, colonized peoples have stuck in the process of catching up with modernity; simultaneously, their voices are limited since they must conform to European logical reasoning to express their ideas. Under the name of modernity, Europe saw its role as being defined by the following four goals: (1) provide colonized peoples with a “history,” both by writing histories of colonies and by starting local populations off on the path of (and to) “development,” which Europe saw as history itself; (2) provide colonized peoples with “culture,” by initiating them to better ways of understanding reality, including the vast body of European literature; (3) provide colonized peoples with true “religion,” starting with worship of the European god, borrowed from the Jews, instead of other, “superstitious”

beliefs; and (4) provide the colonized peoples with “intelligence,” by indoctrinating local populations via European education systems, which could theoretically increase colonized peoples’ intellectual prowess, or at least bring it closer to the idealized, European standard (Pennycook, 2002).

DECOLONIZING KNOWLEDGE

Imperialism was revealed to be a continuing, present-day process, powerful not through direct but invisible forms of violence. Therefore, more than a simple theory of knowledge, decolonization is a “theoretical practice,” which converts knowledge from competence, in any given discipline, to active intervention. Decolonization via literary criticism forever altered the realm of power and politics because it proved that “innocent purveyors of culture” were actually “complicit with European imperialism” throughout history (Schwarz & Ray, 2008). Historically, we can see the movement of several scholars and writers who have engaged in decolonizing biased knowledge, which is aimed at exposing how knowledge serves colonial interests. Thereby, I find that the process of decolonizing knowledge can help liberate people from Eurocentric grand narratives, which impose European values and thought forms on non-Western societies.

To better understand the need to decolonize biased knowledge, Achille Mbembe's discussion of the idea of knowledge production and its existence in conformity with Eurocentric norms will be explored. To Mbembe, “Eurocentric canon can be seen as a canon that attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production. It is a canon that disregards other epistemic traditions. It is a canon that tries to portray colonialism as a normal form of social relations between human beings rather than a system of exploitation and oppression” (2015). Simply put, colonizers leveraged this knowledge to justify and laud their (oppressive) intervention in the East.

From a philosophical point of view, the hegemonic knowledge produced by the West “generated discursive scientific practices and has set up interpretive frames that make it challenging to think outside of these frames. But this is not all; this hegemonic tradition has not only become hegemonic. It is also actively repressing anything that actually is articulated, thought, and envisioned from outside of these frames” (Mbembe, 2015, p.10). As Mbembe illustrated, under colonialism, as a rule, the colonizer’s possession of knowledge always serves to strengthen various colonialist systems. It was apparent in North America, in the sixteenth century, as well as India, in the nineteenth century, and Africa, from the beginning to the middle of the twentieth century that imperialism and knowledge production go hand in hand and are, in fact, “mutually reinforcing and causally interrelated forms of domination” (Mbembe, 2015). Thus, as Mbembe’s statement suggests, I can recognize how knowledge is by no means exclusively the province of colonial invention; therefore, colonial knowledge needs to be critically decolonized. However, since the medieval ages, the proliferation of European literature has fixed these systematic representations, such that are impervious to change:

It is not an issue of removing colonial thinking from European thought, of purging it, like today’s dream of ‘stamping out’ racism. It is rather a question of repositioning European systems of knowledge so as to demonstrate the long history of their operation as the effect of their colonial other, a reversal encapsulated in Fanon’s observation: ‘Europe is literally the creation of the Third World (Young, 1990, p.118).

As I pointed out, the superior European was always defined – and from the start – both in and through opposition to an “inferior Oriental”. While Said considers the ways in which the episteme of Orientalism results in the delineation between Arab and Europe, he further argues that this division is just fiction. The most critical factors in determining what shape this relationship was to take included an

explosion of European “systematic knowledge of the Orient”, and the colonial mechanisms of interaction that both produced and buttressed this knowledge.

My aim in this dissertation is to challenge pre-existing homogenous notions regarding Arab and Muslim women. When reading orientalism through a gendered lens, one can recognize how a similar binary of the male (“civilize Western male” versus “barbaric Eastern male”) was deployed about Arab Muslim women (“liberal Western women” versus “oppressed Eastern women”). These two images of the “barbaric Eastern men” and “oppressed Eastern women” collude with colonial and the patriarchal discourses and the modernity/universal human right agenda. The ongoing representation of women is an extension of the dominant discourses that reinforce binaries imposing these constructed concepts of “modern West” and “exotic East” and are even more troubling for denying Arab women's agency.

CONCLUSION

Franz Fanon, Edward Said, and Michael Foucault explore new ways of interpreting the relationship between knowledge production, power, and other related themes. Orientalism is not just simply the subjugation of the others; it is constituting the other through knowledge production and creating a biased lens through which to see it.

This suggested that Western ascendancy over the East is apparent in Orientalist narratives; this includes themes of repression and hegemony, which form the basis of the colonial enterprise. The set of knowledge constructed by Orientalist narratives to dominate the East while presenting the East's character in a certain light that enables it to be ruled by the West also paints Western values as applicable to all times and places. This knowledge represents a form of Western power over the East. In this manner, the goal of legitimizing the symbolic power is constituted by the colonial domination, which in turn serves the goal of legitimizing a hegemonic/colonialist worldview.

In this chapter, Said's analysis helps us to understand how European powers employ language to define the Arabs as the “orient/other,”; how knowledge is constructed and elucidated by ascendant parties' and the consequences for how the “other” is viewed. In the following chapter, through interpreting the notions of “Self”, “Other,” and representation; hence, we come to recognize how the concept of identity is constructed and reproduced. The concept of “self,” being composed of various elements, is therefore inherently inconsistent.

Problematically, the “Other” is always unqualified to represent himself or herself. It follows that he or she needs to be represented by something or someone else; the Westerner needed to “speak,” both “for” and “about” the East. In the following chapter, I outline an understanding of representation that demonstrates how this concept classifying people into racial groups and then sorting them through ordered levels of power that separated one race from the other and one culture from another. The process of representations has shaped traditional Western attitudes and thinking towards non-Western people, where it has acted as a dehumanizing and oppressive force through shaping knowledge production. Moreover, standards, ethics, and principles that originate from any given society are contained within the constructs of language; this information is influential on the way Euro-American view Arabs, and vice-versa; hence, by examining the concepts of Orientalism, the philosophical basis of the dualism established between East and West, which distinguishes one people from another, will be explored. Through a discussion of the above themes, in the following chapter, we will question if it is legitimately possible to consider sexuality, power relations without any reference to gender.

CHAPTER TWO: THE GENEALOGY OF ORIENTALISM

This chapter aims to establish a basis for understanding how gender is built into Orientalist discourses by asking a number of questions; what does the representation consist of? How women are defined and used, and how does it serve to frame the “East-West” relationship? An initial inspection of the creation of European (Orientalist) discourse is in order, emphasizing how it relates both to the on-the-ground reality of the Arabs and to gender. Through the chapter, we reveal how Said’s articulation of *Orientalism*, while it allows us to understand the distinctions of them and us, does not theorize extensively on the notion of gender beyond his understanding of Arab and European man.

An examination of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* seems an apt point of departure, followed by a discussion of the conceptual definition of self-versus other. I argue that Western academics abused the production of “knowledge” to fashion a set of anti-Arab assumptions. This is borne out by further exploration of the structures of knowledge production and self-Orientalism. The conclusion of each section features an assessment of the discursive construction of gender, wherein I question here how gender acts upon the structural differences, established by the construction of Orientalism, between Europe and Arab world. Finally, I gather from this analysis what role gender plays in the hegemonic construction of power as my focus in this dissertation is the feminist’s criticisms of the use of women in the Western discourses (i.e., colonial, post-colonial, and contemporary discourse). What is common between Said and feminist criticism is reading Western discourses to challenge of the nexus of knowledge and power in its relation to formatting the truth. However, feminists’ critics have turned their attention deeply into the role of using women in Western discourse. Historically speaking, the distortion of Arab reality was built by producing fabricated narratives about Arab women and men simultaneously. In analyzing Western discourses through a feminist lens, it is obvious that the use of women was not an element that can be neglected; yet, it was one of the main components of the formation of the Arabs that

is continuously used to prove the goodwill of the Europe. Undoubtedly, this use of women is a profitable political approach aimed at controlling the Arab region, instilling terror as a means of control through religious, cultural, and psychological means.

SELF AND OTHER: CONCEPTUAL BASIS

“The Other alone can give him worth” (Fanon, 1967, p. 154).

In *Orientalism*, Said analyzes the way in which the world is divided into insiders and outsiders to distinguish between the (“Occident/self”) and the (“Orient/other”). The self is the true exemplar of humanity; and the other is not human. The other is the opposite of the “self,” neither of which can either be identified or defined without the other. Westerners defined “the East” or the “Other” in the following terms:

The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, “different”; thus, the European is rational, virtuous, mature, “normal”. But the way of enlivening the relationship was everywhere to stress the fact that the Oriental lived in a different but thoroughly organized world of his own, a world with its own national, cultural, and epistemological boundaries and principles of internal coherence. Yet what gave the Oriental's world its intelligibility and identity was not the result of his own efforts but rather the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the Orient was identified by the West (Said, 1978, p. 48).

In other words, the “self” is represented as the developed, advanced, vocal metropolitan center of the “West”. In contrast, the “other” is identified with underdeveloped, marginal, and generally silent colonial subjects in the “East”. One must first divide the world before one can rank its components. Thus, this separation of the world into two parts, and the resulting creation of an artificial binary system to organize

the world (i.e., the “self” versus the “other”), is the central thesis of the Orientalist paradigm, which attempts to subjugate the Arab to the European. Said’s argument boils down to the following: “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (Said, 1978, p. 3).

This stems from the European authorship of many economic, sociological, and psychological concepts, which lead many academics to view the West as “self” and the East as “other”. Abdel-Malek, when pondering this point, writes:

One sees how much, from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, the hegemonism of possessing minorities, unveiled by Marx and Engels, and the anthropocentrism dismantled by Freud are accompanied by europocentrism in the area of human and social sciences, and more particularly in those in direct relationship with non-European peoples (Abdel-Malek, 1964, p. 107-108).

Like Said, I argue that the “Orient” is positioned in contrast to the Europe as exotic and dangerous, unreliable, and seen as a threat to the Europe; the dichotomy works to legitimize imperialism's violence. The Arab or so-called “oriental”, in sum, is labeled as a sort of dangerous sub-human in dire need of civilizing and education. Colonizers systematically dehumanized the natives of the Arabs through the process of “othering,” insisting that colonial subjects are “not fully human”. In many ways, Orientalism is the name given to a rationalization process for Europe’s “mission civilisatrice,” whereby locals are persuaded of their mediocrity relative to European. In Western literature and culture, the “other” is conventionally defined in opposition to an ideal self, an alien alter ego amounting to Europe's inferior replica. However, let us concede, in this worldview, colonizers are held up as the true incarnations of the “proper self,” while all others are labeled as “savages”. This discourse creates a chasm, conceptually and morally, between the “other” and the “self,” through the reduction of the former to a blend of imaginary

characteristics. The “Oriental other” can only be interpreted as anti-reason, erotic, exotic, and tyrannical, while the ostensibly all-knowing “West” is understood to be the opposite, which equates to reasonable, moral, and righteous in its fervently held thoughts and imperial compartments.

(T)he strength of the West and the Orient's weakness—as seen by the West. Such strength and such weakness are as intrinsic to Orientalism as they are to any view that divides the world into large general divisions, entities that coexist in a state of tension produced by what is believed to be radical difference (Said, 1978, p. 45).

Hence, like Said, I argue that the construction of the self implies the creation, at once, of the “other”. This contrast gives life and purpose to the self, which on a national level, implies the existence of “outsiders” and enemies. Hence, neither the self nor the other can exist without being compared to its counterpart.

REPRESENTATIONS OR MISREPRESENTATION

“It is not “truth” but representations” (Said, 1978, p. 21).

What comprises colonial power is principally the ability to represent the “other”. Reading of Said’s *Orientalism* leads one to ask a number of questions. First, how can representation be entirely neutral, or truthful? Second, how significant are the changes that have taken place in Western representations of certain locations in the Middle East, where political and military intervention has altered the course of history? Third, does ideology alone explain the creation of specific representations of the Orient.?

As I suggest, to be able to have logical answers to the previous questions, one needs to expose how the dominated discourse has allowed for the formation of fabricated truth that was later defined as the accepted and the ultimate truth. Along the following lines, Said reminds us that:

The Oriental is depicted as something one judges (as in a court of law), something one studies and depicts (as in a curriculum), something one disciplines (as in a school or

prison), something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual). The point is that in each case the Oriental is contained and represented by the dominating frameworks (Said, 1978, p. 40).

As I observe, the main theme of Said's book is the concept of representation. In it, Said seeks to break down conventional European notions tied to both the Arab and Islam. Said claims that normal representations of Arabs, which are rooted in the notion of a backward, inferior, and inherently foreign threat, are often employed via the actions of a complex ideological system that was initially built to ensure the smooth functioning of the colonies and to justify their colonization, sexualization, and exotic representation. No matter how internally and mutually contradictory, these depictions were held up as manifestations of the only true and "authentic" ways to conceptualize basic reality.

Said demonstrates that Islam, serving as a stand-in for everything it touches, including the culture, the people, and the land of "the Orient", is perceived and described as opposed, by nature, to the West in every important regard: it is primitive, backward, and reflexively pitted against modernization, which began in Europe (Said, 1978, p. 184). The dominating western discourse—still a potent trope of Western hegemony—thus remains a site of investigation. Said clearly states for his readers that these are "representations, not a 'natural' depiction of the Arabs. It seems that to Said, representation does not always reflect the reality of the Other. Therefore, one should look at the circumstances of such a representation. Said further addresses the basic "nature" of the "representation" itself:

My analysis of the Orientalist text therefore places emphasis on the evidence, which is by no means invisible, for such representations as representations, not as "natural" depictions of the Orient (Said, 1978, p. 29).

Said goes on to dissect the European caricature of the East:

The European representation of the Muslim, Ottoman, or Arab was always a way of controlling the redoubtable Orient, and to a certain extent the same is true of the methods of contemporary learned Orientalists, whose subject is not so much the East itself as the East made known, and therefore less fearsome, to the Western reading public (Said, 1978, p.60).

In order to confront problematic Orientalist representations, Said highlighted examples of racial stereotypes of the “East”, which sum up the European model of the “Easterner” as an individual.

In cartoons, Arabs are represented as having sharply hooked noses, reminiscent of anti-Semitic depictions of Jews, as well as evil mustachioed leers on their faces....In films and television, the Arab male is associated either with lechery or bloodthirsty dishonesty. He appears as an oversexed degenerate, clever, devious, involved continuously in intrigue, inherently sadistic and treacherous (Said, 1978, p. 287).

Finally, the representation of Egyptian Queen Cleopatra feeds the Western discourse of fatal women corrupted by her sexual desires.

Here, I would stress that as overwhelmingly dominant representations such as these repeatedly come under question, it becomes increasingly evident that alternative narratives about the Arabs are possible. These representations may serve as a way to homogenize other cultures; we might then ask how the representation of a community, peoples, and geographies benefits the political discourse concerning power and hegemony. Said crucially notes that in order to define the Europe in relation to the world successfully, the Arabs is depicted as its diametrically opposed “oriental other”.

Said acknowledges that the European interest in other cultures for colonial or imperial benefits. He further endorses the idea that power-knowledge relations used to frame the interpretations of people from other cultures in a certain way. In fact, European depictions of the Arabs show an inherently hostile

culture. The same evidence leads us to realize how religious and political motivations shaped and continue to shape representations of the “Orient”.

Thus, we find that knowledge is naturally bound up with the process of representation, through which a concrete form is given to enduring ideological concepts. From the political force, operationally, it is inseparable from the power that fundamentally supports these representations. These representations were all thought by their proponents to depict the Arabs neutrally, objectively, and scientifically. The most complicated aspects of the subject area covered by Said as follow:

Under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient, and within the umbrella of the Western hegemony over the Orient during the period from the end of the eighteenth century, there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for recognition in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical thesis about the mankind, and the universe for instance of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character (Said, 1978, p. 8).

Thus, what is important is that a proper understanding of the concept of representation is essential to unlocking the discourses that contain all constructions of knowledge. Given the condition that any person representing something is necessarily drawing from her/his own cultural, linguistic, and institutional foundations, “then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is *eo Ipso* implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the 'truth' which is itself a representation” (Said, 1978, p. 272).

Additionally, I am concerned with the way Eurocentric representations hierarchize Europe as the founder of the world, alone, and assume the privilege of speaking on behalf of the Arabs. By contrast Arab people themselves are forbidden from expressing their opinions concerning the true reality of the Orient.

The European way of speaking on behalf of Arabs people, holding up Orientalist texts as accurate representations of truth, and relying on these as if they were faithful descriptions of the reality of “the Orient,” which is a concept created from whole cloth by these European authors while freezing out Arabs themselves from the discussion. One should question if “a true representation anything” is possible (Said, 1978, p. 1973). To the colonizer, the Arabs were constructed based on the knowledge produced about them during the colonization. All the Arabs were reduced and characterized as Evil and uncivilized to promote imperial acts towards the Arab region.

Everything they knew, more or less, about the Orient came from books written in the tradition of Orientalism, placed in its library... Such an Orient was silent, available to Europe for the realization of projects that involved but were never directly responsible to the native inhabitants, and unable to resist the projects, images, or mere descriptions devised for it. ... I called such a relation between Western writing (and its consequences) and Oriental silence the result of and the sign of the West’s great cultural strength, its will power over the Orient (Said, 1978, p. 94).

As a matter of fact, the so-called East, plainly stated, was barred from the practice of self-representation as a result of the shadow cast by outside influences on domestic thought and discourse. Thus, Orientalist narratives and descriptions were grounded in, and displayed, some distinctly European assumptions and doctrines, rather than those of the people in question.

Referring to Marx’s statement (i.e., “they cannot represent themselves”), Said considers the assumption, which is built directly into Orientalism, that the Arabs cannot represent themselves. Instead, Europeans take up the responsibility of providing a political and linguistic representation of the Arabs. Through this process, the Europeans integrated the “Orient” into Europeans ideological and imperial frameworks. In this light, the core of Europeans representation is exteriority; the Other was excluded since

he cannot use his voice to represent himself. Hence, there was a need for the Europe to represent what they know about the Arab world. Thus, the so-called Oriental is absent in his own representation, as Said stated:

The exteriority of the representation is always governed by some version of the truism that if the Orient could represent itself, it would; since it cannot, the representation does the job, for the West... for the poor Orient (Said, 1978, p. 21).

My concern, though, is with the European representation of the Arabs: it prevents this Arabs “the other” from expressing his or her views; for this reason, speaking for the other does nothing to alleviate the problem of voicelessness. No matter how sympathetic or allied one may be to this other, it is problematic to represent him or her without erasing their identity; in the end, for maximum accuracy, one must represent oneself. Furthermore, I suggest that the way we perceive and understand others should be first thorough understanding and accepting of their culture without imposes one's culture. However, the case is different in Orientalism; the aim of studying the Arab region was not purely for understanding the Arabs or the so-called “Orient”. The purpose was to study the East and, consequently, claim to know more about the Arab region than the Arabs know themselves. During the process of knowledge production, the West produces systematic knowledge, enabling them to legitimize violence upon the Arabs, and deny others' agency. Hence, we need to challenge the processes of the creation of fixed identity that strip the other's voice; yet authorize the holder of the power to exercise violence and sustain it.

In *Orientalism*, Said lays bare his assumptions about the future of the Orient's political and literary representations. Said's analysis of the power of representation and of colonial authority, both in their relationship to one another, remains relevant today. For Said, “(t)here is no avoiding the fact that even if we disregard the Orientalist distinctions between 'them' and 'us,' a powerful series of political and ultimately ideological realities inform scholarship today” (1978, p.327). Hence, to challenge the

dominance of Orientalism, Said invites his readers “to be sensitive to what is involved in representation, in studying the “Other”, in racial thinking, an unthinking and uncritical acceptance of authority and authoritative ideas, in the socio-political role of intellectuals, in the great value of sceptical consciousness” (Said, 1978, p. 327). Thus, when examining the representations of the other, we need to keep in mind that any investigation has selective representations of a subject, necessarily, must consider the historical context into which the subject of representation first came into being and has since continued to be reframed. The danger Orientalism poses is that through deploying disempowering representations it perpetuates the subjugation of whole peoples. Colonial representation is a political representation that cannot be “natural” or “true”. The exoticization is a one of the elements to sustain Western hegemony, which aims to make the East “less fearsome” and to “control their redoubtability in a denial of Eastern agency” As Said elaborates:

(T)he European representation of the Muslim, Ottoman, or Arab was always a way of controlling the redoubtable Orient, and to a certain extent the same is true of the methods of contemporary learned Orientalists, whose subject is not so much the East itself as the East made known, and therefore less fearsome, to the Western reading public (Said, 1978, p. 60).

These representations have purposes. Said’s argument rests in that Orientalism, as a system of knowledge, is inexorably linked with the exercise of power. Said makes a critical point that “orientalism” is an ideological device that enabled Europeans to expand their culture from a safe distance. As it turns out, the Arabs was represented in a way to be framed, reduced, judged, and observed as though it was synonymous with the East. Said’s analysis amply establishes the relationship between representation and power.

Our initial description of Orientalism as a learned field now acquires a new concreteness. A field is often an enclosed space. The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is

the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe (Said, 1978, p. 63).

Said attempts to demonstrate how Europe makes its superiority possible. He discusses the idea of self-representation, wherein Orientals are forbidden from representing themselves. Their only hope of knowing themselves lies in Europe, as the “Orient” exists only as created by European authors, scholars, and intellectuals. In other words, as Tait writes, “the truth of the Arab world only became true when the West authored it, this truth was necessarily a function of the colonial relationships of power from which it emerged” (2015, p. 268-9). Despite the attempts by postcolonial scholars and intellectuals to challenge European stereotypes, very little has changed. I concur with Said's argument because the manner in which Arab people continue to be portrayed in a Euro-American context remains almost identical to the way they were previously depicted, which is to say, as threats that need to be controlled. Notice that all rights and responsibilities relating to the definition of the “Orient”, from the beginning, were deemed to be the property of exclusively European possessors:

The Orient and Islam have a kind of extrareal, phenomenologically reduced status that puts them out of reach of everyone except the Western expert. From the beginning of Western speculation about the Orient, the one thing the Orient could not do was to represent itself. Evidence of the Orient was credible only after it had passed through and been made firm by the refining fire of the Orientalist's work (Said, 1978, p. 283).

European amplified and expanded on colonial representations of “Easterners” in order to acquire and preserve their own control and power. Labels were applied to “Eastern men” that hinged on the assumed fact of their being uncivilized, problematic, and without agency. Similarly, labels were applied to “Eastern

women” that constructed them as exotic, oppressed, and disdained within their own culture. Therefore, Said’s Orientalism raises doubts about whether or not the hegemonic representations were limited to political and economic discourses, and explores how they were applied, in particular, to the bodies of Arab women.

In his lecture, titled “The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations,” Said addressed the under-representation of “Easterners” head-on: “In today’s Europe and the United States ... what is described as Islam belongs to the discourse of Orientalism. A construction fabricated to whip up feelings of hostility and antipathy against a part of the world that happens to be of strategic importance for its oil, its threatening adjacency to Christianity, its formidable history of the competition with the West. Yet this is a very different thing than what to Muslims, who live within its domain, Islam really is” (Said, 1998, p.9). In the previous quotation, Said emphasizes the ongoing impact of the misrepresentation of Muslims that mislead and confuse the reader and create a distorted reality about the “East”, especially Islam, arguing that racism is rooted in the process of producing Orientalist knowledge.

The subject’s humanity is lost in such a mode of representation, where the person is reduced to the abstract figure of a savage creature or lunatic, leaving only the superior European agents to speak about, and on behalf of, this “other”. Said drives home the point, in an abundantly clear fashion, that European scholars devised a way to appropriate for themselves the right and responsibility to express reality for the Arabs and its people, without offering them any role whatsoever in the discussion. Hence, it’s a problem of authority where the representation enabled the colonizers to dominate the Arab region as well as to have authority over it.

Orientalist representations are among the direct causes of cultural hegemony, manifested through art, literature, design, and communication. A visual language of the mind has affected generations of designers ignoring- intentionally- or not the blurred lines between contextual truths and fictional ones. In

Orientalism, Said defines Orientalism as a system of representations which are limited and shaped by a broad swath of “forces” that assimilated the Arabs, first, into the European field of awareness, then, into its sphere of education, and finally, into its overall imperial worldview and social structure.

According to Said, “representations are first ‘embedded in the culture, institutions, and political ambiance of the representer,’ and they are also linked with other things besides the ‘truth’ which is itself a representation ‘inhabiting a common field of play defined ... by some common history, tradition, universe of discourse” (1978, p. 272-273).

Said integrates the volatile political situation of the East into his analysis of modern-day representations of the Arab, in writing: “... if the Arab occupies space enough for attention, it is as a negative value. He is seen as the disrupter of Israel’s and the West’s existence (...) Insofar as this Arab has any history, it is part of the history given to him (or taken from him: the difference is slight) by the Orientalist tradition” (1978, p. 286).

Said argues that it is the mechanisms of representation that construct the “Eastern” man and woman as evil; the history created about the Arabs through the European gaze is always used to support this political representation of the Arabs. As was the case throughout history, my concern is that to one degree or another, this remains the case in Euro-American representations of the Arab world, as the political situation remains fundamentally unchanged from what it was at the time Said authored his treatise. The “East-West” frame is structured and constructed in a way that produces a binary which serves a hegemonic discourse, as well as political practices produced to perpetuate Western power. Raka Shome advances the argument that it is the “White West” most stands to benefit from these representations of the other, by granting it a central and privileged role in the European worldview (1996). The purpose of this writing is simply to lay the groundwork, via hegemonic discourses, to enable the implementation of hegemonic practices. For Shome, the main question pertaining to the post-colonial project is the following: “how do

Western discursive practices, in their representations of the world and of themselves, serve to legitimize the contemporary global power structures?”(1996, p.505). Today, the primary justification of imperialism is discourse. While historical modes of imperialism exercised control over “the native” via territorial expansion, contemporary modes of imperialism rely instead on colonization achieved discursively (Shome, 1996, p. 505). I argue that the misrepresentation of Arab males is concurrently employed by representing Arab women in a way to strengthen the hierarchical structure of the Euro-American. In effect, European notions of Arab and Muslim women as sexually submissive are reproduced and reinforced through misrepresentation. As an example, in the 19th-century concept of sexually submissive women is seen in the Orientalist slave market and harem images, while in the 21st century, the concept of cultural submissiveness is perpetuated through fixation on the veil. This example stresses that the female subject is denied agency and made to be a submissive object of the male gaze. Through this, male dominance in the socio-economic hierarchy is deeply reinforced.

Said opens the space to speak about representation and gender. However, he does not theorize about it himself; many feminists and others have argued by drawing on his work that the representation of Orientalized gender is equally important in the way Western modernity discourses constitute them. Nevertheless, a feminist reading of one of the cases in Said’s text is the encounter between a French novelist Flaubert and an Egyptian prostitute Kuchuk Hanem (Said, 1978, p.6). The recounting of this meeting is taken to describe the “typical Oriental woman”: one who avoids talking about herself, or displaying her emotions, and understates her very existence, including all her own life history. Flaubert, a relatively rich, Western male, enjoys the exclusive privilege of authoritatively discussing and describing Kuchuk Hanem. This domination enables Flaubert first to possess a woman, going as far as to speak on her behalf, while claiming the right to list all the attributes that go into making her “typically Oriental”. Said argues that Flaubert modeled a pattern rather than an isolated instance, wherein the Western man

finds himself, whether or not by his own doing, in a position of strength relative to his counterpart. This pattern reflects the power dynamics between “East” and “West” and the resulting narratives about the so-called “Orient”. To sum up, in his detailed descriptions of her as a “typical Oriental woman”, Flaubert speaks for Kuchuk Hanem, rather than enabling her or allowing her simply to do it for herself. Thus, in so doing, this contrasting representation, particularly of Arab versus European women, fits seamlessly into the overall system of “Orient-Occident” power relations. Of course, this includes all discourses employed both to create and to sustain these power “Orient-Occident” over relations.

The example of Flaubert and Hanem offers a clear understanding of how the Arab woman's description was an integral part of colonial discourse. As I previously pointed out, the representation of women in such a discourse needs to be critically examined. However, considering the fact that Said focuses on the man and not the notion of gender in a very specific way is simultaneously limiting us to understand the use of women through the work of Said. Therefore, beyond the general discussion of representation by Said's work, one can consider a feminist perspective on the issue of representation. Reading Orientalism through the feminist lens allows us to investigate the role that gender plays in the larger orientalist narrative. A potential explanation would be to investigate at the historical events as much of what happened of interventions in the Arab world was in the legitimacy of helping women. When discussing the Arabs' representation, we must grapple with the notion of gender, specifically the way that sympathy for presumably vulnerable Arab and Muslim women can be used to justify colonialism and imperialism. As it turns out, images, discourse, and foreign policy, even human rights movements, clearly use gendered depictions in a deeply problematic way when discussing issues related to the Arab world. Hence, one can argue that this depiction is profitable to the military, political and economic interventions in the Arab region; these depictions echo the tired clichés of Orientalism in ways to justify continued neo-imperial intervention. Paradoxically, these so-called “saving women” initiatives have not had any material

impact on the status of women in affected areas; consider that the general status of women in places like Iraq and Syria have worsened while in other areas like Afghanistan, there have been negligible improvements in the rights of women.

The exposition and critical analysis of Western assumptions about culture or race are central to the project of illuminating general usage of the term “woman”. This usage is often associated with certain thoughts such as the subjective nature of representation, victimization under patriarchy, and the advance of feminism outside the West (Roshanravan, 2014). In her influential article, titled “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses”, Chandra Mohanty (1988) discusses the construction of a uniform “third world” woman, as an object of experience “as a singular monolithic subject in some recent (Western) feminist texts” (p.331). Mohanty agrees with Said that Western academia has consistently depicted “Third World women,” in its literary, scholarly, and media content, as a unified, homogeneous group which includes traits such as ignorant, illiterate, destitute, and lower-class victims of their so-called superiors, who were able to impose on them a kind of life of sexual captivity. I align myself with Mohanty argument on how this representation amounts to a “coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location, or contradictions, (and) implies a notion of gender or sexual difference or even patriarchy which can be applied universally and cross-culturally” (1988, p.337). This monolithic approach fails to consider the immense complexity and diversity of Arab culture, owing to a high degree of ignorance on the subject. There is no direct relationship, in terms of identity, correspondence, or implication, between, first, women as “historical objects,” and second, women as represented by Western scholars in hegemonic discourses surrounding the archetypical “Eastern Woman”. Given the diversity, taken as a whole, of women in the third world, any single representation of the “Third World Woman” could, at best, only ever be an arbitrarily determined composite. This singular representation fatally undermines its creators’ claim with regards to its perfect accuracy. This

representation is flawed, but it features in the endorsement of, and inclusion in, the full canon of Western humanist discourse (Mohanty, 1988).

According to Mohanty, “Third World Women” are conceptualized as one, homogeneous group, deprived of any power. For example, the third world women are collectively represented as helpless victims of the social and economic systems at play in their lives and communities. Mohanty finds that those women that appear in literature are portrayed as victims of one or many of the following force. At any given time: male violence; the colonial process; the Arab familial system; and Sharia law. Mohanty helpfully cites the following quotation from Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar: “Feminist theories which examine our cultural practices as 'feudal residues' or label us 'traditional,' also portray us as politically immature women who need to be versed and schooled in the ethos of Western feminism. They need to be continually challenged” (1988, p.7). The previous quote suggests that women are categorized in various ways before any analysis is ever conducted, meaning that labels covertly affect every stage of the analytical process. My concern is with the representation of Arab women using narratives and stereotypes that serve to position Euro-American women as superior to their Arab counterparts. These representations create an artificial image of Arab women as oppressed, passive, and in need of help. My intention to use the previous examples is to demonstrate how the dichotomous process is similar to the binary discourses that differentiate Euro-American men. Of course, these prefabricated judgments, which take the form of rigid labels, are not appropriate to every case. In fact, they can very well act in a pernicious way upon the analyst's effort to retain his or her objectivity. Despite this, European feminists have constructed a one-dimensional picture of powerless and oppressed third-world women who need external protection and a voice.

Historically speaking, the colonizer's creation of “otherness” involves both the negative generalization of his colonial subjects and the fervent and consistent application of these generalizations

in their daily lives. This is vital in conceptually separating the Arabs from the Europe, to further enable the consequences of colonialism on the Arabs. The impacts of the discourses on the subject of the “Orient”, moreover; ripple through all the rest of the academic fields, including the use and generation of language. This distinction between the “Orient” and the “Occident” provides Euro-American scholars with a definition of the “East” that is vastly more useful than any other provided in either European or American knowledge production about Arabs.

Defining the West as “the center” requires defining all others as “the periphery”. Western feminism commonly descends into imperialism because its proponents commit the serious error of affirming their own culture as superior to that of all non-Western ones (Mohanty, 1988). In this way, the acceptable norm is held to be totally synonymous with Western culture; all other cultures being expected to admire, emulate, and assimilate themselves to it. It is that notion that operationally, it provides power to the Western discourse, first ideologically, then politically and militarily, entailing all of the predictable consequences, enabling the creation of people in the Arab and elsewhere as “the other” (Mohanty, 1988).

Mohanty and Said share in common the concept of self-representation via the representation of “the other”. Mohanty explained the concept of self-representation where “women” and “the East” is defined as “others,” or as peripheral, where the “Western” man represents himself as the center. It is not the center that determines the periphery, but the periphery that, in its boundedness, determines the center” (Mohanty, 1988, p.353). Like Mohanty, I argue that people define themselves from the outside in this way. By contrast, Western women defined themselves as educated and have more 'freedom to make their own decisions” (Mohanty,1988, p. 337). In contrast, as opposed to “the ignorant, uneducated, tradition-bound, family-oriented, victimized” (Mohanty,1988, p. 337), all are necessarily reserved for the average third-world woman. My primary concern here is that the descriptors applied to the Arab women effectively facilitate and privilege those European women who can claim to be the center. An example of what I mean

is the generalization on the “Third World Other” that allows European feminists to represent themselves through discourse as sexually uninhibited, open-minded, and always in sovereign control of their own bodies and lives.

Both Said and Mohanty discuss the third world in terms of a shared vocabulary, which necessarily implies the following two assumptions: first, women “cannot represent themselves”, and second, “they must be represented”. Both authors reference and challenge Karl Marx’s argument that: “They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented”. With this in mind, the idea of Karl Marx is reflected in the way Euro-American feminists articulate Arab and Muslim women and how they view themselves as needing to “save the hopeless Eastern women”. Unreservedly, through their actions, Euro-American feminists feel obliged to represent, speak for, and express concerns for the Arab Muslim women. Consequently, this presumption then serves to empower those Euro-American women at the expense of others.

This offers a clear understanding of how the depiction of Muslim women as oppressed and yearning to be liberated is a staple of the Orientalist representations of them. This depiction simply justifies imperialism by rationalizing the colonial domination of “primitive” peoples as flowing unavoidably from their evident inability to govern themselves. Therefore, misrepresentations serve to justify military interventions and other efforts to assert Western control in and of the region. Given the above circumstances, challenging these narratives is not just about the subjugation or the formation of a dichotomous world; it is about how the knowledge is produced in a way to maintain narratives grounded in traditional Orientalist depictions. As it turns out, all this leads to a certain understanding of misrepresentation and its crucial role, especially in the form of Orientalist imagery on the subject of Muslim women. They are reliably described in terms of muteness and oppression while the Muslim men are considered as threats, in relation to the broader themes of militarism and civilizing missions (i.e.,

evangelism). We must understand how women are used in different discourses to support a political or cultural superiority of the other.

SELF-ORIENTALISM – ASSIMILATING THE WESTERN “TAGREEB”

“You forget where I’m coming from. I was a Muslim; I know what I’m talking about” (Ayaan Hirsi Ali)

Said problematizes assumptions in “Western” archives and literature about the external, “Eastern other,” which seems to indicate that a similar approach could theoretically apply to self-Orientalism. At the end of *Orientalism*, Said discusses the increasing frequency with which “Orientals” themselves employ Western tropes about the Orient: “(The) pages of books and journals in Arabic (and doubtless in Japanese, various Indian dialects, and other Oriental languages) are filled with second-order analyses by Arabs of ‘the Arab mind,’ ‘Islam,’ and other myths” (Said, 1978, p. 322). Said conducted no deep analysis of the possibility of self-Orientalism. Those constituted as “Easterners” would adopt standard “Western” stereotypes for themselves; however, he did open space for other post-colonial authors to extend their inquiries into this phenomenon. These scholars go on to unpack the concept of self-Orientalism as a form of violence, wherein Arabs internalize Orientalist notions first articulated by Euro-American, only through a different epistemology.

Self-Orientalism is a device for Indigenous intellectuals and political elites to construe and present themselves – to themselves, to each other, and to the world – in accordance with the prevailing Orientalist script. These discursive practices of the West revived longstanding “East-West” dichotomies. Moreover, problematic contradictions were seeded within the Arabs' ranks, in addition to the ones already existing between “East-West”. At some point, Arabs began to deploy erotic self-representations, featuring fetishized depictions of their people, in line with Orientalist lore.

A practical representational strategy to build a “true Eastern identity”, called “Self-Orientalism,” is an idea that was developed by adapting the imagery and language of Orientalism. I argue that Eastern people internalized Western concepts, as well as European perceptions of themselves, which also, in turn, became an actual feature of the collective identity. As Behdad and Williams explain, “Middle Eastern writers, scholars, and so-called ‘experts’ not only participate in its production but also play an active role in propagating it” (Behdad, 2010, p. 284). Indeed, classical Orientalists were typically male European scholars and artists, but neo-Orientalists are more likely to be from the Arab region who derive their sense of authority from their ethnic or national backgrounds. Iwabuchi (1994) makes the point that “while Orientalism enjoys the mysterious exoticism of the Other, self-Orientalism exploits the Orientalist gaze to turn itself into another” (p.14). In light of this, one can recognize that self-orientalism gains more recognition by being endorsed and enforced by the others. In fact, self-orientalist authors assume that pushing a similar agenda to the Europe will allow them to approach the Western culture they are appealing to. However, the self-orientalists’ discourses are mainly recognized by the Europe because it is a useful tool in preserving the hegemonic structure.

As discussed earlier, Orientalism is usually a process whereby European actors engage in a knowledge production process that works to others and demonize the Arabs. Self-Orientalism flips this process on its head and instead results in a process where individuals in the Arab world engage in self-othering through the internalization of the Western system of thoughts of thinking (Komel, 2012, p. 355). Accordingly, I find that self-orientalist narratives are a discourse that aligns itself with the European colonial ideology that constructs the Europe as a central, ideal, and universal entity. As a result, the European has no monopoly on the fetishizing of “the other,” as the “East”, too, indulges in it as a widespread cultural practice. Crucially, this re-establishes the binary paradigm through which everything European is taken for granted as the dominant, ever-present, prescriptive, universal norm. This process is

seen as one of deliberately making oneself subservient to others. Kirecci describes the objectives of self-Orientalism as a “willful locating of the self... below the dominating other,” which arises when a culture perceives itself to be in decline (Kirecci, 2007, p. 226). I conceive of self-Orientalism as a form of self-degradation, where the culture externally projects its insecurities and sense of decline. Therefore, a plausible explanation of the reason for this discrepancy is that “the other” is unrecognizable to himself or herself, in the projected imaginations of Westerners, and therefore suffers the insult of either misrepresentation or under-representation, from his or her perspective.

At present, I argue that instead of identifying themselves in opposition to an “other,” authors such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali risk orientalizing their own culture in a craven pursuit of Western support and promotion. Certain Arab-American authors, including Wafaa Sultan, Nonie Darwish, and Walid Shoebat, having internalized false European discourses about Arabs and their culture, eventually came to see themselves in the light that was cast on them by their Euro-American colonizers. I bring attention to how these writers integrated many Euro-American viewpoints into their own ideological systems, particularly Euro-American criticism of the Arab region and especially Muslim people. In their efforts to form a movement of opposition to the colonial administration, its ideology, and its real-world power – i.e., the so-called “party-state” – they even borrow arguments from Orientalism itself. To demonstrate this, it surely suffices to note the plethora of Arab-American academic writings that describe the commonplace hesitation of non-White colonial subjects to celebrate Arab values, based on their internalization of what essentially amounts to Western bigotry. My concern is that these authors leverage their personal experience, as Muslims or ex-Muslim, to claim a certain level of expertise, lending credibility to their strident denunciations of Islam and of the Arab writ large. An example of what I mean is the Egyptian American human rights activist and ex-Muslim, Nonie Darwish, who strongly affirms the concept of Islam

as a backward religion that deserves to be “annihilated,” on account of being a “poison to society”.

Darwish’s words are stinging:

A mosque is not just a place for worship... It’s a place where war is started, where commandments to do jihad start, where incitements against non-Muslims occur. It’s a place where ammunition was stored. (Darwish as cited in Goodstein, 2010, p. 4).

There is a self-Orientalist reductionist wave, which is apparent in feminist literature as well. Hailing from Somalia, Hirsi Ali converted to atheism in the wake of the tragedy that took place in New York City on September 11, 2001. Indeed, since then, she has consistently and energetically promulgated the notion that Islam cannot be reconciled with democratic values and practices. Hirsi Ali wrote an English-language short drama, produced in Holland, titled “Submission”. This work follows the lives of four Muslim women, all of whom are cast as subjugated victims. It invites its audience to indulge in vast amounts of outrage and pity on their behalf. De Leeuw and Wichelen (2005) produced a detailed analysis of Hirsi Ali’s work in *Submission*, summarizing it as the somber tale of four defenseless young Muslim women, deprived of agency in their lives, who “submit” themselves to Allah. Moreover, the movie features a sensual female voice, in addition to American English and even nudity, in a scene where Hirsi Ali appears naked, under a transparent veil. Taken together, all this gives Hirsi Ali’s film a soft-core pornographic quality. The movie thus borrows heavily from Western orientalist imagery, going even so far as to incorporate aspects of Western misogyny by depersonalizing women’s bodies and construing them as objects of desire and lust (De Leeuw & Wichelen, 2005).

Curiously, Hirsi Ali claimed to have made the film for Muslim women. Nevertheless, she chose to screen it in the West, specifically for Dutch spectators. In Holland, where its chances of being seen by her declared target audience were virtually nil. Therefore, the impact of “Submission,” unfortunately, was to reinforce orientalist ideas and confirm stereotypes of the Muslim “other” in the minds of Hirsi Ali’s Dutch

and, more broadly, Western followers (De Leeuw & Wichelen, 2005). Like Leeuw and Wichelen, I have the perception that Submission's overall depiction of the Arabic landscape, wherein Islam is framed as "despotic," by nature, revives Orientalist tropes that have been present in Europe going back more than two hundred years. I argue that the objective of the proposed narrative concerning the "oppressed Muslim woman" is not merely the liberation of conquered women, but the destruction of Islam itself; these writers reaffirm the Orientalist dichotomy between US/European supremacy and Arab region mediocrity.

In this sense, a number of Arab authors took to selling back to Europe the very ideological products that these colonized Arabs were forced to buy from their European colonizers in the not-so-distant past. As I pointed out, Hirsi Ali and others adopted narratives created by Euro-Americans about the "Orient," in many cases stretching back hundreds of years, practically wholesale. Furthermore, they promoted these discourses in the Euro-American, which amounted to the confirmation, in the colonizer's mind, on behalf of the colonized people themselves, of all the worst possible stereotypes about them. In the Euro-American, cultural conservatives cherish supremacist representations and fervently work together, via the conception and implementation of various strategies and programs. I argue that these representations are used to confirm that the United States of America triumphs over what passes, in their view, for an existential threat to the whole of "Western civilization". Paradoxically, Euro-American policymakers, who tend to conflate the terms "East" and "Muslim", while they call for American intervention in the Arab region and a more punitive suite of actions against Muslims at large, they are also known to call for special measures to bear down on United States' citizens, who are of Arab descent, or who declare adherence to the Muslim faith (Yaghi, 2015). Alternatively, one can argue that such calls for military intervention and coherent course of action against Muslims should be followed up with open arms to ensure the help is effective. Yet, one can acknowledge that the notion of helping Muslims/Arabs often takes place far from home rather than within the borders of Western societies.

I should stress that when referring to native female detractors, I purposefully mean scholars/writers who use Orientalists' visions to support the Euro-American ideology on the Arab world. Those native informants, who earn credit as so-called “good Muslims”, at least in the view of Europeans, and who seek confirmation anywhere of the threat posed by Islam to both women, and the West more broadly (Alsultany, 2013). Sunaina Maira summarizes the concept of the “good Muslim” in the following words: “By definition, 'good' Muslims are public Muslims who can offer first-person testimonials, in the mode of the native informant, about the oppression of women in Islam... and the hatred, racism, and anti-Semitism of Arabs and Muslims. These Muslim spokespersons are the darlings of the right-wing and mainstream media, publish widely distributed books, and have slick websites” (Maira, 2009). Thus, like Alsultany, I argue that, in order to boil down complex representations into their simplest possible forms, victims with either Arab or Muslim identities, and ideally both, become necessary in order to enable consumers of this narrative to sympathize with Western invasion as an example (2013). Self-orientalism is a discourse that repeats the central Orientalist ideas where Arabs and Muslims are bundled together into a singular entity. Through this, the “East” is seen as forming one and uniform whole; this whole is then misrepresented as being comprised of cultural and religious conservatives, who are bent on the destruction of fundamental Western democratic institutions. Therefore, this evidence suggested that self-orientalism discourses aimed at Western readers.

It is difficult to imagine the reasons behind any person’s motivation to endorse negative stereotypes about their own culture. The European and American imaginary’s content on Arabs may have found its way into the self-imagery of Arabs themselves, leaving little difference between this process of self-orientalism, and the overall impact of “Western” thought itself. The process of self-orientalism criticizes the Eastern self and reforms the larger culture of the East (Zhong, 2012).

On the one hand, each pole of this spectrum, ranging from orientalism to self-orientalism, features the dichotomy between agreement with the Europe, on the other hand, and resistance to it. My point is that this particular system produces two assumptions; one is the centrality of the West, where it concerns civilization, liberty, and progress, and the second is the backwardness of the East since it displayed symptoms of what Europeans took to be barbarism and autocracy. Given the compulsion to conform to the political, economic, and cultural norms dictated by their “Western” colonizers, economically disadvantaged. Non-Western parties were left with the “West’s value system” as the only recourse for self-expression. According to Zhong, the best descriptive term for modern East-West cultural development, both mentality and identity, is “domination” (Zhong, 2012). Moreover, it ultimately cements Western cultural hegemony, by conceding to the European its superiority over the Arabs, encouraging the latter’s unmitigated surrender to the former (Zhong, 2012).

A potential explanation is that native authors have internalized the dominated values and way of thinking in an unconscious desire to fit within the Western social and academic superstructure. Consequently, these authors have become disconnected from the oppressed group. By this, we mean that these authors, by adopting the Western views, feel entitled to transform from the “Other” into the Westerner and ultimately gain validation, recognition, and acceptance. This process perhaps has occurred without these authors considering the possibility of ongoing distortion of the self. This discourse springs from a global imbalance in the production of knowledge. Fanon also attempts to elucidate the rationale behind many black people’s desire to don white skin; the explanatory value of racial neurosis surpasses that of racial alienation, in that individuals are not only separated from their own “blackness,” which is objectified for them but are also made to understand this blackness through the lens of so-called “white values” (Hook, 2004, p. 127).

I find that the process of internalized racism, where individuals consciously or unconsciously perceive their race in a negative stereotype compared to the other race, results in the sense of disapproval and shame of their race. In a desire to be visible from the superior race, they start to perceive themselves through the eye of the others, wish to reject their association to that culture, and ultimately start to distance themselves from their culture. This “double consciousness” process that Fanon described as the adoption of the Western hegemonic lens as an aspiration to be recognized and accepted by the dominator. With the Western gaze deeply fastened in their thinking, instead of challenging the hegemonic structural system that is imposed upon their race, they considered themselves privileged to impose the same structure upon their people. This implicit mechanism of racism that results in violence of the mind through the subject internalizing the negative social pressures of racism and oppression. In fact, racism can be seen as a mental process that occurs in the victim’s minds, where the oppressors can perpetuate oppression within the minds of the oppressed, then their power will never be called into question.

Egyptian author Sayyid Qutb estimates that the colonization of the mind is far more hazardous to a people than either economic or political colonialism. Either are both suitable for relatively swift elimination through the exertion of physical violence or military force. For Qutb, humanity in general, and the Islamic world in particular, are most threatened by the colonization of souls, minds, and bodies.

What a shame! Those Muslims, who emulate the orientalist, pass on as the high brow intellectuals and masters of Islamic thought, while at the same time they are produced according to the models provided by Zionists (Sayyid Qutb as cited in Samman, 2015, p.

166)

European identity was built on the geopolitical control of Europeans over their numerous colonies and their representational domination over colonial subjects, which was used with abandon to justify the Western suppression of a shadowy, lesser “other”. One needs to consider how the damages resulting from

the adoption of the orientalist representations, which extended from colonial politics, are neutralized by this newfound awareness now dwelling in formerly colonized populations, including those still residing in colonized spaces and those living abroad, struggling to build their identity in exile (Bjelić, 2009). Cultures of the third world are endangered, according to Said, by the trends and doctrines of Western modernization in market economics, consumer culture, and intellectual life:

Its role has been prescribed and set for it as a “modernizing” one, which means that it gives legitimacy and authority to ideas about modernization, progress, and culture that it receives from the United States for the most part. So, if all told there is an intellectual acquiescence in the images and doctrines of Orientalism, there is also a very powerful reinforcement of this in economic, political, and social exchange... the modern Orient, in short, participates in its own Orientalizing (Said, 1978, p. 325).

This describes how the adopting of the Western hegemony thoughts turns oneself into an “Other” (Bullock, 2002). Katherine Bullock, the author of “Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil,” treats the subject of self-orientalism in a way that also defines it as the process by which Arab natives internalize the orientalist view of themselves. Arabs and Muslims were invited to see themselves as being perpetually behind the times, as a culture, their women tainted and dishonored, with only one viable solution: the systematic adoption of Western remedies (Bullock, 2002). Bullock advances the notion of veiling as “a central urgency for elites attempting to ‘catch up’ with the West” (Bullock, 2002). Therefore, I argue that this tactic also provides, for those seeking it, a way to make peace with Euro-American views about reality in the Arab world by affecting a two-way integration of the competing Arab and European narratives about the “Orient”.

Self-Orientalization recognizes “Western supremacy” and “Eastern subordination” as both valid and legitimate. It recommends total and unconditional surrender to the West's cultural dominance,

followed by an ongoing process of self-depreciation and resulting cultural re-organization (Zhong, 2012). The process of mutual Orientalization, within the “East”, occurs when a measure is taken of which country is “more Oriental,” versus “more Western”. In the present, Western-dominated world order, Eastern players self-present themselves in an essentially West-centered discursive structure (Zhong, 2012, p. 2418), according to Zhong;

This proves that both ‘complete westernization or ‘promotion of eastern tradition in the west world’ cannot help the eastern countries establish their self-presentation and self-identity (2012, p. 2418).

A paradox awaits those seeking to abolish colonialism while preserving their adherence to universal human rights. If one wants to protect women and girls from abuse, one will ignore appeals to “respect Indigenous culture,” and will intervene to prevent murders, assaults, kidnappings, rapes, etc. However, if one does intervene to secure the safety of women and children, one does so according to a set of principles that, once again, reflect a history of European hegemony. Ultimately, these questions revolve around whose past is being presented, whose ownership claim over the location of this controversial past will be recognized, and whose right to represent and be represented will be respected as valid. I suspect that when orientalist or self-orientalist urge to save/ liberate women, they do not offer explicit instructions on how they will improve women's situation. However, it seems that Western intervention through either political or military grounds is unhesitatingly the first step taken. This default approach needs to be challenged since it proves that it is not a humanitarian mission but more of a question of maintaining power and authority. What is fascinating here is that Euro-American actions show us that their interest is not saving Arab Muslim women as they claimed; the objective is pursuing the Euro-American geopolitical agenda in the East. I find that their interventions did not deem or guarantee any profit to the Arab Muslim women; yet they sacrificed the women they aimed to protect.

Cruelly, however, Euro-American never genuinely considered these pro-West Arabs reformers and secularists, in any meaningful way, to belong to the West (Darrow, 2013). These colonial loyalists remained castaways of a kind, “different” as a mark of their genesis in the Arab, unable to truly belong to the Western family. Intellectuals in the Arab region embraced Euro-American paradigms, conducting analyses of the historical connections between past and present iterations of the Arabs from the imperial point of view. I think that their works are given value and recognition since they complicit politics and Euro-American power. This leaves room to question if their works would get the same recognition in Euro-American media if they produce different ideology that discusses the Arab fairly?

CONCLUSION

The epistemological constructs one nation develops concerning another are necessary to make sense of a pluralistic global community. There is a need for ongoing to understand the causes of Eurocentric knowledge and its consequences. I emphasize the importance of understanding how gender and knowledge have been aggregated and in what ways it is shaped. The discourse and its representations of the “East-West binary” are problematic; this asymmetry in its structural hierarchy is intended to reinforce their power positions. The notion of knowledge production offers us systematic instruments for the study of the utilization of knowledge in the service of advancing European interests. Orientalism entangles knowledge and power, with harmful effects on certain subjects. In terms of self-orientalism, it is seen as a form of self-degradation where the culture projects its insecurities and sense of decline externally. Self-orientalist thinkers will inevitably fall prey to the same human biases as Orientalist thinkers.

Through these discourses, women's status is used to judge the morality and rationality of the other culture. For example, through the discourse of Orientalism, the depiction of Muslim women as oppressed

and yearning to be liberated, which is a staple of Orientalist representations of them, simply justifies imperialism by rationalizing the colonial domination of “primitive” peoples as flowing unavoidably from their evident inability to govern themselves. Therefore, these misrepresentations serve as a justification for military interventions and other efforts to assert European control in and of the region.

In the following chapter, we will explore the ways through which the representation and typecasting of Arab women take place. Said’s analysis of the discourse is limited due to its lack of deep discussion of gender. Hence, the work of feminists nuances the notion of Orientalism, as well as the relationship between the Arab and the European, by incorporating the question of gender, which in turn also brings to the fore the fact that modernity cannot be challenged without grappling with these dominant epistemologies. The next section examines Arab women's representation in selected works by Malik Alloula and Rana Kabbani to show how images form part of the repository of stereotypes of Muslim and Arab women and how they influence the way European authors, painters, and photographers frame stories about women. In addition, I examine how the Arab women were, for instance, depicted as accessible for the European, which portrays the so-called “Oriental women” as sexually submissive objects and the reason behind such a depiction.

CHAPTER THREE: FEMINIST CRITIQUES OF ORIENTALISM

The power to see while remaining unseen, the power to put others into discourse while remaining unspoken, is a particularly effective form of power. (Fiske, 1996, p. 217)

European representations of Arab women in no way guaranteed even the slightest approximation of the so-called “Eastern reality”. However, they succeeded in defining the “East” in dominant European knowledge systems and thus enabled Europe to control the Arab region. Muslim women, for example, are stereotyped in the European discourse as either exotic sex objects or hopeless victims deprived of all agency. In this part of the dissertation, a variety of feminist critiques of Orientalism are clarified as some of the different means by which the continuation and perpetuation of a patriarchal mode of power are ensured by Orientalism.

Furthermore, relying on Rana Kabbani's and Malik Alloula's discussions of orientalism, this chapter contains an exposition of an argument to the remaining effect of the orientalist discourse. The dominant representations of Arab women, especially in the Euro-American discourse, remain largely identical to the Orientalist discourses that firmly articulated women as sexual objects (i.e., during the Algerian War, the Victorian Era, and the nineteenth century). A discussion of Rana Kabbani's *Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of Orient* is also in order, as it allows for a deeper questioning of the politics of representation of “Eastern women”. Kabbani's book, “Europe's *Myths of Orient*,” offers a detailed description of both the misrepresentation of women and its consequences. I also investigate the ideological grounding the visual constitutions and representations of Algerian women via a reading of Alloula's *The Colonial Harem* (1986).

GENDERING THE EUROPEAN DISCOURSE

Understanding the role of orientalism as a particular mode of critical analysis, is indispensable to decoding the values that go into shaping the various forms of visual representation selected for the discussion (Khalid, 2011, p. 17). This is because Orientalism directly addresses the relationship between Westerners' portrayal of non-Westerners and the consequences of these portrayals on the material power relations between “East-West”. For example, the gendering of Western representations of non-Westerners must be examined, as it has consistently been successfully employed in order to achieve the aims of white European supremacy. One must first question the so-called “truths” in order to challenge the authority of both gendered and Orientalist discourses and the power relations upon which this “knowledge” rests.

One may wonder why gender is of such importance in both territorial politics and its expression in literature. We may also ask about the benefits versus the costs of connecting gender to Orientalist discourse, in terms of the empowerment of or control over women. Anyone perceived as non-European by Western colonizers – most acutely women – are depicted as sexually voracious creatures. According to Loomba, “The non-European woman also appears in an intractable version, as ‘Amazonian’ or deviant femininity... provide images of insatiable sexuality and brutality (1998, p. 154)

Europeans took advantage of their empires' frontiers to break their usual rules concerning sex (Loomba, 1998). Sexual morals were constrained to rigid codes and protocols that often felt stifling; hence, foreign lands and peoples provided the opportunity to escape everyday life in the Europe, particularly where it concerns the generation of new sexual experiences. This made life in the Arab world a tempting and even exciting prospect; however, it also typecast Arabs as a monstrously hedonistic lot. Loomba here describes the suppositions at play: “For most European travellers and colonialists, however, the promise of sexual pleasure rested on the assumption that the darker races or non-Europeans were immoral, promiscuous, libidinous and always desired white people” (1998, p. 158)

Feminists' critics speak about the sexualized uses of women's bodies and their transformation into instruments of profit generation (Alloula, 1986; Kabbani, 1986). This is borne out by the vast catalog of imagery concerning Arab and Muslim males, which emphasizes their supposedly intrinsically negative qualities, such as deception, tyranny, and fanaticism. Women, of course, fare no better, reduced to ever-inscrutable objects of oppression. The biases and misunderstandings that underpin European "knowledge" about the Arab world are heavily invested in European images of Arab women. Arab women are represented as browbeaten and subjugated victims of their culture, their men, and their faith. Accordingly, it is always the case that white men (and "their" women) are responsible for "saving" and "liberating" the most pathetic imaginable population: brown women. The European is fixated on an image of Arab women as sufferers, which leads European to assume their moral superiority, resulting in the consolidation of European cultural supremacy.

Khalid explains the way in which orientalism relied on frames, such as "civilization versus barbarism," in order to advance the representation of Arab women as helpless victims whose freedom and liberty depend on the European colonial "civilizing mission" (2011, p. 18). Khalid underlines that "masculinity" is acceptable because it is controlled and powerful. Armed force enables you to destroy the enemy while kindness and compassion are invoked to "save" the oppressed people. American are, in this way, presented as the "savers of Eastern peoples". This is what actually took place; Western discourse is marshaled into a gendering process that works as follows: first, gender differences and a variety of gender roles to create a set of identities for all parties involved in the development of colonialism. Second, establishing the identity of the child-like female Other, who requires rescuing from the barbarian male counterparts, at the hands of saintly European patriarchs (2011, p. 18).

It is perhaps precisely that European discourse concerning the Arabs relies on a grand narrative centered on the notion of "saving and protecting" non-European women. This narrative, in turn, relies on

the propagation of representations that portray Arab men and Islam as inherently violent towards women. According to Miriam Cooke, the misrepresentations of non-Euro-American women are impossible without imperial and colonial logic:

To defend our universal civilization we must rescue the women. To rescue these women we must attack these men. These women will be rescued not because they are more ‘ours’ than ‘theirs’ but rather because they will have become more ‘ours’ through the rescue mission. [...] In the Islamic context, the negative stereotyping of the religion as inherently misogynist provides ammunition for the attack on the uncivilized brown men (2002, p. 468).

In essence, Cook admits the aim of a rescue mission to assimilate Muslim women by attacking Islamic logic and defending the so-called “Western liberal values”.

FRAMING THE “OTHER”: A HEGEMONIC VISUALITY – MALIK ALLOULA

It does not speak... it is spoken. (Alloula, 1986, p. 120)

Malik Alloula is an Algerian post-colonial author. Alloula challenges French imperialism and colonialism through detailed analysis in his masterwork, *The Colonial Harem (Le Harem Colonial: Images d'un Sous-érotisme)*. He undertakes a feminist critique of orientalism by deconstructing depictions of Algerian women during the French colonial era. In the midst of the French colonization in Algeria, conquering French made gifts of pictures of semi-clothed Arab women to their relatives back home. This was taken to be an effective way of presenting an accurate image of everyday life in Algeria, which is a form of representation. In discussing the French colonial postcards, Alloula stretches Said's analysis of the “East” and its gender. While the methodology is different in both works, I find that Alloula's position is in agreement with Said's *Orientalism*. The more we read Alloula, the more similarities we see with the

mode of thinking in Said's work. Yet, in contrast to Said's understanding of Orientalism, Alloula's analysis provides a space to underscore and exposes the importance of gender. The choice to reproduce the naked images of these women, Alloula tells us, is not a coincidence, and it is not so universal either. The constitutive discourses of the Arabs depend on sex and gender to stabilize even a notion of it. Alloula's intervention with the postcards as a site of the constitution of orientalist discourses through women allows us to highlight how modernity and the “occidentals” as its expression depend on gender for their dichotomization of the world and their possibility in relation to the “orient” and the Arab world.

Drawing on Alloula, one can see that the discourse around women has a long history. For example, Said mentions how women were captured; notwithstanding, he did not elaborate enough on how that played a role in the discourse of Orientalism. Alloula frames the French application of power to generate orientalist “knowledge” about Algeria through the postcards, and particularly its women, as an exercise of control over a colonized land and bodies. In this way, we can say that Alloula and Said agree on the role of Orientalism:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said, 1978, p. 3).

Alloula claimed that the content of these photographed postcards produced by a French photographer between the 1900s and 1930s, contrary to their implicit promise, revealed little to nothing about the subjects themselves. Instead, the postcards revealed the photographer’s fanciful depictions of Algerian women, including his specific and personal desires, and clearly exposed modern consumers to the contemporary colonial template for these women (and their people). He summarizes the overarching

project vis-à-vis colonialism and orientalism, identifying the mission of his book as “return(ing) this immense postcard to its sender” (1986, p. 5). According to Alloula, the Western imperialist (erotic) imagery of the women of Algeria accomplishes the two following goals: (1) discovering both the basis and the significance of such Orientalist representations; and (2) destroying the fundamental pillars underlying the stereotypes bound up with “Eastern” female bodies (1986, p. 5). Alloula’s use of the concept of representation is more novel than Said’s, as the former analyzes the notion of representation with all its connections to gender, where the latter leaves the matter unstudied. We can see that Alloula’s use of Said’s analytical framework still enables him to treat the subject of gender. In fact, Alloula’s work benefits greatly from the application of Said’s Orientalist concept, which offers the basis for his analysis of graphic representations and their connection to the exploitation of women. Therefore, besides other similarities, it becomes apparent that the main objective of both Alloula and Said’s work is to challenge the idea of “historical accuracy,” particularly vis-à-vis problematic and exploitative constitutions and representations of Arab societies.

The *Colonial Harem* offers a critical reading of the colonial postcard from Algeria, claiming them to be false and degrading representations of Algerian women. He denounces as both untrue and demeaning (i.e., to Algerian women) the orientalist signals and messages implied and expressed in such colonial materials. Alloula explores how photography enables a form of voyeurism, which produces knowledge of the “other” (Alloula, 1986). In effect, the images in postcards that purported to display a certain subject matter (i.e., harem women) are actual images of exploited women – prostitutes or other impoverished women forced to pose for the photographer’s lens. As Alloula illustrates in his book, these images frequently create forms of a false knowledge that either fetishizes the subject matter or use outright factual errors in the annotation of such photographs.

One needs to understand first the hidden motives behind producing these postcards. In this optic, Alloula visualizes the dark photography room as a place of will fulfillment: the photographer can satisfy his desires and “scopic instincts” in the relative peace of his colonial refuge. The interest of the producers of these cards centered on the profit motive and in satiating Europe appetites for graphic representations of the East, rather than on the generation of race-neutral, precise renditions of life in the “East” (Geary, 1988, p. 11). European photographers took part in constituting and building the conceptual Arabs and disseminated Orientalist discourse throughout the world in their delivery of the so-called “knowledge” pertaining especially to Algerian women. In particular, the fact that so many of the Algerian women depicted were only half-clothed created the false impression that Algerian women as a whole were sexually available, which concurs with Said’s idea that non-Western women were pictured as “erotic and exotic objects” because “women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all, they are willing” (Said, 1978, p. 207). Through Alloula’s lens, these postcards are intended to relay information based on the producer’s frameworks biases and colonialist worldview. These are frameworks or epistemological framings of what is constituted as the “East” in order to make possible for a certain project. Alloula effectively demonstrates the way in which a photographer can employ the same template for any number of different places, people, and circumstances:

In a set of three documents in which the same model, wearing the same outfit, photographed by the same photographer at the same location, represents in turn a “Young Beduin? Woman,” a “Young Woman from the South,” and a “Young Kabyl Woman” (1986, p. 62).

In fact, generalization is the necessary element; it is the monolithic representation of Algerian women that regardless of their location, they were represented as a sexual object. The *Colonial Harem* expounds the

theory that the women featured in these colonial postcards were trapped by the photographer's "controlling gaze," denied any connection to their own true identities, and converted into sexual objects to be offered as a material for the consumption and enjoyment of Western audiences. In Alloula's words:

In her semblance on the postcard, the model is simultaneously the epiphany of this absent woman and her imaginary takeover. The perfection and the credibility of the illusion are ensured by the fact that the absent other is, by definition, unavailable and unable to issue a challenge (1986, p. 17).

In the above quote, Alloula insists that via the representation on the postcard of an Algerian woman, the "real" Algerian woman is absent from the frame. Consequently, her agency is also denied. While European photographers identified Algerian females as sexually promiscuous, bare-breasted prisoners of their domestic environments, the reality on the ground struck back hard: as Alloula pointed out, with appropriate zeal, these women were in fact covered head-to-toe in veils, which robbed these voyeuristic colonialists of the much-desired manifestation of their Orientalist fetish. This clearly indicated that during the French colonial era, those photographers had the authority and power not only to produce fabricated knowledge about the Algerian women but to label it as the truth. Through the Saidian lens, I insist that the construction known as "the orient" could never be a "free subject," which could be thought about or acted upon (Said, 1978, p. 3). While it cannot alone define the content produced about the Arabs, orientalism is the system of interests that are interconnected with any treatment of this conceptual object (i.e., "the orient").

Alloula's observation that the French postcards intimated the sexual availability of Algerian women further corroborates Said's reflection on the Western obsession with female sexuality. This purported outlook of Arab women on sex was held to be in direct opposition to that of European women,

who were understood to be culturally and morally superior. The failure of the colonizer to enable women to speak for themselves is brought up in Said's invocation of Flaubert's treatment of Egyptian women:

(P)roduced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. He spoke for and represented her.... My argument is that Flaubert's situation of strength in relation to Kuchuk Hanem was not an isolated instance. It fairly stands for the pattern of relative strength between East and West, and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled (Said, 1978, p. 6).

I argue that while Said raises the question of Flaubert and his treatment of women, he collapses the women into his broader argumentative point. In so doing, Said does not push far enough to show how such framings of orientalism are not just about the Arabs in general, but its agents of production of knowledge depend on gender identifications and sorting.

Considering Said's brief analysis of Flaubert, the French postcards featuring Algerian women figure as a discourse that crystallizes Europe superiority over a non-European "other," and a method by which France was able to bring clarity to its power relationship with Algeria. Europeans commonly saw North Africans as inferior, individually, and collectively, which meant that European tutelage would be required in order to bring the lesser civilizations into the modern age. In this way, while Algerian women were sexually objectified, Europeans were viewed as progressive causes and proxies of civilization itself. As mentioned previously, this dynamic is problematic because of its involvement in the erection of imperial discourse by the integration of the obsessive narratives vis-à-vis Arab women and carrying out of the civilization mission. These postcards can be labeled as a distortion of the truth. In accordance with Said's expectations, the postcards provide fodder for the rearrangement of the colonized Arab societies and serve to both exemplify and strengthen orientalism theory and practice. The "Western" method of representing the "East" does more, according to Said, than merely distort "Eastern" cultural

configurations, but it also creates new historical and political “knowledge,” with novel importance, for its own ends.

Some of these photographs of scantily clad, “hijab-free” Arab women clearly reveal their bodies, including their shoulders and chest, affording spectators the chance to perpetuate an otherwise forbidden penetration of the ever-present “oriental” veil. When looking at photographs taken by the French soldier of Algerian women, it reflects a form of domination and ownership over both women and the larger Algerian society. In reality, those women were covered by a veil, so that their bodies would never be exposed, and especially not to those soldiers who violated Algeria's land and sacred territorial boundaries. Alloula claimed the following, in this regard:

These veiled women are not only an embarrassing enigma to the photographer but an outright attack upon him (1986, p.14).

The purpose of the veil was not simply to hide the women's identity. The garment used to conceal the private parts of Arab women stood as a sharp rebuke of the colonizer's watchful eye. The wearing of the veil was, in effect, a purposeful choice to reject European imperialism. Thus, Alloula describes the situation: European colonialist photographers attempt the impossible, namely, to “unveil” Algerian women, who would otherwise exist beyond the reach of their prying eyes. Alloula describes a “double violation” at work in the photographer's approach: first, the “unveils the veiled”; and second, he represents the otherwise un-representable (i.e., the “forbidden” figure of naked Algerian women). This is in keeping with the colonialist's desire to conquer and acquire “revenge upon a society” that both refuses to grant him safe entrance into this sphere of domestic Algerian life and utterly denies his right to have such access in the first place. Then, the whole project is one of revenge and conquer: the “world of Algerian women,” locked behind closed doors to Europeans (especially males), breaks open in the photographer's suite (1986, p.16). Alloula emphasizes the fact that the pictured women were usually prostitutes:

The photographer will come up with more complacent counterparts to these inaccessible Algerian women. These counterparts will be paid models that he will recruit almost exclusively on the margins of a society in which loss of social position, in the wake of the conquest and the subsequent overturning of traditional structures, affects men as well as women (invariably propelling the latter toward prostitution) (Alloula, 1986, p. 17).

Alloula's thesis is more comprehensible via an exploration of Fanon's treatise on Algeria's women and the veil that enshrouds them. It enables us to better understand that issues of visibility were deeply involved with European representations of the Arab veil. Frantz Fanon, in his opus, "*Algeria Unveiled*," points out the key role of women for imperialist dominators. Both Alloula and Fanon discussed the representation of the veil during the French colony in Algeria, in particular, the habit of French colonizers of employing playthings of their own (forced) creation to represent all Algerian women. Fanon advances the hypothesis insisting that the unveiling of Algerian women was a form of revenge that the colonizer took upon the colonized for the crime of refusing, as a whole culture, to reveal the secret, sacred parts of its women. In France, the fashion of unveiling women in Algeria was equated with the demolition of oppressive Algerian structures vis-à-vis women. As Fanon puts it; "If we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must, first of all, conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide and, in the houses, where the men keep them out of sight" (Fanon, 1967, p. 163).

The veil acts as a material technology for governing the body and everything else that constitutes the Algerian woman; in fact, the veil becomes one of the essential technologies of governance of Algerian women's bodies. Therefore, to the European imperialist enterprise, the revelation of everything hidden it was a priority in order to target women's bodies. Fanon phrased it in the following way: "The occupier was bent on unveiling Algeria" (Fanon, 1967). In like manner, as Alloula argues, the Algerian women

were depicted as sexual objects, who cannot be “known,” while they are covered by their religious dress and should be unveiled so they can truly be dominated. Visuality and transparency were the European way of conquering these epistemologies; such tools made possible for the European conquest of the Arab region. Through the acquisition of power and control over women in Algeria, and specifically over their bodies, the French thought they possessed the means by which to achieve a permanent victory. The most casual examination of orientalist materials, whether written, painted, or otherwise, quickly reveals women's sexualization as a central and ever-present theme.

However, by rendering the female “other” plainly naked, and apparently accessible for “penetration” by male Westerners seeking to “know” her, the French photographers’ unveiling progression of Algerian women serves metaphorically to demonstrate the workings of male possessive power. This includes the power Europe now held over Arab lands. Alloula’s appraisal of French colonial postcards exposes their collective shortcoming as a definitive historical record of real life in Algeria:

The real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer. ... a representation is eo ipso implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many things besides the “truth”, which is itself a representation (Said, 1978, p. 272).

This representation of women runs up against a figurative “brick wall,” so to speak; there is no chance of either representing or sexually possessing them. Alloula stated that these postcards, insofar as they claim to “mirror” the ostensibly “exotic East”, do more than simply picture half-naked women; in fact, they achieve the colonial aim of justifying colonial violence through “ventriloquial art” (1986, p.120). Alloula described this exercise of one that presents the pictured women as a “truth” made available for the free consumption of people in colonial France. Alloula further expounds on the postcards as a form of degraded art, since it

is never present in what it represents and, as a result, is without specific finality, the postcard derives from colonial discourse its only, rather shabby, justification. Its constitutive illegitimacy turns it into a hollow and malleable form filled with a discourse that it proceeds to amplify by disseminating it widely but in front of which it effaces itself (1986, p. 121)

Altogether, Alloula and Said work to undermine both the validity and credibility of originally European representations of native, non-European subjects. An exploration of both objectives and methodology is obligatory in order to know more about how racist narratives about Arabs ties into the question of the credibility of European discourse. For the French photographers, the postcards were a means of displaying what they saw in the Algerian culture. Alloula distrusted the implied claim that these graphic materials were in any way objective and did his best to convey information about the precise concepts they embodied. Alloula argues that these postcards become a means of validating colonialism and buttressing the racist notion of innate French supremacy over the Algerians. They offer “typical Orientalist iconography,” featuring nude Algerian females, which violates their dignity and cultural identity. One is left to consider whether the influence of printed photographs of real-life individuals is greater than that of a painting, for example, in which case the ethical problem would seem to vanish. “The photograph has a claim to represent reality in a way no artist would claim for a painting” (Kaser, 2013, p. 49).

Alloula and Said claimed graphic representations such as photographs constituted more than a mere image, but accurate cultural descriptors of the “other,” and his or her society. French postcards implied the “fact” that they conveyed an authentic image of routine life in Algeria. Yet, these postcards, erotic as they were, meant to pass for documentary evidence of day-to-day life for Algerian women:

This is a determinant moment for what follows because this is where the machinery, or rather the machination, is set in motion. The entire distorting enterprise of the postcard is

given here in schematic form. It is contained in the gesture of drawing the veil aside, a gesture executed at the photographer's command and destined to be followed by others.

When she completes them, the algérienne will no longer have anything to hide (1986, p.15).

In fact, the postcard is a technology for the governance of knowledge and power. It is used as a tool to unveil the Algerian woman, ready for the eyes of those who receive the cards. In these postcards, the photographer uses his imagination and his assumptions about Algerian women. The seemingly run-of-the-mill actions recorded in the pictures intimated to their consumers that the scenes they contained were ordinary, everyday occurrences. No matter how random the staging may seem, the photographs transmit a message to viewers about Algeria and Algerian people. However, the unexamined element we consider is who truly occupies the place of power from which “knowledge” or “true” assertions about the “strange” and “exotic” nature of Algerian women can be made.

Another way of formulating this is that the look in the eye of Arabs women betrays specific fixed ideas, particularly in the West, of subjects of oppression, repression, subjugation, and sexual eroticism. It is the immoral, demonic, and sexually voracious nature of these women that are featured in descriptions offered in the French postcards. Of course, the irony is that the reverse is, in fact, the case: the violation of Algerian women, as colonial subjects, is the primary aim of these materials. For Alloula, the colonial product encapsulated in French photographers' work, touted as a sort of descriptor of daily life in Algeria, amounted to documentary evidence of some of the various categories of Western violence that were visited upon Algerian society. The bodies of Algerian women are made to be docile and submissive, interesting for being peculiar (i.e., different), mysterious, trifling, and saturated in sex. In this way, Western photographers affect a rather callous conversion of whole and complex human beings (i.e., Algerian women) into mere instruments of the Western empire. A potentially comprehensive explanation of why such an image is essential would be that these instruments enable the European and consumers of such

products generally, to ascertain and validate the supposedly “natural” and inherent superiority of the West. Such portrayals whittled down the substance of the individuals involved in helpless, non-living component parts. Boasting dominion over worthless possessions hardly suits the ruler of a glorious empire, so it may be too simplistic to assume these women were seen as completely worthless. However, they were practically deprived in all these representations of any hint of self-possession, thereby often striking a fatal blow to Arabs subjectivity.

What I want to emphasize is that it is well understood that even though Algeria achieved political independence from France in 1960, the orientalist's mode of thought survived well into the 20th century. Whether past or present, postcards featuring semi-clothed Algerian women tend to confirm the following two things: first, the female body is a predictable metaphor for all things in the exercise of a colonial power; and second, Europe is fixated on the veiled female body. Of course, when the motivations of those producing the images are taken into account, the presentation of the bodies of Arab Muslim females takes on a different meaning. European picture-makers portrayed the Arab region and its people as barbaric, erotic, and altogether mysterious; French postcards reflect the same results. Therefore, it does not suffice to interpret such images as merely “art,” regardless of aesthetic content. Rather, they are constitutive of orientalism and weapons of European imperialism. In *The Colonial Harem*, Alloula exposes the damage done to “East-West” relations by this continued misrepresentation of Arab women by European sources that serve as “a surrogate for and means to the political and military conquest of the Arab world” (1986, p. XV).

It might be argued that the republication of the notorious French postcards is justified to bring the West to a new awareness of its colonial history of dehumanizing Arabs. However, it once again results in the indulgence of voyeurism of (male) spectators, stunned by the vast quantity of images of “people in pain” (Möller, 2010). However, it also profits the publisher, while denying essentially any kind of agency

to those who were used to constitute the postcards. Analyzing Alloula's work opens a space to understand why he paid no heed to the life of the photographic subjects in question (i.e., Algerian women) or how they were coerced into taking part in the Western photographer's project. Instead, he targets the West and focuses relentlessly on the male voyeurs' perceptions. Thus, I argue that Alloula recolonizes these bodies and re-appropriates the violence to constitute a critique that does not rupture the dominant epistemologies of colonization. Accordingly, Alloula's focus on exposing these cards pushes us to wonder why Alloula participated in reproducing these images again. Hence, my concern over the difference between the colonial exercise of power in producing these images in the first place, and Alloula's exercise of power in using them, unfiltered, for his book. I disagree with the way Alloula republishes French erotic postcards. I unhesitatingly acknowledge the importance of revealing how the French colonial orientalist violated Algerian women's rights. Yet, despite that, I find Alloula's work to be problematic.

In the *Colonial Harem*, I argue that Alloula's content decried the harem, as constructed by colonial authorities while following the same process as the Western powers in sexualizing and emphasizing the allure of Arab female subjects. The fundamental issue in Alloula's methods is that by the republication of the postcards, the visibility of those Algerian women again was reduced to nothing, as they were dismissed as nothing more than sexual subjects. Looking at these pictures in Alloula's book, there is no denying these women were exploited and forced to be part of these knowledge constitutions and systems, including experiencing patriarchal and colonial oppression, which probably led to their submissive status in the French postcards. On an epistemological level, I find that Alloula does not challenge the idea of exhibiting the photos of Algerian women. In fact, he lacks creativity by exhibiting these photos, rather than pursuing an alternative; thereby reasserting a kind of patriarchal power over those Algerian women. This is a particular kind of power, whereby someone internalizes Orientalism and understands himself in relationship to the Western men, while the women are excluded. The way Alloula produces *The Colonial*

Harem seems to suggest that the Algerian women do not have any agency. In fact, I argue that this lines up with the kind of thoughts that allow for the entanglement of knowledge and power, which sustains Algerian women in a place where they never become agents; they cannot speak, cannot make decisions for themselves, and do not have any personal will. Alloula believed he was standing up for Algerian women while mirroring the colonial discourse unconsciously and exercising patriarchal power by reducing them to sexual objects. While reading Alloula, I question if it is possible to comprehend the disturbing portrayals of women without re-colonizing the subjects depicted therein. Intellectually, there is a good reason to suspect that Alloula's canon is essentially an extension of the colonial project or, as I believe, an exercise of his patriarchal functions. Chow succinctly expresses the dilemma that involves all attempts to discover the “true voice” of the women in question:

How would we write this space [of the native] in such a way as to refuse the facile turn of sanctifying the defiled image with pieties and thus enriching ourselves precisely with what can be called the surplus value of the oppressed, a surplus value that results from exchanging the defiled image for something more noble? (Chow, 1994, p. 124).

A number of feminist ethicists have taken Alloula to task since the publication of his major works. For instance, feminist literary theorist Mieke Bal criticized Alloula for perpetuating the practical annexation and abuse of women that he sought to condemn. In a chapter titled “A postcard from the Edge,” Bal investigates Alloula’s work and attempts to demonstrate that in his effort to undermine “the colonial gaze,” he actually fortifies the patriarchal axioms that he ostensibly finds so offensive (1991). Likewise, cultural critic Rey Chow also takes Alloula to a task, in an essay titled “Where Have All the Natives Gone,” for his own use of Orientalist pornography, which similarly “unveils” Algerian female bodies, as did French photographers, and renders them the graphic objects of Western sexual desire:

The Algerian women are exhibited as objects not only by the French but also by Alloula's discourse.... The anti-imperialist charge of Alloula's discourse would have us believe that the French gaze at those women is pornographic while his is not. This is because he distinguishes between erotism and pornography, calling the picture postcards a "suberotism" (Chow, 1994, p. 39).

Posing as the great defender of Algerian women, Alloula is here accused of sympathizing more with the colonizer than with Algerian women pictured in French postcards because his in-practice method also leads to the exhibition of their bodies and the denial of their agency to express themselves in their voice. In addition, Chow claims that Alloula's work is as pornographic as the series of colonial representations he seeks to dismantle, it also exploits Algerian women's bodies through the medium of photography:

The images of the Algerian women are exposed a second time and made to stand as a transparent medium, a homoerotic link connecting the brown man to the white man, connecting the "third world" nationalism to "First world" imperialism. What results is neither a dismantling of the pornographic apparatus of imperialist domination nor a restoration of the native to her 'authentic' history but a perfect symmetry between the imperialist and anti-imperialist gazes, which cross over the images of native women as silent object (Chow, 1994, p. 41).

Thus, the anti-imperialist (and native) critic, himself, exploits Algerian natives, who are made to suffer this abusive treatment all over again, although now at the hands of a purported and self-proclaimed ally. Chow finds fault with the approach of postcolonial male academics waging a crusade to correct the injustice of abusive representations of Arab women. While operating as though he was himself trapped in the victims' position, he also seeks an exact vengeance on the European responsible for this outrage.

Feminist writer Cynthia Enloe advances the argument that Alloula's appraisal of French postcards featuring Algerian women, in effect, strengthens patriarchal nationalism:

Alloula used these images to explore his own identity as a male nationalist; for a man, to be conquered is to have his women turned into fodder for imperialist postcards. Becoming a nationalist requires a man to resist the foreigner's use and abuse of his women (Enloe, 2014, p. 91).

Therefore, one could question to what extent Alloula's culture affected his methodology. I believe that any analysis of Alloula's work must, therefore, incorporate the truth that this author was himself an Algerian male with the explicit goal of recovering his "lost sense of honor" and compensating for a past characterized by systematic oppression:

What I read on these cards does not leave me indifferent. It demonstrates to me . . . the desolate poverty of a gaze that I myself, as an Algerian, must have been the object of at some moment in my personal history (Alloula, 1987, p. 5).

In the above, Alloula expresses his anxiety about being the object of the colonial gaze. However, using the postcards does not grapple with this anxiety. The project could have been more interesting and realistic if he showed how the patriarchal relationship is entangled in a particular way with modernity and with dire and uneven effects on women and men (Agathangelou & Ling, 2009; Agathangelou, 2011).

A number of ethical problems spring up from Alloula's work, starting with the question of how to decolonize graphic narratives (i.e., the visual discourse) of the materiality of the subject (Agathangelou, 2013). Given Alloula's complaint that "pornographic" materials featuring Algerian women represented colonial violence, why did he choose to reprint them? After all, one can fairly and easily picture analysis and critique of Orientalism that refrains from re-exposing vulnerable Algerian women. What I insist is that by once again exhibiting the bodies of Algerian women, Alloula's work overemphasizes one side of

a coin characterized by the sexualization of women in discourses produced on their subject, and in fact, encourages a “voyeuristic gaze” that re-victimizes them, years after the fact. There is no question that French colonial postcards robbed Algerian women of both their dignity and subjectivity. However, Alloula’s critique fails to show that colonization outside the Algerian male as the object of it as well as engage what it may take to account for the material conditions that constitute the Algerian woman as the site of sexual conquest open to Europe. In an interesting way, he eviscerates the work that takes place intellectually to constitute her as open to such conquest. He also fails to theorize on how the absence of Algerian men in those postcards also establishes a form of power. In this way, Alloula is even violent to the ways that masculine absence is being constituted and with what effects on thinking and organizing gender relations (Agathangelou, 2019).

From reading Alloula’s book, I find it impossible to glean much about the women portrayed in French postcards. He argues, convincingly, that they must have been either poor or engaged in prostitution. However, I draw attention to the fact that this in no way warrants the publication of their faces and hardly explains his failure to make any attempt to hide their identities; Alloula gives into the tendency to conquer and humiliate those women by reproducing their picture again, thereby stigmatizing them again. Because I hail from a compatible culture and identify as an Arab woman myself, I suspect the women featured in French postcards might prefer their pictures to go out of use, rather than be reprinted, even in the goal of decolonizing Orientalist discourses. Of course, given that their voices were never sought I would not presume to speak for them. It is nonetheless important to give them, and each plausible possibility, our every consideration. In the following section, I will shed light on the treatment of women as passive objects and in relation to the immortalization of sexuality within the discourse of Orientalism through the analysis of Rana Kabbani’s book.

MORALIZATION OF SEXUALITY-RANA KABBANI

Rana Kabbani, a British-Syrian author, in her 1986 work, *“Imperial Fictions: Europe’s Myths of Orient,”* challenges the treatment of the subject, which focuses on the cross between female representation and Orientalism in the Victorian era. In addition, she analysis orientalism’s considerable age and chronicles its portrayals of women through the ages while connecting each element to the broader political, sexual, and ethical landscape. *Europe’s Myths of Orient* serves to answer a number of questions that arise from the intersection of Orientalism, imperialism, gender, and sexuality. The significant aspect of Kabbani’s study is an appreciation of the moral judgments built into Orientalist representations of the “East”. These judgments enable their creators to classify both people and societies as either “good” or “bad,” which in turn enables effective combat against a perceived foe.

Kabbani’s critique of this Western approach to interacting with the world, which holds up the Arab as a debauched and morally bankrupt “other,” includes the claim that this worldview stems from European anxieties that predate the modern era. These insecurities would have arisen as a consequence of the Islamic Golden Age, which brought to shame the level of human development taking place in nearby Medieval Europe. In short, the Orientalist paradigm grew up in an intensely self-doubting Medieval Europe, which could not help perceiving itself as inferior in comparison with the Golden Age of the Islamic Caliphate. This deep insecurity, through which Europe depicted itself as superior to the Arabs, jeopardized the European sense of self-respect, leading to the emergence of an image of the Arabs as sexually immoral. This sexual impropriety dovetailed with religious dogmas in Europe around sexuality, which facilitated the creation of new representations of the Arabs as “sensual” and lascivious.

Kabbani’s work offers a feminist assessment of Western colonialism as the product of sexual repression in Europe and the perpetuation of Medieval attitudes towards purity and innocence. Kabbani extended Said’s analysis of Orientalism; yet, Kabbani adds to the role of gender in such a discourse of

domination. Where masculinity and femininity are concerned, Kabbani points out Said's utter failure to seriously address the notion of gender. Kabbani channels Said's analysis into a more concentrated effort to address Victorian texts, including journey logs and images on canvas, and finds the "East" is mainly portrayed as a sensual and exotic milieu, which is used as a foil against the more advanced Western civilization. She hammers home the connection between European dominance in every domain of life and the Orientalist ideology. Nonetheless, she describes a relationship that does not exclusively take shape in predictable ways (i.e., commonly observed modes of propaganda and control). However, when reading *Imperial Fictions*, it is obvious that Said's Orientalism has a significant influence on Kabbani. In fact, Kabbani uses a similar methodology to Said, yet Kabbani set up her work to expose different eras with a significant focus on women. Like Said, Kabbani intends to deconstruct and discard the colonial legacy of misrepresentations of the Arabs that characterized "West-East" discourse. Thus, I suggest that despite the focus on gender in Kabbani's work, Kabbani aligns her position clearly with Said's *Orientalism*.

Drawing upon Said's work in her *Imperial Fictions*, as a means of understanding Western's colonial possession. Kabbani explains how the Europe sought out means of utterly reforming the "East"; this age-old tactic of dividing a population in order to better rule over it was amply applies here (Kabbani, 1986, p. 138). It seems that Kabbani borrows conceptions of knowledge and power from Said in order to assert that travelers' accounts of journeys to the "East" could generate the "knowledge" necessary to the task of governing it:

From the seventh to the fourteenth centuries composed of military and political powers which held sway over an area that came to stretch from Spain to China, sent out travellers, either as emissaries or as explorers, to bring back knowledge that could be used to enrich the store of politically useful information (Kabbani, 1986, p. 2).

To Kabbani, these travelers exert and solidify colonial control over territory and people, particularly women, rather than genuinely educating themselves and others about the “East”. Similarly, Said in *Orientalism* emphasizes travelers' role in the creation of the colonial and the legitimacy of all their authorities and overseers. Orientalism usually advances the notion that Europeans better comprehend the “East” than do “Easters” themselves; in this sense, Kabbani points out how limiting this belief is and also how relevant discourses work. It seems that any functional vision of the Europeans traveler must be rooted in a centuries-old heritage of Europeans academic texts, studies, and other materials. The European traveler is then chained to the resulting mix of out-dated notions and symbols, which renders his accounts tainted by prejudice and unfounded ideas (Kabbani, 1986, p. 10). While Kabbani grants that orientalist’s narratives did indeed enlarge the pool of knowledge in the world, she laments that it was fundamentally contaminated and weaponized for colonialism.

Kabbani describes a particular ideological process at work to justify Europeans rule over the Arab region. The proposition that Easterners (i.e., the “Other”) are lazy, lusty, brutish, and helpless to govern themselves is accepted as true, which justifies Western intervention and rule. At all times, the honor of Europeans imperialists is maintained, as the colonizer takes on the role of educator and benefactor, rather than brazen abuser and opportunist. The colonizer's obligation to God and king, and to his fellow man, whom he altruistically seeks to elevate to his noble position in life, drives his thoughts, words, and actions relative to the Arab region. Together, this set of circumstances is described as the white man's “burden,” which warrants the conquest of foreign lands.

As I suggested, one can see that Kabbani echoes Said in her discussion of the so-called “East”, this sensuous “other” deprived of morals, as differentiated by Orientalists from Europe. Kabbani summarizes the Orientalist view of “Eastern men” as barbaric and “Eastern women” as slave traders. These greedy, heartless abductors of women, particularly their bodies, had no respect for females anywhere in the world;

rather, they treated them as livestock and property. This “observation” of the Orientalists drew a vital distinction between the “Eastern barbarian”, who enslaved women and sold them at auction, and European civilizers, who always faithfully honored them. For Kabbani, this amounts to “good reason” for the European male to fully dominate the Arabs through the production of certain notions and ideas about the other: “It was one added way of convincing himself that he was born to rule over them” (Kabbani, 1986, p. 78).

Kabbani’s analysis closely follows Said’s conclusion that the “Orient” was a methodical construction of narrative-builders, including authors, colonial administrators, and academics, who offered up a number of labels (e.g., foreign, unethical, unreasonable, dangerous, slothful, and sexually voracious) for application to Arabs, over whom Westerners were destined to rule. Kabbani incredulously approaches Victorian Era discourses with a view to Orientalism’s age-old legacy of misrepresenting women and ties them to political, sexual, and ethical themes. She offers a number of examples of the treatment of women in these discourses. For instance, on wild depictions of the Saracen princess, Kabbani highlights the responsibility of Middle English romances for the advancement of Orientalism:

The prototype of the enamoured Saracen princess. She is ready to serve her knight with slavish devotion. He inspires ardent desires in her, and this because she is inherently lusty. Muslim princesses are the wooing women of medieval temptation scenes, who walk unbidden into bedchambers and proffer their bodies only to be virtuously refused. These seductresses will even forsake their religion for love of the knight (Kabbani, 1986, p. 15).

In other words, Arab women functioned as sex symbols in the colonial framework. Flowing from the patriarchal methods and practices of colonialism, Arab females were represented as sexy, “accommodating” objects. Kabbani explained that Arab women were depicted as “an even more conspicuous commodity than their European sisters. They were part of the goods of empire; the living

rewards that white men could, if they wished to, reap. They were there to be used sexually, and if it could be suggested that they were inherently licentious, then they could be exploited with no qualms whatsoever” (Kabbani, 1986, p. 51). When considered side-by-side, Arab women and European Christian women are not perceived as equal; one is seen as inherently immoral, while the other is raised to the status of moral example. “Eastern women” were religiously and culturally different from European women, where “Eastern women” are depicted as morally inferior. Europe exercised its power to generate knowledge about “immoral” behaviors throughout the “East” by using the artificial, fantastic knowledge about the “East” produced from Orientalist accounts. By contrasting itself against the “East”, as Edward Said posited, the West defined its own identity over time; “the Orient has helped define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, and experience” (Said, 1978, p.1-2).

Through the Saidian lens, one can explain this process as the colonial mindset where it sees a need for moral reform where the West documented themselves as noble and moral. As Said put it:

Not only is the Orient accommodated to the moral exigencies of Western Christianity; it is also circumscribed by a series of attitudes and judgments that send the Western mind, not first to Oriental sources for correction and verification, but rather to other Orientalist works. The Orientalist stage, as I have been calling it, becomes a system of moral and epistemological rigour” (1978, p.67).

In Kabbani's analysis, she notes that European sentiments relating to the Arab women vacillated between longing, a kind of compassion, disdain, and indignation. They were sensual/sexual objects, but also sufferers of injustice and oppression. Yet, these “scheming witches” also indulged in lesbianism when their men were away (Kabbani, 1986, p. 53).

During the colonial era, a prolific amount of Orientalist portrayals of Arab women, in which she appears either naked or only partly dressed, deliberately give the impression of an ostentatious being that

willfully takes on a first-hand role in the libertine sexual activities that characterize life in the Arab region for the European imagination. Kabbani finds no surprise here; such depictions of “Eastern women” perfectly reflect the biases of Victorian Era Europe. Women counted as imperial property; spoils of war meant for the white men who were so inclined to enjoy. Their purpose was to be of guilt-free sexual use to the conquerors, which became all the easier when a case, however flimsy, was made that “Eastern women” are innately lustful (Kabbani, 1986, p. 51).

Kabbani explained the orientalist's definition of Muslim women collectively as subjugated, yet wicked relies on a process of sharp simplification. This is similar to Said analysis in regard to European treatment of the Arabs; where he emphasizes that “the Arab is always shown in large numbers. No individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences” (Said, 1978, p. 287), as an example of what I refer to is the way Arab women were collectively constructed as if all the Arab women share the same identity as immoral. Given the above circumstances, the Arabs stereotypes resulting from this process are essential to the continued propagation of Orientalism; both in its appeals to reason and justice for the maintenance of colonialism and its general insistence on Europe supremacy in every area of reality. To Kabbani and Said, by representing “Eastern women” as “others” (i.e., those other women), Orientalism succeeds in reducing them to less-than-human status. Further, Kabbani argues, the biases of the Europe's narrative-writers pervade every “East-West” exchange, which is manifest, for example, in the Victorian discourse on “Eastern women” in Richard Burton's account of *Arabian Nights*. In *Europe's Myths of Orient*, Kabbani examines the array of Arabic folk tales gathered from the Islamic Golden Age, known as the *Arabian Nights* or *One Thousand and One Nights*. Kabbani brings to light the vapid stereotypes fostered in the tale *One Thousand and One Night*, she identifies the Victorian concept of “Eastern” females as “loose women”, which *Arabian Nights* strongly propagates, and most obviously so in Burton, the translator of *Arabian Night's* Richard burton (Kabbani, 1986, p. 51).

Kabbani detects two broad classes of representations relating to women in *Arabian Nights*: first, negative casts (e.g., demonesses and witches), and second, “positive” labels (e.g., virtuous, and judicious) (Kabbani, 1986, p. 48). The former category is vast and offers a wide range of examples of erratic, dishonest, godless, and lecherous women. They are innately malicious and strive to feed their lusts in ways that cruelly disregard others' well-being and interests:

The first category is by far the larger one, containing the negative stereotypes of demonesses, procuresses, sorceresses, witches. They are fickle, faithless and lewd. They are irrepressively malign, and plot to achieve their base desires in the most merciless manner imaginable... The second category (and the less important one) contains women who are pious and prudent. They are usually either well-brought up virgins who fall victim to a cruel fate before being corrupted (for all women are corruptible), or pious wives or mothers who are not disturbingly sexual. They are kind and good and their kindness and goodness is usually a decorative foil to the storyline, but of no great dramatic value (Kabbani, 1986, p. 48-49).

Hence, what Kabbani suggests is that the latter category is far narrower; it features either virgin who, like all women, eventually fall prey to depravity or religiously inclined female family members whose sexuality does not transgress Victorian era sensibilities. While their virtuousness often serves as a means of contrast in the narrative, its role in the discourse is insignificant. This enables us to understand that the focus on female mediocrity in *Arabian Nights* rests on non-European “others,” whose essence can be condensed into a body deprived of moral worth and thus also free of any doubt with regards to both her status and the significance of her actions.

For instance, according to Kabbani, the representations of women in Richard Burton's version of the *Arabian Nights* were in perfect conformity to wider Victorian preconceptions. Whereas the totality of

women were “known” to be inferior to men, the women of the “East”, for the mere fact of being “Easterners”, in addition to being women, were considered twice as mediocre. The status of “Eastern” women as property surpassed even that of their European equivalents; they were colonial possessions, the spoils of war, which willing European men could on a whim experience for their enjoyment. Their function was one of sexual gratification, which in light of the claim that “Eastern” women were essentially impious and lustful, could go uninhibited by moral objections to the exploitation of the innocent:

They were part of the goods of empire, the living rewards that white men could, if they wished to, reap. They were there to be used sexually, and if it could be suggested that they were inherently licentious, then they could be exploited with no qualms whatsoever (Kabbani, 1986, p. 51).

While refined citizens of the Europe eventually found their way to denounce the evils of slavery, they nonetheless displayed a voracious appetite for its representations. For example, art portraying the domination of captive bodies satisfied deep patriarchal and imperialistic impulses (Kabbani, 1986, p. 79). Offerings of European travelers to the “East”, posing as first-hand witness accounts, often amounted to mere of erotic fantasies. Kabbani’s work repeatedly reveals the kind of template of European representation of “Eastern” women in art and literature.

Hence, it can be seen that the Victorian concept of women and girls as property (i.e., as mere physical bodies to be owned by men) was the officially authorized one. Fundamentally, Arabian Nights did no more than endorsing the conventional (male) view of “Eastern” women, whereby a female person was synonymized with a set of “privities” that remained at all times available for discursive scrutiny (Kabbani, 1986, p. 64). “Eastern” women served as an additional function: that of allowing European males to pass judgment on Western females, particularly as it related to sex, via the proxy of their “Eastern” counterparts (Kabbani, 1986, p. 59).

This leaves us to question whether these male European's successfully obtained valid insights into women's reality, otherwise, if their imaginations led them to their conclusions, along with their dependence on tales offered by others. The answer is yes; orientalists relied heavily upon the previous representation of Eastern women. In her book, Kabbani clarifies that European travelers used each other's accounts in order to produce a collective narrative concerning the colonial possessions they sought to "discover" (1986, p. 2). Then, these European travelers imagined the "oriental women" in a common way, due to previous iterations of the ostensibly benign colonial fact-finding endeavor, and this "version" of the "East" muddled any and all attempts to discern the true reality of life in the "East".

The irrevocability of these ways of perceiving the Arab forbade European travelers from accomplishing the very mission they had, on the surface, set out for themselves, as assumptions and problematic notions about the other ruled out the possibility of attaining any genuinely new depths of knowledge about the Arab region. Europeans created the "orient" as they described it, transforming both land and people into objects of symbolism and allegory. The consequently provided domestic audiences with exactly what they thought they desired to consume on the subject. Landscape painters that attempted to generate serious work authentically depicting life in the East found their products supplanted by the more salacious offerings of Orientalists. Kabbani goes so far to argue that these European representations of "Eastern women" actually described Victorian rules of life and standards of conduct, rather than on-the-ground reality in the so-called East:

Such portraits, in wishing to convey the East, described more accurately, Europe. They portrayed the repressiveness of its social codes, and the heavy hand of its bourgeois morality. The gaze into the Orient had turned, as in a convex mirror, to reflect the Occident that had produced it (Kabbani, 1986, p. 85).

Echoing Edward Said, Kabbani thus finds that in creating such elaborate portrayals of “Easterners” in its attempt to detail life in the Arab region, Europe’s really brought into being a record of Europe’s own reality and progress. Thus, this made-up “Orient” is, in fact, a central feature of Western society, including its art, music, and literature, due to its key role as the “other,” against which the European self was both opposed and contrasted. Again, the manner in which Europe understood itself was chiefly through producing a canon of ideas defining a mysterious “other”:

In attempting to document the Orient (the Other, the opposite, the enemy, the foil), as Edward Said has argued, the Occident came to document itself. Although the travel narrative of Victorian England did reflect the personal idiosyncrasies of individual travellers, it was mainly a recapitulation of inherited ideas (Kabbani, 1986, p.10).

Kabbani advances that there are two major modes of impact, concerning the observer’s moral judgment on sexuality in determining his or her outlook on any given community. In the case of colonizing the “East”, the “East” was portrayed as a center of, first, bawdy sexuality and, second, intrinsic violence. To better understand that, we will use Said’s concept of Orientalism where he defines it as a narrative artifice built up by Europeans to bolster colonial authority and facilitate the task of representing “Easterners” as the “other”:

Discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what “we” do and what “they” cannot do or understand as “we” do) (Said,1978, p. 12).

Initially, one can recognize how heavy dependence on the hegemonic discourse of power characterized the European organization of Orientalism. The political facet of Orientalism, according to Said, represents an effort to both understand and dominate the “other” via direct power, but also on account of the moral weight of the “East’s” failings. Kabbani underscores this in describing “deliberate stress on those qualities that made the “East” different from Europe, exiled into an irretrievable state of ‘otherness” (Kabbani, 1986, p. 5-6). European notions of truth, reason, and ethics determined both the parameters and the types of analyses produced about the East, wherein European generated new “knowledge” about Arabs, particularly women, including their morals and beliefs.

Kabbani further problematizes how morality infuses Western knowledge about the Arabs, particularly as its producers consider Arab women to be creatures of “loose morals”. The consequence of this discourse is simple: through the ages, the European imagination harbors a static view of the Arabs, whose “history” is wholly determined by the activities and verdicts of the Europe. According to Kabbani, Victorian narratives about “Eastern” women consistently highlighted their aberrant manners juxtaposition with their ample sexual appetites. This explanatory process, whereby the “Orient” was deciphered and exposed for the benefit of European audiences, relied on typically European definitions of goodness. This implied the need for the castigation of the Arabs for any divergence from the European system of moral thought.

Reading Kabbani through Said’s analysis; her work does much to emphasize how essential to the Orientalist construct are the twin concepts of “depraved women” and “brutal men”. It was the work of European protagonists to civilize these barbarians and, if force was required in order to do so, then it came as no surprise because this sort of power was the only one to which “Easterners” consistently responded:

The Orientalist stage... becomes a system of moral and epistemological rigor. As a discipline representing institutionalized Western knowledge of the Orient. ... For the

Orient (“out there” towards the East) is corrected, even penalized, for lying outside the boundaries of European society, “our” world (Said, 1978, p. 67).

Hence, from a theoretical perspective, in terms of both culture and ethics, I find that Orientalism was a moral system that placed European ahead of “Easterners”; the Arabs were reduced to an object of analysis that could be evaluated and sanctioned by the European, according to European principles. Both Said and Kabbani agree that the contrast between the “moral” European self and the sexually depraved “other” exemplified the Orientalist worldview. Therefore, I suggest that Orientalism can be summarized as the practice of playing up this contrast; by exaggerating the differences between Arab and Europe, European can better define the values of their domestic culture.

Said’s treatment of 18th century Orientalism lucidly explains how the Western project relies on notions of the “other” as a backward and inadequate foil to its ascendancy. He writes:

Along with all other peoples variously designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment. Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or – as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory – taken over. The point is that the very designation of something as Oriental involved an already pronounced evaluative judgment, and in the case of the peoples inhabiting the decayed Ottoman Empire, an implicit program of action. Since the Oriental was a member of a subject race, he had to be subjected: it was that simple (Said, 1978, p. 207).

Hence, like Said, I argue that the function of Orientalist representations of godless “Easterners” was to thrust them outside the margins of an acceptable moral universe, according to European, such that “Easterners” could commit actions for European would be severely punished. Therefore, the problem that

I want to expose is that such narratives generally instill in their European audiences a deep assurance that European women are inherently more honorable than their Muslim counterparts.

At the end of such a construction, European are left with a sense of moral superiority that-in turn- confirms their privileged place in the hierarchy of power. As the unchallenged redeemers of the “East”, according to orientalist lore, European are compelled to intercede for good in the affairs of the Arabs. To clarify, through the Saidian lens, the references to both physiological and moral categories are ubiquitous among philosophical and historical scholars:

The force of moral generalization is enhanced by the precision with which dramatic, almost archetypal figures – primitive man, giants, heroes – are shown to be the genesis of current moral, philosophic, and even linguistic issues. Thus, when an Oriental was referred to, it was in terms of such generic universals as his “primitive” state, his primary characteristics, his particular spiritual background (Said, 1978, p. 119-120).

When the West constructed themselves as moral, it gave them the privilege to act upon people who are viewed as immoral. Hence, the West is entitled to agency to exercise power over the racialized other; ultimately, their actions are defined as moral and necessary.

Given certain assumptions about power and sexuality, Kabbani joins Said in framing the masculinity of the European relative to the femininity of the “East”. However, my concern is that although representations of Arab women in Orientalist literature created some obligatory objects of sexual fascination, the demeaning treatment of Arab men was also essential to the colonialist project. Demonstrations of the immorality of Arab women were insufficient and needed to be complemented by equally galling accounts of the barbarousness of Arab men, justifying European control over Arab region as a whole. The idea is clearly that under the Orientalist framework, Arab female bodies could be justly deprived of both their territory and their independence on the basis of ingrained differences between the

so-called “Orient-Occident”, including intellectual dominance and European style “respect” for the sovereignty of the individual.

What is essential for us, as Kabbani reveals, is the exercise of power that European travelers wielded over Arab women which shows how the Orientalist framework was advanced through the reduction of Arab women to sexual objects. They were disdained for their passivity, perpetual victimhood, and universal licentiousness, ensuring their subordinate position in the civilizational hierarchy. These dualistic structures are essential to the creation of “self” in contradistinction to some necessarily dissimilar “other”. While the notion of difference enables the creation of meaning, it also has the secondary function of organizing people into the colonial hierarchy. Said and Kabbani offer painstaking descriptions of orientalist representations of the Arab region, which depict Arab and Muslim lands as a place of sexual license where “anything goes,” and elaborate the ways in which such narratives and discourses affect the calculus of an individual’s value. The initial distillation of their essence into powerless targets of patriarchal oppression in a “dangerous culture” enabled the subsequent description of the Arab women as retrograde, submissive, compliant, and erotic. Arab women were made into objects of “knowledge”, imagination, and this objectification process yielded the Arab itself as a gendered (female) creature. Such discourses about Arab women both generate and support static and uniform representations of them, which are based on an initial denial of their own ability to accurately represent themselves. Through analyzing Kabbani’s work, I recognize the ability of Arab women to truly express themselves, of course, would imply a basic erosion of the single, exclusive, unalterable version of Arab reality that is so tenaciously proffered in European literature. European travelers conducted no in-depth analysis of either the nature of the causes of Arab women's comportment, opting to point out that it took place in a “sexually debaucherously East”. This highlighted the illicit pleasure possible in their presence and on their land.

This all tended to validate European bodily control over them, in what is today best understood as abuse and exploitation.

However, in reading Kabbani I suspect the analysis, in fact, dichotomizes the “East” and European in a way that otherizes Europe and idealizes the Arab world. I argue with Kabbani's analysis in so far as this dichotomy does not effectively challenge the discourse of Orientalism; her analysis serves to reinforce assumptions about the “Other” in ways that continue to perpetuate East-West conflict. There is a certain hypocrisy in denouncing the European for otherizing the East and then claiming itself to be better than the other. For example, in the following quote Kabbani insists that “Such portraits, in wishing to convey the East, described more accurately, Europe. They portrayed the repressiveness of its social codes and the heavy hand of its bourgeois morality. The gaze into the Orient had turned, as in a convex mirror, to reflect the Occident that had produced it” (Kabbani 1986; 85). Then to Kabbani, if the “East” and the “West” are equal, then claiming the superiority of the “East” over the “West” is no real remedy to Orientalism. Kabbani insists that while these false discourses may yet be informative about certain elements of life in the Arabs, they reveal a great deal more about Europe's own repressed (sexual) fantasies. The outcome, I believe, when the self observes the other is a deformed representation of the truth. This points to weakness in perception, cultural confusion, contradictory information, and even rank hypocrisy, which masks colonialist impulses, comes together to produce an unfaithful image of reality. To be more transparent, Kabbani's interpretation would raise a crucial question if she did not create the same “East-West” dualism that she criticizes. This process of characterizing the Arabs as the “Self” and the European as “Other” inevitably fall prey to the same problematic interpretation. I doubt that Kabbani only ends up turning the roles where the European becomes not merely different from Arabs, but morally inferior. Consequently, Kabbani rectifies the dichotomy by applying the same faulty logic to arrive at a more satisfactory conclusion to Kabbani (and presumably to some Arab readers who delight in the idea of the Arabs being

superior to the European). I cannot entirely agree with her approach; Kabbani's characterization of the East as superior to the West is just as problematic as the Orientalists whom she criticizes. Hence, one ought not to create false dichotomies, mainly when these are utilized to justify value judgments of one as “moral” and the other as “immoral”. Ultimately, Kabbani's interpretation leaves us to think if there is any possibility of producing objective knowledge about other cultures.

CONCLUSION

I find the position of both Kabbani and Alloula is in agreement with Said's way of thought. Yet they both use Said's concept of Orientalism to understand what Said overlooked. In spite of the authors' contribution to enhancing the understanding of the discourse of misrepresentation I remain concerned with their methodology. I insist that I do not refute both authors' contributions, but, from a theoretical point of view, I need to criticize their works critically and fairly. What is important is that dichotomizing the world poses an epistemological problem, as this approach assumes a hierarchy in which one part is superior to the other; the dichotomization of the world is the foremost problem, by its logic, certain colonial knowledge and powers are maintained. These are epistemological framings for what is constituted as the “East”, which exists solely for the purpose of making possible a certain project, namely the European domination of the East. In Kabbani's book, the “Other” was judged morally; epistemologically, it is problematic to start with the dichotomization of the world and hold the belief that we address the colonial project or entanglement of knowledge and power because shifting the discourse where the Self is the Other is not enough. If one wants to challenge the relationship of knowledge and power, one must challenge the process by which the discourses construct power and vice versa, instead of focusing only on the function of the discourse's content. In addition, Alloula falls prey to this same problem in *the Colonial Harem* when

he unconsciously reproduces the same discourse that French colonial powers adopted vis-à-vis Algerian women through exhibiting their photos in a way to diminish them as sexual objects.

Both Kabbani and Alloula challenge the depiction of Arab women as an oppressed sexual object; however, there was a change in the depiction of Arab women during the 19th century. The images of the naked beauties of the harem were replaced with the image of the conservative, veiled victims of Islamic oppression, provoked by European discourse. In the narrative, the impressions left of Muslim Arab women, and their lives, is that they are oppressed. These two different statements are here implied about Arab women. However, both statements adopt exactly the same logic, by which others have the right and ability to decide who and what Arab women are. In this process of creating two statements, female writers feel the privilege of speaking on behalf of Arab women but assume that those Arab women should follow the universalize Western values. The language used in both statements explicitly clarifies that it was the European's obligation to act upon Arab and Muslim women claims to "rescue" those women. Without a doubt, gendered Orientalism is not a discourse of individuals who intend to produce the Arab women in a certain way collectively; yet, it is a discourse that was constructed and profoundly ingrained in favor of political and regional facts to one group over the other.

One must question what enables people to attribute qualities, whether positive or negative, to Arab women. Such statements do not only originate from individuals, but also by institutions. The logic that allows any person to attribute qualities to Arab women too often goes unchallenged. According to Said, Orientalism was essentially a male construct, where the (feminine Orient) is a production of men's imagination, gaze, and desire. In cases where the discourse of Orientalism takes both forms (i.e., veiled vs. naked); one would question if Orientalism is male-dominated discourse (as described by Said), and if circumstances would be different if the European author were a woman. Would the discourse or the representation of Arab women be any different? We can also wonder whether female European, in

producing knowledge about the Arabs, also typecast Arab women the way European men did. The answer to these questions will be found in the following chapter via a discussion of selected works of Lila Abu-Lughod and Meyda Yeğenoğlu. To them, modernity and human rights continue to play a role in the stereotypical representations of Eastern women that were contributing to the continued control over the Arab region.

CHAPTER FOUR: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FEMINIST ORIENTALISTS

This chapter examines the trope of Arab females' downtrodden figure and their role in the discourse of Orientalism. Through the discussion of the work of Meyda Yeğenoğlu and Lila Abu-Lughod, I will trace the ways Euro-American feminists draw on it to rationalize the European conquest of the Arab world. The works of both authors challenge the discourse of gendering orientalism by Euro-American females. First, in *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (1998), Meyda Yeğenoğlu considers the existence and the consequences of misrepresentations of the so-called Oriental women, offers a basis for questioning the political dynamics of the representation of Muslim Arab women. She maps out the relationship between feminist and post-colonialist thoughts, focusing on the themes of modernity.

Second, to discuss further the misrepresentations in the current era, additional reading of Lila Abu-Lughod's *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (2013) will help to illuminate this chapter. The investigation by Abu-Lughod of the representations of women's status in the Arab region reveals that Euro-American media portrayals of the subjugation of women that serve as a basis for European or American military incursions in that Arab region. Abu-Lughod's description of the position gender assumes in the Euro-American worldview enables us to recognize the political machinations that take place behind the scenes of discourse construction. She builds on the concept of Orientalism, developed by Edward Said, by integrating into it the notion of gender, categorizing Muslim women as a separate social class from women in general.

Yeğenoğlu and Abu-Lughod accuse Euro-American feminists of painting Arab Muslim women as little more than suffering objects, requiring European liberation, instead of separate individuals and free agents. Euro-American feminist theory is problematic, according to both authors, which continue to haunt

the study of Orientalism to the present day. Through this chapter, I will examine the role of knowledge in European identification with modernity and how it constitutes both “East-West”. The Euro-American discourses about the Arab Muslim women removed women from their ability to act freely, which was characteristic of the alliance with the colonial and the current discourse around the situation of Arabs, especially Muslim women.

UNVEILING AND MODERNITY: MEYDA YEĞENOĞLU

Meyda Yeğenoğlu, a Turkish post-colonial writer, is the author of *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (1998). Yeğenoğlu analyses Orientalism through feminists’ lens, where she strives to emphasize the sexual and cultural differences that emerge in Western imperial discourse, which as she points out are usually overlooked. She notes that explorations of sexual difference in Orientalist narratives are usually absent, whenever they are not relegated to altogether different fields of study, such as gender studies (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 10). Yeğenoğlu argues that Edward Said exposes a good number of European stereotypes and linguistic techniques depicting the so-called “Orient”, which relate directly to the question of sexual difference. However, he nonetheless fails to connect gender to Orientalist discourse in his analysis (1998, p.14-15). In reading Said's treatment of sexuality in Orientalist representations, and his analysis of the depiction of the “Oriental woman” offered by Flaubert, Yeğenoğlu concludes that Said must have been conscious of the consequences of Orientalism in terms of sexuality (1998, p. 25). However, she laments that Said chose to exclude the question of sexual difference from his analysis, thus consigning it to a separate field of study, which forbids the possibility of adequately considering the role of unconscious sexuality in the process of “knowing” other cultures. Accordingly, representations of women and sexuality are considered insignificant structural elements of Orientalism, essentially making them distinct from broader representations of the “Orient” (1998, p. 25-26). Hence,

Yeğenoğlu emphasizes that the “question of sexuality cannot be treated as a regional one; it governs and structures the subject's every relation with the other” (1998, p. 26). Yeğenoğlu thus stated the consequences of ignoring the gender aspects of the discourse:

In other words, neither the images of woman nor the images of sexuality are understood as important aspects of the way Orientalist discourse is structured...Consequently, we are left with, on the one hand, the representations of the Orient and Oriental cultures, and on the other, representations of Oriental women and of sexuality (1998, p. 25-26).

Said fails to acknowledge the oppression of women. Indeed, he displays little interest in it at all. This leads one to question if it is possible to discuss Orientalism and power relations without any allusion to gender.? For that reason, Yeğenoğlu sets up her work to uncover the modes of Orientalist discourse, which are activated by normative judgments of the presumed “oppression” of women by their cultures. Yeğenoğlu neither accepts some of the notions given by Said (i.e., neglecting the role of gender and the role of female writers in the discourse of Orientalism) nor follow Said’s approach. However, she does agree with Said's conception of Orientalism as a methodology by which the “Occident” dominates the “Orient” through creating a presumption of authority through knowledge and discourse.

YEĞENOĞLU AND FEMALE ORIENTALISM

Said believes the discourse of Orientalism is essentially male; yet; Yeğenoğlu challenges Said and takes it upon herself to examine how different the European discourse around veiled women is when advanced by women (1998, p. 67). Yeğenoğlu explains the reason for having female orientalists and their effect on the knowledge produced about Muslim women. As Yeğenoğlu reveals that the European are permitted access to seemingly every part of Harem life, save the private world of women, exasperating the colonizer in his quest for total, uncompromising dominance. Consequently, the European observer is

left groping for information; however speculative, about the reality that takes place “behind the curtain”. Europeans are provided descriptions of scenes in harems that exemplify the sexual impropriety of which the whole culture is held to be guilty. In this context, the Orientalist female was bound to emerge in order to fill the void. As Yeğenoğlu stated, European men, are left with the sole option of adopting European female narratives about the reality of harems and the women who reside in them. As a result, the European man’s inadequacy and absence of power are thrust into his face by his incapacity to pierce through the Islamic veil and gain access to the inner life of “the other”. Hence, the only people capable of “remedying this gap” (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p.74-75) are European women, who provide more “authentic” descriptions of life in the “Orient”:

Women should go to Turkey, “for what men are able to see is very much “marginal” when compared to what women can see, which is the “real” Turkey (Gautier as cited in Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 75).

The central preoccupation of Yeğenoğlu’s research is the European female representation of Muslim women, as she describes longstanding collusion between the imperialist basis of Orientalism and a number of aspects of Western feminism (1998, p. 72). The contributions of such women as Lady Mary Montagu and Sophia Poole are thought to fill in the blanks, owing to the inadequate accounts secured by male European observers. In this way, European women fulfill the objective of offering a total explanation of “Oriental” life by supplementing the observations already provided by men. In other words, European women provide a missing piece in the male European accounts of life inside the veil, which without, the Orientalist discourse remains incomplete (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 75-76). All items of supplementary evidence offered by European women immediately become a fundamental component of the larger body of knowledge about the Arabs. However, the masculine accounts remain primary, intimating their standalone wholeness, which ensures the dominance of the male perspective:

The Western woman's descriptions of the harem and of Oriental women do not have an independent definition of itself (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 78).

Yeğenoğlu's concentration on Montagu's work arises from the latter's standard usage of European stereotypes, which are similar to and in other ways different from those employed by male Orientalists. Montagu's text also indicates where women figure, relative to men, in the broader Orientalist discourse:

“(It) emphasizes over and over again how her accounts are faithful to the truth of the Orient and its women and tries to dismiss the texts written by men as being merely a distorted and an inaccurate representation of the “reality” of the Orient” (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 80).

Yeğenoğlu insists that the male supremacist and colonialist interpretations of everyday life in the “Orient” offered by male visitors are intertwined with Montagu's narrative concerning Muslim women:

Montagu also employs a rhetoric of difference. It is this latter feature... which makes Montagu's text similar to the mainstream Orientalist attitude which differentiates, and constructs Orient and Occident as opposites (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 82-83).

In a similar vein, female authors who develop their thinking by contrasting it with others will fall into the same false dichotomy trap. This contributed to forming female authors' beliefs and decisions in a more authoritative position. Undoubtedly, it is race that gives female writers legitimacy to position themselves in a way that subjugated Muslim women's bodies and minds. In this sense, those female writers consciously or unconsciously had a deep-rooted presumption of privilege to intervene on behalf of Muslim women and push for European women's values (i.e., the case of unveiling). Through this, the author is able to possess the power to control her conditions and articulate her own subjective “truth”.

Consequently, the truth of Muslim women is produced through European female writers who hold the authority to construct the truth of other women. In the following section, I engage with how female orientalists' discourse around the Muslim female body attempts to bring the Muslim female into the modern era.

MODERNITY / MODERNIZING THE WOMAN

In light of a Saidian analysis, one can see how Muslim feminism's depiction of women's rights in the "Orient" seems to be in accordance with the major tenets of Orientalism. The notion of Orientalism, relying on such vulgarizations, goes on to draw a contrast between the ostensibly forward-thinking Muslim and the "traditional East" (i.e., wrong-headed). That European feminists identify each other and themselves according to stereotypes of Muslim women is proven by the fact that the veil is used as a representation of backwardness and subjugation. The Islamic dress code becomes symbolized as the repression of Muslim women; for that reason, it had no place of being and should be taken off. The European fixation on the Muslim veil is borne of a desire to "civilize" and "modernize" the "backward Orient", including its female population, rendering them into political objects. This comports with the view that Orientalism is, in Said's words, "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" (and) "the Occident" (1978, p. 10). According to Yeğenoğlu, repression of this sort flew in the face of European ideas about modernity. In particular, the retrograde Muslim practices and customs posed a menace to the establishment and growth of "reason":

The situation of its woman, who is secluded behind her veil required a much more serious working, for the most essential features of the culture are assumed to be inscribed onto her; she is taken as the concrete embodiment of oppressive Islamic traditions which the

Orient desperately needed to break up in order to reach the level of development the West achieved a long time ago (1998, p. 97-98).

In striving to understand female Orientalism, Yeğenoğlu focuses her attention on European representations of women's veiling in the East. The logical conclusion of several key tenets held by European feminists is the corroboration of Europe's claim to inherent superiority, which provides a moral basis for an assault on what is considered "Eastern" culture and traditions. To Yeğenoğlu, Muslim women were portrayed by European feminists as helpless victims whose rescue would come only by European intervention. Yeğenoğlu concludes that the European discourse's accounts of supposedly oppressed docile Muslim females – who require European assistance in order to free themselves from the shackles imposed on them by barbarous men – amount to cultural imperialism.

I agree with Yeğenoğlu that European feminists' prescriptions of Muslim women involved rejecting their customs (religious dress) in favor of emulating European mores. These prescriptions insisted Muslim women could only grow into prominence by giving up key components of their culture, and in this sense, they were woefully deficient. Hence, looking through the mode of thinking of the European females, the act of unveiling is necessarily one of emancipation, given that the Muslim tradition of veiling women is a lamentable symbol of social inferiority and subjugation, which proves the backwardness of the societies in which this practice takes place. The symbolism of the veil was taken to summarize the whole story of the subjugation of Muslim women and their situation in their region; however, this use of negative language to describe Muslim women, in fact, does nothing to advance their social or economic progress. Therefore, we need to reveal that the weakness of the European female analysis of the Muslim women can be recognized in their ignorance of the other aspects that directly affect Arab and Muslim women, which is problematic. Yeğenoğlu reveals that the European female impulse to unveil Muslim women was as a result of the obsessions of the European society in which they were raised.

Western feminist desire to lift the veil of the Oriental woman in the name of “liberating” her reflects the historical, cultural, psychological, and political obsessions of the culture that produced Western women (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 12).

She goes on to develop the sexual implications of European’ fixation with the Islamic veil and the process of unveiling:

The veil is one of those tropes through which Western fantasies of penetration into the mysteries of the Orient and access to the interiority of the other are fantastically achieved (1998, p. 39).

Hence, the narrative concept of unveiling the female body serves to strengthen the European dominance and its beliefs about the “orient world”. This is similar to how French photographers depicted veiled Algerian women (as discussed in Alloula’s section). Under the logic of modernity, visibility is a key objective, which can be achieved through the unveiling of Arab women; European powers estimate that they can better manage, control and discipline their colonial subjects in this way. The work accomplished by the veil, namely, in blocking growth and liberation by turning away the scrutiny of European observers. This is seen as a rejection of the notion of masculine European will:

(T)he colonial feminist discourse to unveil Muslim women in the name of liberation was linked not only to the discourse of Enlightenment but also to the scopic regime of modernity which is characterized by a desire to master, control, and reshape the body of the subjects by making them visible. Since the veil prevents the colonial gaze from attaining such a visibility and hence mastery, its lifting becomes essential (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 12).

Yeğenoğlu relies heavily on the concept of subject in challenging imperialist narratives, noting that the others were held to be deficient in all the areas in which the European was held to be dominant, including agency, ethics, and modernity. As Yeğenoğlu suggested, the “other” is produced as deficient and lack all the positive qualities compared to the western (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 5-6). There is a striking contradiction, whereby Muslim women are held to be powerless, and therefore in need of saving, yet also powerful enough to pose a threat to the colonizer and his unquestioned dominance. The premise for the modernization of the “Orient” is established as the revolution, by necessity, of old Muslim modalities and ways of life. The unveiling of Muslim women was considered to be crucial, due to the identification of women with tradition and with the core meaning of the “Orient”. In the name of modernization, the lifting of the veil accomplished a radical change in “Oriental” society as a whole (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 99):

The necessity to modernize these cultures was taken for granted. There was no hesitation in morally condemning the practice of veiling, for it was regarded as an impediment to modernization (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 99).

Therefore, like Yeğenoğlu, I find that modernity was made out to be synonymous with the Euro-American worldview by a number of European female writers, who presumed to represent “Oriental women” in their work. In fact, the European concept of modernity constructed was based on European standards. It was later posited as a universal means of remedying the negative impacts of traditional notions of right and wrong in Muslim societies, which blocked European attempts at bringing “progress” to the “Orient”. It is presented as the reality in European feminist discourse that, having their liberty at home, European women could stimulate and motivate positive change (i.e., liberation) in the “Orient region”. One can clearly see that European feminists grant themselves the status of universal subjects by demanding that their work be adopted as the sole norm, represents democracy, progress, and liberation, especially given that their situation is held to be “the highest achievement of humanity” (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 100). In order to bolster

their own identity as an ideal self, European feminists heavily “otherized” Muslim women along with the original Orientalist model:

The declaration of an emancipated status for the Western woman is contingent upon the representation of the Oriental woman as her devalued other and this enables Western woman to identify and preserve the boundaries of self for herself. The deliberate confusion of their particularity and specificity with Universalist norms has crucial implications for the subject status these women occupy. To be Western here implies feeling that one is entitled to universalize one's particular achievements and interests (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 102).

The act of constructing the traditional “Orient” into a contemporary state transforms the colonial European into an all-powerful figure in his own right, one who can transform entire social landscapes from backwardness (i.e., the original Orient) to the cutting edge of civilization (i.e., the reformed Orient, modeled on the Europe). This can be understood through Said’s analysis, where he states that “in short, having transported the “Orient” into modernity, the Orientalist would celebrate his method and his position, like that of a secular creator, a man who made new worlds as God had once made the old” (Said, 1978, p. 121).

I can see through Yeğenoğlu’s work that the problem with the denial of European women’s “particularity” is that it validates and reinforces the colonial discourse. Even though the orientalists are female, women remain an object that always been reviewed and examined. It seems that European female writers continuously differentiated themselves using certain characteristics. For instance, female writers who frame the veiled women as submissive reinforce the belief that Islam oppresses Muslim women. When these European female thinkers juxtapose the image of the “liberated”, they engage in the process of detachment from the East, where they highlight certain characteristics as being inherently linked to the

East. This process of detachment from the Muslim women is evocative of historical processes of colonialism and imperialism. There is an act of creation that includes the setting of boundaries around which people and opinions are included or overlooked, which necessarily reflect decisions made around what subjects are considered versus those slated for the omission. Under such conditions, I argue that the reliance on European feminist voices to investigate the plight of Muslim women probably undermined the latter's agency, ironically muffling them while decrying their voiceless status. Sadly, in claiming to emancipate Muslim women, European feminists take a part in the colonization. One example of today's world is the universal human rights; while the idea of human rights flowed from the notion of modernity, these were nonetheless restricted to Europeans, flying in the face of the concept of universality. In order to advance a certain kind of Eurocentric universalism they attempt to advance the imperial project in the name of benevolence. Consequently, as Yeğenoğlu problematizes, not only is the European worldview identified as the universal template for life, but the difference between "East -West" is also seen as basic and essential; one is seen as the opposite of the other (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 102-104).

In fact, modernity's measured progress comes via the place of women in society; ultimately, the fundamental variance between "East -West" is proven by the different status conferred upon the women of either world (Volpp, 2001). In this sense, Muslim women collectively embody the doorway to possessing the Arab region. The most important factor in the reformation of Arab communities, according to European feminism, was the perceived advancement of the status of women, which required the abandonment of both cultural traditions and Islam (Volpp, 2010). Hence, under this view, any evaluation of the society should be carried out with a view to the place of its women, as this was seen, "along with the rule of law, education, and Christianity," as essential to the European mission civilisatrice (Volpp, 2001). The appeal of Orientalists to human rights in unveiling Muslim women, and their demand that Muslims abandon their religion bears this out, as their invocations of a backward tradition provides the

moralistic basis for the continued expansion of imperialism. Then, the liberation of the Arabs can only be achieved through European involvement, via a political intervention, in the interests of securing such values as liberty and self-rule. Then, for the orientalists, modernity is the solution to the Arabs' key problems; its regressive, peculiar, and abnormal status can be exchanged for a cutting-edge, advanced, modern one, thus "saving" them from their abject inferiority. Said conceived of "modernity" as hinging on a mix between narratives promoting change and those advancing the colonial project, which closely aligns with the explanation of modernity put forward by Yeğenoğlu.

Given their beliefs in the unveiled European figure as the universal standard, Female western writers can hardly resist the temptation to emancipate veiled Muslim women. As an obstacle to the unimpeded access of European men, in Yeğenoğlu's view, the veil renders its wearer a subject of European obsession. In relation to the veil, then one can consider the given that the enlightenment project advanced the cause of visibility, Yeğenoğlu wonders if there exists a link between the colonial feminist impulse to lift the veil on Muslim women and the imperialist desire to "master control and reshape that body" in the act of making it visible and, therefore, knowable (1998, p. 12). It has been posited that the lifting of the veil is necessary in order to situate Muslim women's "subjects" within sight of their generally male European observers and, therefore, within their control. To be more transparent, we find here a nexus of knowledge and power; in order to be recognized, women must first be visible because, clearly, one cannot control a subject that one cannot see. Yeğenoğlu explains the European and American captivation with the veil in that, to the Western gaze, it represented a vexing hindrance:

Erecting a barrier between the body of the Oriental woman and the Western gaze...veil seems to place her body out of the reach of the Western gaze and desire. Frustrated with the invisibility and inaccessibility of this mysterious, fantasmatic figure, disappointed with the veiled figure's refusal to be gazed at, Western desire subjects this enigmatic

“sartorial matter,” to a relentless investigation (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 39).

For example, she took the case of France and Algeria. To colonial authorities, the veil symbolized Algerian defiance and opposition, as it frustrated their ability to exercise “visual control”. What the veil accomplishes is nothing less than a revolution of roles, in that “her body completely invisible to the European observer except for her eyes, the veiled woman can see without being seen” (1998, p. 40-43). To the colonizer, veil turns women into a mystery to be illuminated through study. This construct invites the supposition that the veil hides the true nature of its wearer, covered with deception (1998, p. 45).

In this regard, by residing somewhere beyond prying French colonizers’ eyes, the covered Muslim female enjoys a level of freedom and control that colonial authorities find unpalatable. According to Orientalist lore, the Islamic veil symbolizes the repression of women, which is why there is a rich irony in that it is precisely this emblem of female oppression that empowers Muslim women to escape the controlling gaze of their European overlords, frustrating colonial attempts to completely “know” them. Then, this can be seen as the European aspiration to see and to sexually “know” Eastern women, by unveiling them, is rooted in a desire to possess an increased measure of knowledge and control over them:

(T)he desire for mastery through the knowledge acquired by vision. The project of liberating the Oriental woman through unveiling her is inseparable from the mechanism of a subjectifying gaze that is supported by the desire to know her (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 110).

At its core, the colonial act of dominance inherent in the unveiling of Muslim women provided means of possessing the bodies of Muslim subjects. A precondition for such possession was knowledge to be gleaned from these subjects. However, such knowledge was itself contingent on visibility, which enlightenment thinking dictated needed to exist as a precursor to the attainment of any “true knowledge” (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 116). Therefore, any impediment to colonial powers' ability to see non-European

women, in the interest of gaining insights and information about them, had to be abolished (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 111). The issue at hand is that European colonial females, by aiming to lift the veils of Muslim women in the name of modernity, actually engage in a larger Orientalist scheme that relies heavily on the scrutiny of (largely male) European authorities. More so, this knowledge-power nexus is one of the conquests of the other, the gendered and sexualized other.

Said offers an apt summary, stating that “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (1978, p. 1). To understand what can be meant, cultural, moral standards of one society necessarily differ from the other, and it is wrongheaded, simplistic, and reductive to apply one society's norms to another. It is clear that the subject and the object need each other deeply; one, in fact, simply cannot exist without the other. In order for one to be a superior self, another must necessarily be the inferior other. As I reflect, the discourses around the women of the so-called “Orient” provide a case in point; by applying a European female analysis to “the Orient”, European female have essentially acted as modern-day colonizers of Muslim women. Euro-American female express the conviction that their privileges stem from the superiority of their culture as universal truths; however, there is hiding in what the interests and power dynamics are. Consequently, they find themselves thinking they are aware of aspects of the life of which Muslim women are ignorant. Here we can see the impact as it leads to European feminists taking on a parental attitude towards Muslim women, claiming to know better than what is necessary or appropriate for their well-being. In other words, Euro-American feminists will need to relinquish their belief that Eastern women are inferior to them if they ever intend to be worthwhile allies.

Yeğenoğlu offers an excellent examination of how Muslim women are alienated from female European social standards, held to be applicable worldwide, through the use of the Islamic dress code by European powers. The role played by female orientalists in the production of discourses that distinguish

between the metropole and its conquered lands is an essential contribution of Yeğenoğlu's work. Hence, her analysis strongly challenges European female orientalists' tendency to feed off key elements of the female experience, which in turn helps generate imperialist narratives. While colonialism in its purest form is now mainly absent from the contemporary scene, with countries throughout the Arab world gaining formal independence, at least, from their former colonial masters. However, colonialism has left a rich inheritance that informs and shapes the making of dominant institutions, narratives, and rational processes that are associated with societies that are now free of it in its overt forms.

I have been concerned with the European female's view of the veil. To the European female, the Islamic veil cannot be harmonized with materialistic and liberal values thought to be key to human progress; like oil and water, the two were thought to be completely incompatible. One increasingly represented a denial of the other, which is an Orientalist bequest that Euro-American feminism uses today in much of its narratives about the "East". Clearly, Euro-American assume their responsibility is to represent Muslim females because they understand them to be otherwise totally voiceless. The consequence of this assumption is that portrayed images of veiled Muslim women are chronically twisted, and these women are denied any true voice. No matter the source of the misrepresentations of Muslim veiled women, whether in mass media, academia, or elsewhere, the impact upon our knowledge of the Islamic world is direct and serious. Islamic traditions are systematically otherized in order to pave the way for further intervention and dominance. Euro-American domination is advanced by an approach that is adopted even by Euro-American feminists who apply their norms relating to human autonomy to the situation of Muslim women disregarding how Muslim women have a vastly different social landscape. In fact, this prohibits any real and genuine grasp of these women's experiences, as it puts blinders on any analysis to be conducted. All this bears out that the dynamics brought forth under colonialism are alive and well today.

While I have chosen to align myself with Yeğenoğlu's theory of gendering orientalism, I would draw attention to my concern with Yeğenoğlu's claims concerning the role of the European female travelers and their participation in the discourse of Orientalism. While Yeğenoğlu challenged Said's focus of Orientalism as solely produced by Western men, as he claimed, "Orientalism itself (...) was an exclusively male province" (1978, p. 207). However, Yeğenoğlu's survey of the narratives arising from European female concerning the Arabs stretches the notion of Orientalism as Said articulates it. For Said, the focus was on the man of enlightenment. For Yeğenoğlu, it is impossible to understand how deep and nuanced this assemblage of power and knowledge about (geography, Arabs, and the other) without attending to the close production of discourses about gender, sexuality, and violence. In tracing the female productions about the Muslim women, as Yeğenoğlu insists, these European female authors necessarily harbor the same dynamics of power, control, and subjugation featured in the discursive products of their male counterparts.

Everything novel furnished by European female accounts of "the Orient", Yeğenoğlu points out, is considered to be an essential component of knowledge concerning the "Orient". However, these contributions are also understood to exist on the periphery of the male accounts, as the latter must always stand as whole depictions on their own:

Each additional piece of information that comes from Western women is conceived as an integral part of the knowledge of the Orient, but at the same time it is seen as standing on the outskirts of the primary texts, thus implying the fullness and completeness of the masculine subject's representations (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 79).

Like Yeğenoğlu, I argue that liberal European feminists rely on discourses used by male Orientalists to advocate for freeing their subjugated counterparts in the others. Of course, instead of recognizing the differences between cultures, European feminists apply their own ideas throughout the

world, and in so doing, advance the Orientalist agenda. As such, European feminist discourse is not independent; in fact, it is a discourse of hegemonic power, and its production enhances the European masculine discourse by adding stories, narratives, and experiences about Muslim women. Thus, in this regard, I have found the description of Orientalism as a male perception of the world to be correct, in that even when women author discourses concerning the Arab region, they do so according to a male-dominated perspective. When placing male and female Orientalists' work, a similar pattern of invisible violence starts to emerge, as an example, the shared assumptions in their writings to push for modernity display such invisible violence.

I definitively support Yeğenoğlu's concept of the role of female writers in legitimizing the colonial paradigm by producing more knowledge to support the discourse and do not refute the role of female writers in such a discourse. Yet, one cannot ignore the fact that even if women deploy Orientalist discourse, I find that female discourses regarding Arab women still contribute to the masculine Orientalist discourse. Briefly, the Orientalism discourse is not an “exclusively male province,”; yet it is masculine discourse. The fact that women are the producers of a particular narrative in no way frees their work from being subject to the underlying assumptions and colonial attitudes that are prevalent in male-authored texts. The following section will be analyzing the current mode of representation of Muslim women through the work of Lila Abu-Lughod. To Abu-Lughod, the notion of universal human rights is the new face of modernity or Orientalism.

FEEL SORRY OR FEEL SUPERIOR: DEPICTIONS OF THE MUSLIM WOMAN

Depictions of Arab women in art, music, and particularly literature was constructed during the past century through the filter of systemic racism and condensed into specific and derogatory labels. In the work of the Palestinian-American anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod “*Do Muslim Women Need*

Saving?”, Lila Abu-Lughod reveals the Euro-American media’s misrepresentations of the women in the 20th century. While between the 17th and 19th centuries, Orientalist narratives may have described women as lusty sex objects (Said, 1978, p. 207), in the days following the World Trade Center attacks in New York on September 11, 2001, the discourse shifted to one whereby the rescue of veiled women, their sexual liberation, and received priority (Abu-Lughod, 2013). Abu Lughod’s treatise focused on the Euro-American worldview that advances the interpretation that subjugated Arab women require outside intervention to be rescued from their plight. Such narratives, she notes, vastly underestimate women’s position in Arab societies where the instinctive categorization of Arab women as subjugated victims in need of saving pits them against Euro-American women, who are immediately labeled as free and empowered.

In proclaiming that Euro-American principles and society, particularly the ideals of social evolution and innovation, ought to be taken as the universal norm against which all others should be gauged, liberal Euro-American feminists asserted their own authority. Modern-day Euro-American feminism has been to highlight objectionable cultural artifacts, which are then used to justify political and military intervention by the Euro-American. A case-in-point is the lead-up to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, where Western feminists imagined the enterprise would contribute to liberating helpless Arab women from the clutches of their backward, Muslim male captors. The discourse is responsible for justifying otherwise unjustifiable acts of war to “protect” women in Iraq and Afghanistan. These twin goals of “saving” and “enlightening” the Arabs, particularly its women, were invoked to provide a rationale for brutal military intervention in the Arab region. Said writes:

It is perfectly natural for the human mind to resist the assault on it of untreated strangeness; therefore, cultures have always been inclined to impose complete

transformations on other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be (Said, 1978, p.67).

The vilification of Arab men and justification for Euro-American military adventurism in the East stems from American and European portrayals of Arab Muslim women as helpless sufferers of injustice. I am in a total agreement with Abu-Lughod's argument in regard to the contemporary manipulation of the Arab Muslim women's image. Like Abu-Lughod, I insist that the Euro-American tendency to stereotype Arab Muslim women as victims whose rescue becomes the "West" responsibility amounts to hubris, which goes hand in hand with a conviction of the Euro-American pre-eminence over the Arabs.

In Abu-Lughod's analysis, she challenges Euro-American media portrayals of Arab Muslim women and how the common discourse is employed politically. However, Abu-Lughod brings up anecdotal evidence in the stories of particular women. In order to properly address the deficiencies in Euro-American feminist narratives about Arab Muslim women, to her credit, Abu-Lughod opted to interact with Muslim women directly (from Egypt) and provide them a rare opportunity to express their own voices. By bearing witness to her experiences of daily life in rural Egypt, Abu-Lughod aims to deconstruct the Euro-American representations of Arab women. Abu-Lughod clarifies:

I want to use their lives to open up a way we might think differently about Muslim women and their rights and about our responsibilities (2013, p.139).

By interviewing Arab women and sharing their stories in her book, Abu-Lughod aims to reveal the lives of Muslim women and real challenges they face in order to challenge the misrepresentations and negative perspectives around Muslim women. Dialogue with individual women bears out their frustration with the West's usual trope of the helpless Arab Muslim female whose liberation depends upon Western agency (2013, p.9-12). It must be borne in mind that Abu-Lughod seeks to provide these Muslim women with an outlet to express themselves and tell their own stories. This is an opportunity that was denied by Euro-

American female and Orientalists alike. Hence, discourses that depict the oppression of people due to their culture, such as the ones advanced by Orientalists with regards to the Arab region, require the intervention of authentically Arab voices to break the cycle. In a world where veiled Arab women are portrayed as helpless mutes, it can be helpful to identify empowered Arab women who challenge this representation by their very being. Abu-Lughod's objective in interviewing Arab Muslim women and revealing their stories is to portray them as human beings, and not simply slaves or chattel. However, keep in mind that she does not intend for these individuals' stories to exemplify life for all Arab Muslim women. Rather, Abu-Lughod exposes these stories to show that close knowledge of specific cases rules out being "satisfied with sweeping generalizations about cultures, religions, or regions," or buying into the notion that "problems have simple causes or solutions" (2013, p.17).

Such discourses distract from the true agents at play in determining the shape society takes at any given moment in time (2013, p. 20). Abu-Lughod's analysis points out the inability of Euro-American writings to take in systemic problems that affect women, such as general insecurity. When it comes to the Arab world, Euro-American discourse focuses too narrowly on the cultural and religious elements that impact women, denying the other issues, such as the existence of dictatorship and war. This can reveal the systemic racism and the conflation of religion and social and cultural practices when speaking about Muslim women. As an illustration, Euro-American feminists offered simplistic reasons for Arab Muslim women's oppression, invariably related to religion or culture. These narrow accounts had the effect of distracting from more in-depth explanations for the subjugation of Arab Muslim women. Abu- Lughod writes:

Why was knowing about the culture of the region—and particularly its religious beliefs and treatment of women—more urgent than exploring the history of the development of repressive regimes in the region and the United States' role in this history? (2013, p.27)

For instance, one of the women that Abu-Lughod interviewed is Zaynab, an Egyptian mother who lives in an Egyptian village. Abu-Lughod asked Zaynab if Islam subjugates Muslim women, the reaction of “Zaynab” to questioning whether or not Islamic law contributed to the subjugation of women was informative. Zaynab thought of several other elements of her life, such as politics and poverty, far better explained the limits placed upon her life and possibilities (2013, p. 7):

There are many suffering women who are Muslims. Zaynab, in the village in Upper Egypt, has to deal with police harassment. My aunt suffers silently a great injustice and sings about deep personal losses. Refugees beg on the streets in Beirut and Amman. The suffering of some of these women is not totally unconnected to expectations about gender enshrined in the Qur’an or cultures in the Muslim world, or sometimes justified in terms of interpretations of Islamic law. But in all cases, their suffering has more complex causes.

These are the sorts of causes we should explore (2013, p. 54).

What I have found interesting is that Zaynab does not question that she is a victim of subjugation, yet she questions the Euro-American assumption that her oppression is the result of her faith. According to her, Islam is not the culprit; there are other factors that lead to her oppression. In Abu-Lughod’s story concerning Zainab, the latter took a different view of her “rights,” as she identified a significant number of other factors at play in her oppression, which she believed should be addressed before it could be possible to speak of human rights. Religion played a far smaller role than Euro-American actors imagined, according to Zainab, who believes that religion is much more complicated than what is presented in Euro-American media. By interviewing women such as “Zaynab,” and recounting several individuals’ stories, Abu-Lughod demonstrates that the causes of any particular woman’s state of subjugation vary wildly from case to case. This emphasizes the deeply different conditions in which Arab women live their lives. It ought to be taken for granted that to adequately understand the reality of

Arab women, we should recognize and accept their different backgrounds; after all, when it comes to freedom and liberty, surely one size does not fit all. This is particularly true of Muslim society's attitudes, given the stunning diversity that exists in and among these societies. In a similar vein, Abu-Lughod poses a number of questions:

Does the idea of liberation capture the goals for which all women strive? Are emancipation, equality, and rights part of a universal language or just a particular dialect? Might other desires be as meaningful for people? Might living in close families be more valued? Living in a godly way? Living without war? (2013, p.45).

At this point, Abu-Lughod here challenges the way universal Language contributes to the subjugation of Muslim women. A case-in-point here is the veiling of Arab Muslim women, which in the West is taken to be representative of the subjugation of Arab women. It is not a given, to Abu-Lughod, that veiled women hold no power in their communities; nor it is given that either unveiling these women will free them from tyranny, or that all veiled women are forcibly compelled to don their chosen style of dress. As in the case of the Afghanistan War, contrary to American and European feminists' hopes, upon the removal of the Taliban from power, women continued to veil themselves for a variety of reasons, ranging from religious to moral and social, which necessitated that hair or face be concealed. Abu-Lughod explains:

What happened in Afghanistan under the Taliban was that one regional style of covering or veiling—associated with a certain respectable but not elite class—was imposed on everyone as “religiously” appropriate, even though previously there had been many different styles that were popular or traditional with different groups and classes... If liberated from the enforced wearing of burqas, most of these women would choose some other form of modest head covering (2013, p. 31).

Accordingly, the challenge Abu-Lughod lays down is straightforward where she questions if liberated Arab Muslim women chose to continue wearing their veils, would Euro-American powers honor that choice? What if Arab Muslim women opted for a variant expression of human rights than that traditionally adopted by the West? (2013, p. 34). The answer can be found in some European policy that bans Islamic head or face coverings. As a matter of fact, while Euro-American power invokes women's liberation to justify their actions in the Arab Muslim, they assume that the veil is forced upon Muslim women, not as their conscious choice. Furthermore, this is thought to be the result of cultural oppression and, in particular, due to backward religious influences. Remaking the "Orient" according to Euro-American values is also an appropriate example of the Euro-American refusal to accept Arab societies as an authentic and autonomous society. In so doing, Euro-American authorities constructed a regime of "rights" that must apply globally to all women, regardless of individual circumstances, leading to the notion of universal rights. The writings and productions of such authors collude with the notion of dominant power that sustains in place the idea of agents of change and regimes of truth. Abu-Lughod challenges the language of universal rights because it fails to factor in the real-life details of individuals' experiences. She lays out the concept of universality as follows:

What is universal seems neutral in that it belongs to everyone and anyone, not to someone particular. The opposite would be something partisan that favors one group or grows out of its interests or traditions. In these everyday meanings, the universal is understood through a distinction from another term. It is the stronger, more encompassing, more general term. It is also the more abstract term because universals stand above particulars, and therefore lend tremendous authority to those who claim them. The new common sense borrows from this powerful discourse of universal rights that appears not to represent special interests (2013, p. 63).

Abu-Lughod's analysis allows us to understand the contemporary conversation around Muslim women's rights as a form of Orientalism, featuring knowledge and power. Abu-Lughod challenged the discourse of Muslim women's rights in the Euro-American media, which assumes that Muslim women need to be saved, and have no power, no agency, no ability, or capacity or will to do anything for themselves. In these Euro-American media accounts, the "West" is the subject who has the reason, will, and agency to change the lives of helpless women. When contemplating contemporary moments, the epistemology of Orientalism still seems to apply or seems to inform and shape how we understand human rights. These relationships reflect a certain kind of modernity that keeps in place the other women as an object who have no rights and need to be saved.

Abu-Lughod's text raises important questions: is it possible for Euro-American thought to change? Will the Euro-American ever be capable of embracing cultural divergences, and refraining from attempts to remake its counterparts into likenesses of itself? Or is it possible for the dominant Orientalist epistemologies to be challenged and even ruptured? Clearly, "Western supremacy" was at play when the one society, based on a generalized language concerning principles and ethics, employed its superior cultural and military power to annihilate the other's cultural reality. Under these circumstances, the meaning of freedom of choice is unclear. In effect, the outcome is that freedom of choice is unavailable to Muslim women who freely choose to break Euro-American rules around human rights, an excellent example of which is the ban on the hijab in certain Euro-American nations.

As Abu-Lughod stated, in a number of nations calling for women's rights for Arab women, a legal ban on the veil renders women who chose to veil themselves criminals (2013, p.32) negates their basic human right to choose how to dress. For Abu-Lughod, a ban on the veil may signify an encroachment on women's right to freely act as they understand to be right, all in the name of condemning the veil as a "medieval imposition" (2013, p. 32). Abu-Lughod calls attention to a number of questions: what is

freedom? When is a woman freely choosing to veil herself, as opposed to being forced to cover up or to unveil by men? Is it possible for Euro-American thinkers to interrogate their own viewpoints and come to accept different interpretations of freedom than their own? But beyond that, is it possible to see through some of these problematic productions the material relations that seem to insist on colonizing the other in the world while promising a universal that excludes them? Consequently, universal Euro-American language continues to be an obstacle for the production of cultural meaning and identity; in fact, it tends to downplay individual choice and difference, and fortify discourses built upon stereotypes that portray Arab women as helpless victims of religious and cultural repression.

Said's work "*Covering Islam*" will be used to better understand Lila Abu-Lughod's work. Said's *Orientalism* investigates the treatment of the "East" during the colonial periods in ways that unpack the Orientalists' discourse in Europe from the colonial period. Yet, *Covering Islam* acts as both an extension to his previous work *Orientalism* and an exploration of modern relationships between "Middle Eastern" cultures and the "West", especially the United States. I find that both Said's and Abu-Lughod's books investigate the continuous Orientalist thinking and how it influences the current relationship between the Arab and the Euro-American. While Abu-Lughod did not refer to Said in her text; yet it seems that Abu-Lughod's stance is in a closer agreement with Said in regard to the construction of the other through the nexus of knowledge and power. Importantly, I find that Abu-Lughod did not only extend Said's concept of knowledge and power, but her content analysis and her methods of bringing native voices bring new insights. It opens up a space to think differently, and also to challenge the discourse around Eastern women. Furthermore, unlike the model proposed by Edward Said, Abu-Lughod investigates the continuous use of gender in contemporary Euro-American discourse; specifically, she investigates how gender informs responses to political, economic, and social developments in the Islamic world. Nonetheless, Said's work remains informative. In "*Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts*

Determine How We See the Rest of the World,” he offers highly valuable insights for addressing a number of issues raised by Abu-Lughod.

In *Covering Islam*, Said studies the ways in which colonial narratives infiltrated American mass media and popular culture, which according to its mode of organization, promoted a polarization in the public mind between American society and Arab barbarism. The manner in which members of the Islamic faith are portrayed in American print publications, for instance, promotes apprehension of all things Muslim:

The deliberately created associations between Islam and fundamentalism ensure that the average reader comes to see Islam and fundamentalism as essentially the same thing. Given the tendency to reduce Islam to a handful of rules, stereotypes, and generalizations about the faith, its founder, and all of its people, then the reinforcement of every negative fact associated with Islam — its violence, primitiveness, atavism, threatening qualities — is perpetuated (Said, 1997, p. 9).

There are a huge number of discourses on Muslim entities which paint whole communities as being made up of dangerous sub-humans, altogether ignoring “the enormously varied life that goes on in the world of Islam, with its more than 800,000,000 people, its millions of square miles of territory principally in Africa and Asia, its dozens of societies, states, histories, geographies, cultures” (Said, 1997, p. 46).

In American media coverage, such as in newspapers or television broadcasts, the routine practice was to apply Orientalist stereotypes to describe the entire Muslim landscape, even though “such vast platitudes (may not) always (have) accounted for the behavior of every Muslim” (Said, 1997, p. 99). Correspondingly, Abu-Lughod points out that certain horror stories printed in the American press concerning women’s rights, in certain specific cases, are never acknowledged to be one-off situations that bear little relation to broader trends (2013, p. 65). The dominant idea that Euro-American media

communicates about specific Muslim world is advanced through a set of discourses that may invoke real individual cases of abuse, then present them in such a way as to give the impression that they represent the living situation of all women who adhere to an Islamic dress code (2013, p. 67).

I insist that when examining the gendered discourse, one needs to challenge why the image of submissive Arab Muslim women is accepted and necessary. For instance, if a Muslim woman decides to wear a hijab/veil, she will need to defend her choice as a personal decision, not a patriarchal or cultural force. In fact, the case of wearing a veil as a personal choice has been challenged and becomes even more, pressing where the woman lives in a jurisdiction with dress codes embedded into modesty laws. It is perceived as a unique case compared to the narrative of veiled-oppressed women. The truth is that Muslim women have diverse experiences; not all women had the freedom to decide to wear or not wear the hijab, yet not all the veiled women were forced to wear it. Ultimately, this raises a critical question of why the narrative of oppressed Muslim women is constantly reiterated as the sole experience of all Muslim women. The answer is simple; this image of oppressed women is needed to empower and sustain the dominant relationship.

This all bears great relevance to the cases made between 2001 and 2003 for the American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, which partly rested on the need to bring universal human rights, in particular for women, to that region of the world. Abu-Lughod invites us to ask whether or not this discourse fully captures the reality that is experienced by Muslim women, whose distress stems from vastly more intricate and varied causes than simply social structure or religion. Similarly, Said decried the fact that Western representations of Muslim communities tended to downplay “social, economic, and historical factors” in favor of depicting the whole of Islam as a menace to the American and to American values (Said, 1997, p. 47). Said discusses the assumption that certain peoples are endowed with lofty goals, which grant upon them the right to dominate others, “not in the name of brute force or raw plunder, both of which are

standard components of the exercise, but in the name of a noble ideal” (Said, 2000, p. 574). Thus, the operative goal of intervening militarily in the Arab region is depicted as an honorable one, namely the rescue and safeguarding of oppressed women, rather than the simple despoliation of Arab societies.

Post-9/11, any invocation of Muslim females seemed, mysteriously, to be coupled with negative adjectives such as “subjugated,” while media reporting on members of the Islamic faith concentrated on specific cases of upsetting experiences that were then extrapolated to establish a connection between Muslim people and dangerous social, economic, political, or security conditions. This creates, in the Euro-American mind, an association between Muslims and “trouble”. Clearly, Abu-Lughod draws a direct link between the American media portrayals of Arab women and colonial discourses. The portrayals of Arab Muslim women in Euro-American media as helpless victims demand that certain narratives be followed, such as that of Muslim women yearning for liberty, rather than those depicting women doing their best to be good children to their parents and good wives to their husbands (Abu-Lughod, 2013, p.74). This kind of selective narrative can be explained by the need to compete with attention-grabbing items featured on television media outlets. Print media opts to publish stories that will entice readers, rather than faithfully cover events on the ground (Said,1997, p. 179). Such a practice explains how Euro-American media outlets portray Muslim women, since depicting “women and girls who challenged Western assumptions” would essentially chase readers away, as “Western women would no longer be the role models, nor would they feel needed” (Abu-Lughod, 2013, p. 74). Hence, we can see how such productions of such problematic narratives are, therefore, an essential component to the epistemologies of dominant Euro-American discourses and continued Euro-American hegemony in the Arab region.

The concern here is that these binary narratives in the media are informed and shaped by the early contact between the “East - West”. The polarization of the self versus the other, pitting values such as modernity against their perceived opposites, served to strengthen the case for Euro-American intervention

in the Arab world. Hence, the “language of universal human rights,” ironically, most often served to promote inequality, as it merged with 20th century Orientalist discourses (Said, 1997, p. 97) to “demonize and dehumanize” Islamic culture, based on the notion that “it is 'enraged' at modernity,” thus rendering Muslims “into the objects of therapeutic, punitive attention” (Said, 1997, p. 30). When trying to understand media coverage of veiled Muslim women, I ask how, for the sake of women's emancipation, the United States acquired the right to intervene militarily in the Arab world.

The power dynamics at play in the contemporary era are all-important; as an example, one needs to consider which party boasts enough influence to shape narratives about “the other”?. Abu-Lughod insists that we must explore “who has the power to reduce other women and particularly Muslim women, to subjects known only by deficits in their rights,” and who can prescribe remedies “in development, empowerment, Christianity, women's rights, human rights” (2013, p. 223). Abu-Lughod's statement leads us to question who can legitimately represent Muslim women? To whose benefit does the notion of subjugated Muslim women accrue, under which circumstances.?

American media coverage of Islam amounted not to any real elucidation of facts, but rather, an affirmation of force. American media can get away with expressing anything they like about Islam, resulting in the dominance of a certain portrayal of Islam in media coverage, as “anything falling outside the consensus definition of what is important is considered irrelevant to United States interests and to the media’s definition of a good story” (Said, 1997, p. 224). The profit motive naturally drives media corporations to foster certain interpretations of reality over others, which occurs “within a political context made active and effective by an unconscious ideology, which the media disseminate without serious reservations or opposition” (Said, 1997, p. 117)

In this regard, I have found that as European colonizers previously employed the tools of discourse to provide a rationale for American conquest and domination of the Arab region. Similarly, the American

lawmakers and policymakers to make it sound more accurate employs its media establishment to promote a version of reality that enables it to “justly” intervene in the Arab region to protect American approaches and values and supposedly rescue Arab Muslim women from these backward societies. American social norms are presumed to be applicable around the globe, regardless of local conditions. Problematically, without a narrow focus on individual cases of abuse, generalized into broad statements about Islam as a whole, the American and European mission to “save” Muslim women falls apart and with it, what I suppose this practice to be called “noble” justification for American dominion in the Arab world. The goal of liberating veiled Muslim women was, therefore, an empty one, as their invocation by American powers rather served the purpose of providing a credible rationale for military intervention. Hence, in accordance with Abu-Lughod, this universal language of human rights or Euro-American modernization is part and parcel with the Orientalist discourse that sustains colonialism well into the 21st century. Media products, such as television shows, newspapers, and opinion articles, are artificial constructs of human agents, resulting from “human will, history, social circumstances, institutions, and the conventions of one’s profession” (Said, 1997, p. 118). In these productions, there is no true representation, and “no one lives in direct contact either with truth or with reality” (Said, 1997, p. 114). Said clarifies:

Each of us lives in a world actually made all, of willed human labor expended to give those things an identity we can recognize. Not that truth and reality do not in fact exist (1997, p. 114).

I concede that this is a man-made discourse where the truth does not exist; a man who makes the discourse will have it for their own benefit. A paradigmatic example is the current discourse that framed Muslim women as victims of cultural abuse; consequently, they need to be saved by the Euro-American man. The issue at hand is that this discourse is created by the Euro-American to justify their actions in the Arab and Muslim countries.

Going back to the role of media productions, we can recognize that these productions are not unrestricted, spur-of-the-moment events, as “pictures and ideas do not merely spring from reality into our eyes and minds, truth is not directly available, (and) we do not have unrestrained variety at our disposal” (Said, 1997, p. 116). This asserts that Euro-American portrayals of subjugated Arab Muslim women are essentially media products made for consumption by readers “in a very specific political context,” which then serve as “key ingredients in the normalization of political and military hostility toward countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq” (Abu-Lughod, 2013, p. 78). These problematic narratives about Islam that are so common in Euro-American media, which involve the conflation of Islam with female oppression, contribute to the continuation of a set of discourses that insist on confirming the major principles of Orientalism. My primary concern here is that this production of knowledge is a form of invisible violence that is entangled with a form of power whose effects are violence towards and to obliviousness about the Arabs. They also promote Euro-American supremacist views through which the Euro-American is held to be more advanced than the Arabs in every important area of life. Euro-American media, as a whole, provide a collective center of discourse that offers a particular view of the Muslim faith, which accommodates the specific needs of the elites of the society that the media functions to enlighten (Said, 1997, p. 115).

Before explaining my contention with Abu-Lughod, I will discuss Abu-Lughod's discussion of the role of self-orientalists' women such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali, in promoting the narrative of oppressed Muslim women. The author challenges how the US/European media uses Ali's personal story as the case of all Muslim women in the Arab world. To Euro-American media, Ali is considered native informant with the authoritative voice who speaks negatively about the cultural norms of her culture of birth and claim to speak about voiceless women. Apparently, she feels entitled to be a representative of Arab Muslim women. Similar to the colonial framework, Ali accuses the Islamic faith and Eastern men of oppressing

and subjugating Muslim women. Ali gets the authority to speak and to be heard and, more importantly, to be perceived as speaking the authentic truth. Considering the case of Ali, I wonder whether an Arab Muslim woman get the chance to represent herself in the Euro-American if her story was different and does not support the colonial discourse.? The challenge presented here is that those who get the opportunity to be heard as the only authentic truth.

To Abu-Lughod, human rights institutions can emancipate women once they express themselves by using their voice. However, she overlooked the fact that discussing the issue of the human rights of Arab women and giving them the chance to express themselves by hearing their voices does not necessarily mean that we are challenging the dominant epistemology that oppresses them. The reason is that using their voice is no way guarantees that Arab Muslim women will be heard by or through these institutions because they already have a dominant epistemology and ontology to decide who should be represented. Any consideration of knowledge production and power must go beyond the individuals who produced this knowledge and address the institutions that generate the knowledge as a truth or reality. The institution, generally, is highly important; as knowledge and power are entangled, so too the way the system is produced and the way the subject is produced are entangled through institutions. In sum, different institutions produce different ideas about the same subject. Thus, the usefulness of media as an instrument of politics is well established. In *“Do Muslim Women Need Saving,”* Abu-Lughod spells out the ways in which anti-colonial groups focus on media initiatives in order to sustain their efforts. This is due to the immense value of the diffusion of information in a way to gain people’s backing, which was done to justify establishing colonies in the first place. Pushing women to self-express themselves is not enough. However, we need to continue to challenge not only individuals who write about Muslim women but also those institutions which presume to give those individuals the authority to speak on behalf of Muslim women. This is especially pressing when these institutions hold power and decide who can have

a voice and who can be heard, these institutions decide who gets published, who can speak to large audiences, which is placed on television, and who is shown through web search engine algorithms.

CONCLUSION

I locate my theory more with Abu-Lughod's and Yeğenoğlu's analysis of gendering the East's discourse, as I consider both works as crucial in understanding issues pertaining to the construction of others, especially women. Through their analysis, I revealed that even when women were the authors, discourses concerning Muslim women remained deeply male-centered. The complexity around the question of veiling forbids oversimplification. In the Arab region, veiling can be seen as a symbol of individuality and an act of defiance against imposed identities (e.g., the case of Algerian women during the French war). In this chapter, I have come to trace the production of a set of discourses about the production of the universality of women's rights. I illustrated through the works of Abu-Lughod and Yeğenoğlu that this production is not neutral but entangled and co-constitutive with a form of hegemonic power that insists on the superiority of what is articulated as the Euro-American and the backwardness of the Arabs. Furthermore, these orientalist discourses are inflected through gender. These discourses are connected to the imperial project, centering on the imposition of "modernity". We should not allow ourselves to think that liberation can be achieved through war. Deepa Kumar aptly summarizes this hurtful truth: "Empire does not liberate, it subjugates" (2017, p.248). The situation is best understood as follow; the universal language of women's rights is thought to be applicable to all women, regardless of their differences, in order to liberate them. This raises questions around the construction of the self and its interconnectedness with the concept of the "other". Adherence to the notion that the Euro-American is innately superior leads to misrepresentations of Islam and a denial of Muslim women's universal human

rights. This leads to a bifurcation featuring two sets of opposites: a retrograde Islam and a modern Christian Euro-American.

Drawing from these authors, I explained how under the banner of humanitarianism, a number of disciplinary procedures were implemented over the centuries by relying on the above-described binary between “East -West”. Consequently, the consistent belief that the culturally inferior Arabs has yet failed to catch up to the innately superior Euro-American is thereby bolstered. For example, a number of Euro-American feminists calling for universal rights based solely on the Euro-American concept of rights that can be seen as exercising a kind of hegemonic power over Muslim females, all in the name of freedom. In the Euro-American, the Islamic veil represents an affront to Euro-American values, including freedom and democracy, and as such, it must be banned in order to protect the Euro-American legacy of human rights. As in the case of banning the veil, religious men or the patriarchal state play the role of arbitrator of appropriate dress for women; such an action raises an interesting question, how laws restricting Muslim's women choices are promoted as doing anything other than oppressing women in the name of human rights.

By this, we mean that a gendered analysis of the appropriation of such a discourse by Euro-American outlets reveals how it hinders the power of women to express their struggles. This knowledge, produced by Euro-American women, portrays Muslim women as subjects that cannot self-represent but must instead be represented by others. These discourses stemmed from images of Muslim women already deeply engrained in Euro-American culture. Hegemonic representations of Muslims in the media, literature, art, etc., directly, and indirectly, affect them. These types of representations offer a very distorted and untrue view of life as a Muslim woman, contributing to a feeling of disillusionment about how Muslim women are represented. The far-reaching impact of the dominant discourse remains to be fully described.

I concur with Abu-Lughod's that the challenge is to first question the dominant epistemologies of Orientalism, which are gendered. Second, it is only then that Muslim women can start thinking about what it means to represent themselves and how so, instead of being represented by self-proclaimed saviors, and for the resulting product to be recognized as a legitimate form of knowledge. As in Abu-Lughod's book, being willing to honor the testimonies of Muslim women, concerning all aspects of their lives, will open up new ways of producing knowledge about Eastern women. This will lead us to better appreciate Muslim women's rights. A diversity of perspectives enriches the whole body of knowledge under study. To conclude, representing the Muslim woman can only truly be addressed by incorporating all aspects of her life in the analysis, not merely the religious or cultural aspect, and by giving her a voice of her own. This will unleash the potential to truly know these women in all their diversity and help us better produce more accurate discourses about them.

DISSERTATION CONCLUSION

Our present concern is to demonstrate how feminist critiques of the concept of Orientalism open up new ways of understanding knowledge production to help decolonize the dynamics of Western power in literature and representation. The utilization of Muslim women's negative characteristics through various channels tends to depict Islam as a hegemonic and a regressive belief system. As it turns out, this creates an overly simplified image of Muslim women; such simplification serves to marginalize them. This has historically been based on numerous biases and mythologies which serve to create distorted images that continues in the 21st century. We have discussed texts that enable us to observe the development of Euro-American narratives and images concerning the prejudiced misrepresentation of the Arab world, especially women in Euro-American literature and media. The widespread Orientalist representations of Arab and Muslim women have contributed to a dichotomization between the constructed concept of "East and the West". In dissecting and analyzing texts and narratives that criticize Orientalism, we have brought to light how Orientalist texts alter Arab and Muslim women's actual image. Emphasizing and engaging with this subject matter will hopefully illuminate how narratives connect to their broader milieus.

Drawing on Said and other feminist postcolonial theorists such as Abu-Lughod; Alloula; Kabbani; and Yeğenoğlu, we discuss how Arab females are depicted through a feminist lens. We discover the origins of the imbalanced connection between the European and the Arab, particularly as it exists in the narrative of the subjugated Arab female. Given that feminist authors fault Said for relegating gender to a mere tangential afterthought, we here opt to concentrate on gendering Orientalism. Those authors stretched Said's Orientalism by picking up themes and stressing themes to allow us to understand, challenge, and deconstruct power relationships that were created during colonialism and persist into the postcolonial era. Through analyzing their work, I look for answers to the following questions: how can

feminist critiques of the concept of Orientalism open new ways of understanding knowledge production? How do such insights contribute toward decolonizing the dynamics of Eurocentric knowledge and power relations in literature and representation? In pursuing these questions and tracing Arab/Muslim women's catastrophic depiction within Euro-American discourses, the selected texts reveal how certain notions of domination became entangled with the notions of oppression. These texts collectively problematize how the discourse is constituted as a set of the fixed and intertwined bind between knowledge (i.e., representations) and power. Ultimately, it has concrete material implications in how we think, how we understand and perceive the others. Taking their work collectively, it is a resistance to dismantle and unearth the consistent gendered structures of domination and racialized power.

By exploring the way those selected authors expose the process of constructing Arab women, one can take their works to understand better the inextricable relation of racialized power and knowledge produced about Arab women. The interpretations given interrogate how the historical legacies of Orientalism still formulate contemporary politics and attitudes. In exploring these books, I have located four major themes that go hand on hand to strengthen the discourse of Arab and Muslim women, including morality, visual depiction, modernity, and the conception of human rights. By exploring each theme, I explain how the universal language of human rights establishes and sustains a hierarchical binary that only benefits the holder of power. These themes can be seen as the internal differences between the four authors, where each one is showing the violence of constituting the Arab women through the Euro-American discourses (i.e., colonial, post-colonial, and contemporary) yet in a precise way.

Starting with the theme of morality that Kabbani explores in terms of the exoticization of the so-called "Eastern women", it specifically depicts sexually aberrant behavior. Narratives of exoticism, eroticism, and themes related to the sexualization of women's bodies resulted in justifying enslaving the others through the intersection of politics and cultural means. My concern, though, is that these

characteristics are used to strengthen a picture of the Arab and Muslim women as a sub-human who is racially, socially, and culturally inferior due to defects in morality.

My argument asserts that the visual depictions are used to create an artificial and arbitrary homogeneity of visual depiction, I find evidence when tracing the representation of women from the 16th to the 20th century I recognize that while the nature of images have changed, the dominant purpose of these images continues to persist. Themes of a visual representation arise in how the “Middle East” is arbitrarily constructed with a fixed meaning as a unified whole visual in defying cultural and geographic reality. For example, the selection of specific modes of photography in the creation of dominant stereotypes and archetypes of the “Middle East” created a fabricated reality. As it turns out, visual representation is a profitable tool to convince the readers of the so-called “reality of the East”. Interestingly, throughout history, Arab women's visuality changed from erotic/mostly naked to oppressed/fully covered; the historic 19th-century depiction of the Orientalist slave market imagery evoked the exotic concept. However, this visual homogenization persists with depictions of the fully covered women as icons of oppression. These visual depictions are continuing, but some of the authors I read like Alloula participated in constructing some of those images.

It seems that anything that does not fit into the characterization of modernity is seen as a problem. When a place is represented as less modern, it drives a narrative in which that place may be advanced to be more modern if it accepts the guidance and domination of the supposedly more modern Euro-American countries. Thus, the Euro-American are presented as the wellspring of modernity from which technological, social, and political advancement continues outwards and downhill to the more barbaric regions of the Earth. The problem I see here is the Kipling's conception of a “white man's burden” continues to underpin the narrative of modernity. The 21st-century ideals of bringing democracy and a narrow conception of feminism to the “Middle East” are fundamentally the same as the traditional

imperialist mode of bringing civilization to the Earth's wretches. Hence, the use of ideology serves to legitimize and perpetuate a racist discourse.

From my standpoint, the universal human rights discourse is the new face of modernity where Islam and Arab world cultures are presented as barriers to the attainment of women's rights. On its face, there is a need to separate Arab and Muslim women from their cultural and religious heritage to allow them to attain equality, liberation, and the actualization of their rights. This ideology paradoxically ignores the underlying fact that freedom of religion is a core human right. Hence, the hegemonic modes of Euro-American thinking on women's rights exclude Arab and Muslim women's experience and advance patriarchal agendas that seek to separate women from their culture and religion. It is analogous to occupying soldiers who claim that "In order to save this village, we had to destroy it". My concern here is that human rights are trampled on and ignored, especially in terms of religion, cultural expression, and linguistic autonomy Which can be observed in the case of representing war as a rescue mission to save Muslim women.

ORIENTAL WOMEN

Narratives concerning Arab and Muslim women emanating from the Euro-American have strengthened Orientalism and made it more prevalent throughout the world. Through images, news, and lectures concerning Muslim women's situation in the Arab region, they have strengthened Westerners' knowledge production and their construction of the world into two groups. By critiquing the narrative creation practices of the Euro-American, through the readings of Abu-Lughod, Alloula, Kabbani, and Yeğenoğlu, we have shown that such practices support the standard narrative of the oppressed Arab and Muslim woman. This justifies Euro-American intervention in the Arab world. To those authors, these discourses are based on stereotypes of Arab women and their plight to strengthening the polarity between

“East” and “West”. The exercise of using Arab women in order to clarify the differences between the situations in both the Arab world and the Euro-American is a political tool to reinforce social, religious, and cultural superiority.

The terminology of “erotic” and “oppressed” have been used to depict Arab and Muslim women as a form of “Other”. These ideas of the Muslim woman as pliable and submissive fuel the racialist narratives that advance a binary superiority and inferiority. This is especially stark when considering the representation of Arab and Muslim women under Islam as being antithetical to Euro-American feminist models. As I illustrated, Arab and Muslim females who opt to wear the Islamic religious dress are depicted in a way that shows them as enchained captives in need of help, whose only purpose is thought to be gratifying men. They are represented as submissive creatures who long for the type of liberty afforded to their “Western” counterparts, compared to “Western women”, who benefit from endless freedom. The role of this discourse is obvious in determining the way Islamic religious dress is perceived where the veil is not considered as a religious symbol, but a political one. The interpretation given by these authors brings to light issues arising from the misrepresentation of Arab and Muslim females opting to wear Islamic religious dress. The European and American impulse to “free Eastern females” from such dress maintain the nature of the constructed alter-ego (i.e., the other). In fact, Euro-American feminist discourse has been co-opted by policymakers, media, and etc. who use these discourses to criticize Islam and Arab world culture. In this sense, Islam is deliberately misrepresented, with its most-extreme forms being held to exemplify the Islamic archetype. Ultimately, these narratives advance the idea that the treatment of women in some areas of Islam is an indictment of the entire religion of peace. Euro-American (including feminist) narratives concerning Arab and Muslim women are commonly rooted in portrayals of the latter as subjugated, particularly on an account of their religion (i.e., Islam). It is established that, far from neutral observations of reality, European narratives originate in Europe's dominant status. Behind this discourse

lies a vast amount of knowledge generated to strengthen superior countries' domination over inferior ones. These discourses continue to be relevant to Euro-American endeavoring to expose the “truth about the East”.

DICHOTOMY

Problematically, the dichotomizations of the world into categories – “East and West” - make it impossible to see the reality within these discourses, which evade the multiplicity of worlds and relationships. It is a construction of the others, not a purely descriptive discourse; while it does come to be seen as a reality, it is still construction. For this reason, we need to continually challenge “East/West's” construction as part of an epistemology of modernity that focuses on the hierarchization of the world. Under the name of modernity and providing Arab and Muslim women with an agency to live a “better” life, Euro-American discourse reinforces their cultural and political superiority. The default European discourse identified Europe as the crux of all world events, and it gave birth to the “other” versus “self” worldview. What Euro-American consider to be reality is represented by them as the truth, and the same applies to the ideas of human rights and modernity; what the Euro-American considers universal must be applicable to all others, as well as to themselves. For this reason, there is a need to challenge the dichotomization of the world into two groups, the dominating “West” and the in need of being under control “East”.

The dichotomy between Orient and Occident is an artificial structure for the advancement of the colonial agenda, which intensified over time as it noted the distinctions between what came to be “the Orient vs the Occident”. The dichotomization of “East versus West” has been used as a powerful tool to validate the European position. Furthermore, it makes it epistemologically possible for people in the Arab world to think about themselves in the same way Euro-American do. In other words, “Westerners” create

in the mind of “Easterners” the internalization of a sense of inferiority that conforms to the Euro-American worldview, which holds the “East” to be backward, savage, and otherwise morally bankrupt. However, this is not the truth about the Arab world; it is a “Western” construction of the world in Euro-American perception.

Thus, intending to subjugate the “East”, Europeans established the morally and otherwise lower status of Arab relative to the Euro-American. In this way, the worldwide supremacy of European was constructed through the religious and moral dichotomy, and by maintaining the European-established meanings of “West” and the rest. In this optic, the Europe and America are placed at the top of the human pyramid, while the Arab is cast down below the level of humanity.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The European ideological framework has provided the basis for any standard evaluation of Arab reality. First, one must come to grips with the fact that universal human rights are problematic and need to be challenged. Universal human rights are all Euro-American beliefs and ideas about human rights, which cannot be applicable to all other societies. However, because the Euro-American visualizes them as being universal, any society that does not adopt them is considered backward and in need of civilization. In essence, the Euro-American has the knowledge to define human rights and the power to fight for them. The act of enforcing human rights should not violate the rights of other people. For example, the Euro-American perspective considers wearing the veil as a sign of abuse and a violation of Arab/Muslim women’s rights. However, enforcing this right by agitating against the veil explicitly violates their right to choose what to wear and to use their agency to live the lives they want. If, by invoking human rights, Euro-American claim to give agency to oppressed Arab/Muslim women, how would Euro-American

control women's choices based on the European code or the so-called "universal rights" not violate their rights?

This indicates how outdated sex roles continue to determine how women are conceptualized. The standard against which the situation of women worldwide is measured remains that of the emancipated European female. The European version of the freedwoman is set as the standard. One should question who has the power to reproduce these rights as universal norms and in which discourses these ideas are used. Such a worldview is seriously challenged every time Muslim women make a conscious decision to don Islamic dress. Protesting in favor of rights not considered part of the European canon of "universal" human rights, such as wearing the veil of the hijab, again renders Muslim women the objects of Euro-American control, on the basis that she and her male counterparts are incapable of governing themselves. For example, in the case of Afghanistan, an ostensibly honorable mission to save Afghani women was used to support American military intervention, with much media coverage lending its power to develop this narrative. However, the consequences of the Afghan war are never highlighted. It is as if they existed somewhere in the distance, as something irrelevant, or perhaps simply a thing of the past, but certainly never likely to worsen the situation of Afghani women. This demonstrates how Arab and Muslim females' liberty is only worth protecting when it contributes to Euro-American political and military objectives. This is better understood within the case of Malala Yousafzai, Yousafzai, a Pakistani female at the age of 15, was attacked by the Taliban after speaking about girls' right to study (Husain,2013). This is what took place in Yousafzai's case; Euro-American use Malala's story to justify their intervention in Pakistan, claiming to be protecting Pakistani women, giving them agency, and defending their rights to study and live as do normal Euro-American females. This is probably due to the fact that the violence in Malala's case was visited on its victims by the Taliban, representing the "evil East".

FRAMING THE OTHER

The idea of framing is selecting and emphasizing specific aspects of life (e.g., events, circumstances, discourse) to connect them in such a way as to advance a precisely crafted narrative (e.g., interpretation, assessment, or proposed resolution). Frames that employ a culture's most meaningful words and images are the most intelligible, impressive, and emotionally potent; they have the highest probability of wielding influence over both people and events (Entman, 2003, p. 417). For example, following a familiar template, Canadian media portrayed the story of the celebrated Saudi-turned-Canadian-refugee Rahaf Mohammed Al-Qunun as one of "Western salvation". Once again, a poor, helpless, voiceless, powerless, Arab Muslim woman benefited from the kind-hearted rescue of "Western men", the only creatures capable of hearing her. The reason Orientalists adopt a victim narrative around Al-Qunun because, through the process of retelling her ghastly accounts of abuse and fleeing from certain death in the "East," the old trope of "primitive" Islamic and Muslim men not only survives but expands. It reflects the narrative that the unequal treatment afforded Arab Muslim women by Arab Muslim men is a sign of their entire culture's inferiority, savagery, and barbarism. The two latter points apply mainly to Arab males and are often invoked in the form of complaints about the absence of women's freedom in matters ranging from education to marriage or dress. One writer for *The New York Times* seems to speak for her, in keeping with the Orientalist approach, given the contrast that he draws here between the two cultures involved (i.e., East versus West), to express what the voiceless Al-Qunun's motivations truly are:

The celebrated Saudi-turned-Canadian-refugee Rahaf Mohammed Alqunun just wants to experience what it is like to be a teenager, free to do what she wants and dress how she wants...

Now she can do things unimaginable for a woman at home (Porter, 2019).

A statement like that apparently illustrates the superiority of the Euro-American and its "free" culture.

This centuries-old imperialist structure, at this point, is quite familiar. The “rescue” scenario, so often played and re-played to support colonialism covertly, appears to be written by template in articles about Al-Qunun. Al-Qunun’s story follows a “good Orientalist” pattern: she was “saved,” upon successfully obtaining refugee status in a “Western” country (i.e., Canada). Now, when asked, she uses her new “voice,” freshly given to her by her ostensibly benevolent white male allies (and their “free” women), to express that she intends to follow her dreams, pursue her studies, explore her passions, and altogether live her life. As we have seen, such a discourse includes and compels an “agreed paradigm,” through which Islam is condemned as a misogynist creed. Euro-American media plays a part in this by consistently lamenting the exclusion, in Muslim societies, of women from the full range of fields of study, framing this matter as an inherent problem with both the Arabs tradition and Islam itself. The production and publication of articles such as these establish beyond doubt that Orientalist stereotypes about Islam and Muslim women, in particular, are still very much alive in the contemporary Euro-American discourse. In light of this, I suggest that before problematizing individuals for continuing to reproduce asymmetrical knowledge, we need to challenge the persistent hegemonic institution that works in sustaining power and authority by legitimating those individuals as authoritative voices.

This distorted framing of Arab and Muslim women is dangerous because it tends to show the division between women who live in the Euro-American region (i.e., “free” and modern women) and women who live in the Arab region (i.e., primitive, helpless, and “voiceless” women). Furthermore, it disregards the full range of ways of being, of genuine perspectives, and of lived experiences that exist among the women in Arab region. Accordingly, the forced silence of Arab Muslim women can only end, and they can only obtain accurate representation, upon the divinely inspired action of Euro-American. For instance, once women in Saudi Arabia were finally granted the right to drive in 2018, the focus of Euro-American writers remained steadfastly trained on a supposedly vast list of rights yet unattained by women

in that country. Reactions vary, but a direct response to what may appear as pure cynicism on the part of Euro-American media, which was offered by Saudi Arabia's first-ever female envoy, Princess Reema bint Bandar Al Saud, is poignant:

Once we exhibit change you come to us with cynicism. I don't know how to explain how destructive that is. We are so thrilled and excited and the article ends up: 'This was so fabulous BUT'... why but? Do you say that to anyone else? Is it because we are in the Middle East and there is a history of what you did not feel assimilated to your values? Please understand the values we have are different. They are not right or wrong and they should be honored for what they are.. That 'but' is so detrimental to the women I work with, and the women I try to inspire, but I will remind you what I remind them: We are not working for anyone outside this nation. We are working for this nation, for the women of our nation, for the men of our nation, for the evolution of where we need to be, and that is how we will benefit you and that is how we will be global (as cited in Nugali, 2018).

It did not seem to matter if Saudi women have the right to drive because there will always be a notion of differentiation that will be picked to challenge any positive changes in the Arab world. With this understanding, it is the impossibility to view Arabs changes in relation to women's rights without the comparison to the existing modernization system.

GENERALIZATION

When looking at a veiled Muslim woman's picture, one must ask two questions: What ideas and descriptors come to mind when looking at this picture? What is the intention of the presenter or the image and descriptors they want to convey? The image of the oppressed Muslim female originated in a

masculine, European imperial context. A particular contract persists between Arab Muslim women wearing Islamic dress and apparently liberated and emancipated Euro-American women. In the Euro-American canon, the representation of Arab Muslim women is generalized as a single type of person, i.e., oppressed, and with no agency to speak or act. Those subscribing to the European and American pro-female ideology tend to believe that the thought forms produced in their societies can pull Arab women out of their plight, even though such a view mimics the usual forms of oppression. To Euro-American feminists, “Eastern culture and religion” are generalized as opposed to Euro-American culture and necessarily violate human rights. Hence, Euro-American feminists give voice to their concerns about women's situation in the Arab region and demand intervention to assert the rights of women. This is another way of using the discourse that justifies and benefits the Euro-American culturally and politically.

Since females in the Euro-American see their situation as being superior to that of women in the Arab world, they perceive Arab Muslim women as a whole as unfortunate woman. The constructed dichotomization of liberated European women and subjugated Muslim women betrayed the Orientalist influences on the European and American agendas for women's rights. In particular, agendas that are manifested in many of the representations and narratives that are set as part of the debate around Islamic dress. I find it challenging because Arab Muslim women in such a discourse are constructed as a single unit without considering the differences in society in terms of religions and culture. European and American thinkers find it extremely difficult to accurately capture the actual reality of life for Arab females and, most of the time, display utterly no interest and exert little to no effort in doing so.

Euro-American human rights, which ostensibly stands for universalizing the rights of women all over the world, is not universally transferable. These rights often disable the true perception of the definition of freedom for Arab women who choose to don Islamic dress. Muslim dress is composed of garments that females adopt on a variety of grounds, including giving voice to their personal or cultural

backgrounds; however, the Euro-American discourse that is interested in Muslim women's dress, especially "veils or scarves", does not really consider that donning Islamic dress may sometimes be an empowering gesture. The veil should not be generalized and discussed as a political dress. It is a form of religious expression whereby Muslim women decide to wear such items on account of their religious or cultural beliefs. Nevertheless, the European and American women's rights movements now embrace it as part of their approach to the question of Islamic dress.

Crucially, then, there needs to be an understanding of the status of women in the Arab Muslim world as a multifaceted matter that is not liable to be condensed to a pithy concept. Typecasting Muslim women in this way are not just unethical and condescending; it dichotomizes the world, as demonstrated in this text. Such a discourse can be clearly seen as a vast array of misleading narratives, essentially amounting to slander, which has contributed to fortifying the European sense of self and superiority while demeaning and devaluing the Arab's self.

This calls attention to the ongoing racist and sexist domination of Arab women by oppressive Euro-American cultural, economic, and patriarchal domination that has long been problematic. Because of the obsessive focus on the veil, they fail to consider other severe problems; in particular war-related violence against women (i.e., rape and torture cases in Abu-Ghraib). As an example, I draw on the cases of Nabila Rehman that, not surprisingly, was nearly overlooked. In 2012, Nabila, a 9-year-old Pakistani girl, was the victim of a drone strike launched by the US-led coalition, Nabila was injured, while her brother and grandmother were both killed in front of her (McVeigh,2013). While Nabila did her best to communicate her views and her suffering in 2013 (McVeigh,2013), she barely received any consideration in the "West". The violence visited on Nabila was from the United States military, representing the "saving heroes in the Western script". Those are the same noblemen who were sent to supposedly rescue oppressed Muslim women, left Nabila hopeless. When discussing violations of human rights by American, as

occurred in the case of Nabila Rehman, there seems to be nothing to be discussed or to be explained. This suggests that the protection of women is just a narrative used to exercise power and assert moral superiority in a way that strengthens the “West's position” in the world. The ignorance of American media led to Rehman's case because her rights were violated in the context of the American intervention. Hence, Nabila's case unmasks the real face of the so-called “honor” that was used to justify intervention by the American. The contrast between the Nabila and Malala cases (discussed earlier) supports the argument that offering Muslim women opportunities to speak, as Abu-Lughod suggested, does not necessarily mean they will be listened to. Apparently, while both were victims of violence, Malala was the only one universally celebrated by American and European media.

OBJECTIVES

Constructing the Arabs necessarily constructs the European; one may then wonder: what power underlies the ability to construct the “other”? The readers should be conscious of how distinct such portrayals are from the truth “on the ground”. They ought to consider the beliefs and discourses that define the world, and deeply examine who has the power to produce and construct the world in any given way, as well as who benefits from such discourses. As a matter of fact, a discourse is not a true or accurate representation of the world; it is a political construction that has been strengthened by the alignment of knowledge and power. As Said stresses, the representations were not based on studying the Arab region but were for the sake of drawing political implications and proposing courses of action.

I apply these insights as my intervention to explain how these different themes altogether build a full picture of how the knowledge was structured and formulated our perceptions of reality. Therefore, we must be very suspicious considering under what circumstances this knowledge was produced. Placing these texts into conversation enable us

to merge their internal differences/themes to draw a full picture of the different forms of systematic invisible violence. These forms of invisible violence go hand on hand in the discourse around Arab and Muslim women that legitimize direct violence (i.e., war) as well as perpetuates both the invisible and direct violence. In addition, these themes enable us to recognize how producing those pejorative meaning resulted in producing systematic forms of power. Thereby, it opens the space for marginalized voices who are silenced in such a discourse to represent themselves; and explore different theories to challenge the asymmetrical knowledge that is yet affecting the present.

Neutralizing these narratives means ending the de facto prohibition that has existed on Arab females expressing themselves and enabling them to relate their experiences in their authentic voices. As I explained through analyzing the work of Abu-Lughod, it should be noted that, quite frequently, information inconsistent with the discourse of the subjugated “Oriental female” is absent from materials published in the “West”. They are not heavily treated, the same way as the negative discourse about the Arab world, which is highlighted. The Euro-American cannot free itself from the discourse of the subjugated Arab Muslim female, which focuses on discrete events as everyday stories in the Arab world. It is framed and limited in a way to maintain the dichotomy of the two worlds, “East versus West”. By not only expressing themselves but also having the opportunity to be heard, Arab Muslim women can inspire others to think twice before attempting to represent them. This approach appears to be a viable one, which offers a data set of information that is both accurate and deferential to the experiences of real-world people. Hence, pro-woman Euro-American authors may come to an understanding of the Arabs by initially realizing the prejudices to which they are subject, starting with the hierarchies constructed in the Euro-American discourse.

There is a need to understand other cultures without judging them according to one's own expectations. The current discourse about the Arabs is not a neutral knowledge; it is a knowledge that aligns with power to control and have more authority over the “other”. In other words, it is not a purely objective observation of reality. A method for overcoming this challenge involves altering our comprehension of society's makeup; because culture cannot be defined in relation to another culture, We, therefore, should endeavour to proceed in attempting to understand a culture by not define it at all. Thus, simple misrepresentations and conventional expectations must give a way to more in-depth understanding and inter-societal solidarity and goodwill. In order to open up a space for other possible knowledge, we need to challenge the deep systematic that allow writers/media to produce knowledge as authoritative “truth”, and to look at the structure that has been deeply constructed. The process of challenging representations and myths aims to undermine the concept of a universal and homogenous knowledge system that allows for such representations.

I insist that creating new modes of representation without replicating the same binary will allow us to transcend the legacy of systemically racist historical representations and false knowledge creation processes. Yet, the primary concern here is that the “truth” does not exist; knowledge can never be purely neutral. All knowledge is imbued with political motivation, which is a desire for power, domination, and control. If someone represents a supposedly objective fact, then one must unpack it to understand the drives for power and domination behind it. This leads us to consider knowledge as merely a profitable tool to seem out control and domination over others. To put it another way, I unreservedly follow Foucault's statement that “knowledge is not made for understanding; knowledge is made for cutting” (Foucault, 1977, p. 88). For this reason, it may not be possible to represent anything truthfully, and any representation we do make will likely be used to guide the coercive powers.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In conclusion, throughout this dissertation, we have endeavored to expose the Orientalist elements in the representations of Arabs, particularly females, and show how the typecasting of these subjects takes place even in the current literature; aiming to emphasize the continuation of a constriction in this literature of Arab Muslim women, who are portrayed as oppressed in the Euro-American discourse. This dissertation explores the relationship between the concept of Orientalism and the related concepts of representation, knowledge production, and gender. I aim to contribute to expanding the knowledge base by focusing exclusively on the relationship between gender discourse and Orientalism. The depiction of anything or anyone depends on things which are revealed and withdrawn. Our examination of the historical dichotomy of the world and modern portrayals of the Arabs produced by the European, which is analogous to the early Orientalist offerings, was carried out through the Saidian lens, insisting that racist narratives persist to the present day. Consequently, the Euro-American discourse, in general, and the Euro-American discourse around Arab Muslim women, in particular, should be analyzed and understood with regard to what is explicitly disclosed and implicitly suppressed. Thus, where it concerns information represented about the Arabs, with interest in wielding the necessary influence to properly understand the European anti-self, the relationship between the “West and the East” is a hegemonic one, which is maintained by the power to produce and control biased knowledge under the name of neutral knowledge.

The problem is that such knowledge is represented in a way that gives the impression that it is singularly accurate, an impression that is then reinforced by information in the broader culture. In fact, power permeates such a discourse. It is not neutral, but rather a “product of certain political forces and activities” (Said, 1978, p.203). As such, it is full of cultural and moral prejudices and is produced and taught to sustain the Euro-American position as the holders of power, which dichotomize the world into superior and inferior elements and impose expectations of what should be seen as true or false. Throughout

history, to validate European's position as morally, politically, and culturally superior, European needed to define the "East" as opposite to the "West" explicitly. This ideology serves to implicitly reinforce the superiority of European values and positions, with the European taking the advantageous position and demonstrating the will to dominate the other.

The examination offered here yields the conclusion that Euro-American have concentrated narrowly on their own societal and military preoccupations. At issue, at this point, it is not the representation of Muslim women in current discourse, but the constantly representation of Muslim women in a negative light. This present dissertation discusses both the demeaning manner that has developed over the past decades to construct the image of Arab men and women, and the impact of narratives which reduce reality to a question of superior and inferior counterparts. In the 20th century, producers of arts and literature were essential in promoting and broadening Arabs discriminatory portrayals, especially women. Euro-American discourses in different forms continue regularly reinforce stereotypes, often ancient ones, of the Arab.

Euro-American feminists have furthered the subjugation of Oriental females by overlooking their lived experiences and voices. Narratives about Arab females are rooted in the idea that the subjugation of women is a phenomenon that is shared universally. In a Euro-American world where there is a tendency to see all things European as universal and accepted as the standard, Euro-American authors, especially those writing from a pro-woman standpoint, have a habit of rendering white femaleness as the norm throughout the world. This tendency discounts the broad range of different experiential truths that exist for Arab women. The grounds on which European and American feminists render the lives of women around the world as being identical, particularly where it concerns the realities experienced by Arab women, are rather precarious. The constructed "East" and "West" are not true, in fact; orientalism was as a project that imagined both Arab and Europe geopolitically, both constructions are political imagination

spaces that been constitute and consolidate through the production of powerful knowledge about the Arab world. Hence, we need to challenge the structure of power that dichotomizes and constructs the world in hierarchy relationship to each other to decolonize the racist discourse.

In the end, it is unfeasible to understand the way dominant power creates knowledge about Arabs without understanding the gender role and its effect in contemporary moments. The issues of gender and sexuality is central to the depiction of the Arabs that can't be dismissed or relegated.

As I unpack my arguments, I am affirming the necessity to contextualize the historical representation and its connection to the present time to fully recognize the hyper-visibility of the oppressed Arab women notion which do not reflect the full range of the material realities of those groups. While there was an extensive assortment of transformations in the Arab women's portrayals that have affected the contexts of their identity, from the images of half-naked hypersexual women in the 70's to the images of fully-covered oppressed women in the 2000's. Yet, both images serve to justify invisible and visible violence. Undoubtedly, both cases were related to patriarchal power relations and justification of Euro-American patriarchy. This will bring us to question if the universal rights are not also a justification of Euro-American patriarchy and highly embedded in both masculine and European norms of masculinity.

My dissertation represents, to me, a form of resistance against these masculine and racist discourses that not only constructed Arab women as passive and in need of European savers but also prevent them from being part of the conversation. These definitions collapsed all Arabs and Muslims as being homogeneous category without considering the complexity and the varieties of women live in the Arab region. These classifications still exist, in today's world, we are colliding aspects of orientalism and modernism through foreign policy related to universal human rights. This approach works to exclude the possibilities of understanding materially the relationships of the “other” in different context.

The philosophy of my work is that Arab men and women should be able to define themselves according to their understanding of their own material lives independently. The kind of disciplinary knowledge that produces systematically constructed definitions of the Arab men and women should be challenged and problematized.

I am overly concerned with the notion of universal subject which excludes any possibility of diversity, my intention is to show that there is no universal or standard subject that is applicable to everyone. In fact, Arab women should be able to create their own subjectivity and also should have the right to reject the kind of gendered expectations that imposed on them. Therefore, in order to provide Arab women with the opportunity to define themselves, we need to first, challenge the kind of misogynistic and patriarchal expectations of the Orientalist literature. Secondly, we need to challenge the institutions that works to constitute Arab women and prevent them from creating their own subjectivity and the kind of normative framework underpinning it. We must understand that individuals should not be definable based on any social or gender expectations. Therefore, different personal experiences, cultural beliefs and morals that shape our values and subjectivity should be accepted and recognized.

Throughout my analysis, I want this discussion of gender to be an ongoing conversation where every woman who lives in different parts of the world will have the right to create different perspectives and understandings of what liberated woman would mean in their own context. Ultimately, analysing the history of gendering orientalism and the continues use of Arab women in today's political discourse, should make us conscious of the dramatic consequences of these discourses on women's freedom.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdel-Malek, A. (1963) 'Orientalism In Crisis', *Diogenes* 11(44),103-40.
- Abu-Lughod, L. (2013). *Do Muslim women need saving?*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Agathangelou, A. M. (2011). Making anew an Arab regional order? On poetry, sex, and revolution. *Globalizations*, 8(5), 581-594.
- Agathangelou, A. M. (2011). Deconstructing sexuality in the Middle East. 23(1), 197-200.
- Agathangelou, A. M. (2013). Neoliberal geopolitical order and value: Queerness as a speculative economy and anti-blackness as terror. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 15(4), 453-476.
- Agathangelou, A. M. (2019). A Conversation with Emma Hutchison and Frantz Fanon on Questions of Reading and Global Raciality. *Millennium*, 47(2), 249-262.
- Agathangelou, A. M., & Ling, L. H. (2009). *Transforming World Politics: From Empire to Multiple Worlds*. Routledge.
- Ahim, S (2007) "Beyond Orientalism" A Study of Three Arabic Women Writers" Texas Woman's University - College of Arts and Sciences.
- Ahmed, L. (1992) *Women and Gender in Islam*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Aijaz, A. (1994). *Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso.
- Alloula, M. (1986). *The Colonial Harem*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Alsultany, E. (2013). Arabs and Muslims in the media after 9/11: Representational strategies for a "post-race" era. *American Quarterly*, 65(1), 161-169.
- Al-Azm, S. J. (1981). Orientalism and Orientalism in reverse. *Khamsin*, 8(1981), 5-26.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (1998). *Key concepts in post-colonial studies*. Psychology Press.
- Ayotte, K. J., & Husain, M. E. (2005). Securing Afghan women: Neocolonialism, epistemic violence, and the rhetoric of the veil. *NWSA Journal*, 112-133.

- Bailey, M. (1993). Foucauldian feminism: Contesting bodies, sexuality and identity. In C. Ramazanoglu (Ed.), *Up Against Foucault: Explorations of some tensions between Foucault and feminism* (pp. 99-122). London: Routledge
- Bjelić, D. I. (2009). Immigrants as the Enemy: Psychoanalysis and the Balkans' Self-Orientalization. *Slavonic and East European Review*, 488-517.
- Bal, M. (1991). "Malek Alloula", The Colonial Harem (Book Review). *Diacritics*, 21(1), 25.
- Behdad, A. (2010). Orientalism matters. *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 56(4), 709-728.
- Bullock, K. (2002). *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical and Modern Stereotypes*. Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Chow, R. (1994) "Where Have All the Natives Gone?" in *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*. Angelika Bammer (ed.). Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Cooke M. (2002). Saving brown women. *Signs* 28(1):468–73
- Darrow, S. B. (2013). Negotiating Hybridity in the Work of Lalla Essaydi: An Exploration of Gaze.
- Desmond, J. (2013). "And Never The Twain Shall Meet?' Considering the Legacies of Orientalism and Occidentalism for the Transnational Study of the US". *Review of International American Studies*. 6, 1–2.
- Dreher, T., & Ho, C. (Eds.). (2009). *Beyond The Hijab Debates: New Conversations On Gender, Race and Religion*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Dreyfus, H. L., & Rabinow, P. (1980). *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Routledge.
- Doumato, E. A. (1996). Am I part of the problem?'. *Middle East Studies Review*, 1(1), 2.
- El Aidi, A., & Yechouti, Y. (2017). Michel Foucault's Theory of Discourse in Edward Said's Theory of Orientalism. *The Criterion: An International Relations Journal in English*, 8, 1059-1072.

- Enloe, C. (2014). *Bananas, beaches and bases: Making feminist sense of international politics*. University of California Press.
- Entman, R. M. (2003). Cascading activation: Contesting the White House's frame after 9/11. *Political Communication*, 20(4), 415-432.
- Fanon, Frantz. (1967). *A Dying Colonialism*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier. New York: Grove Press.
- Fanon, F. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. (1967). *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markham. New York: Grove Press;
- Fields, L. (1981). The Eurocentric Worldview: Misunderstanding East Asia. *Asian Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia* 19.
- Fiske, J. (1996). *Media matters: Race and gender in U.S. politics* (Rev. ed). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Foucault, M. (1970). *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*. Tavistock Publications.
- Foucault, M. (1984). What is Enlightenment? (pp. 32-50), in Rabinow, P (Ed.) *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1971). Orders of discourse. *Social science information*, 10(2), 7-30.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Translated from the French by AM Sheridan Smith. Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1977). Nietzsche, Genealogy, History. In: M, Foucault (1977). *Language, counter-memory, practice: selected essays and interviews*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. P.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*, Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage.

- Foucault, M. (1990). *The History of Sexuality: An introduction, volume I*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1988). The concern for truth. In L. D. Kritzman (Ed.), *Michel Foucault, politics, philosophy, culture: Interviews and other writings, 1977-1984* (pp. 255-270). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Garland, D. (2014). What is a “history of the present”? On Foucault’s genealogies and their critical preconditions. *Punishment & Society*, 16(4), 365-384.
- Geary, C. (1988), *Images of Bamum: German Colonial Photography at the Court of King Nyoja, Cameroon, West Africa 1902–1915*. Washington DC, Smithsonian Institution.
- Goodstein, L. (2010). Across nation, mosque projects meet opposition. *The New York Times*, 7.
- Grosfoguel, R. (2012). The dilemmas of ethnic studies in the United States : Between liberal multiculturalism, identity politics, disciplinary colonization, and decolonial epistemologies. *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 10(1), 9.
- Guhin, J., & Wyrzten, J. (2013). The violences of knowledge: Edward Said, sociology, and post-orientalist reflexivity. In *Postcolonial Sociology* (pp. 231-262). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Hook, D. (2004). Fanon and the psychoanalysis of racism. In D. Hook, A. Collins & E. Burman (Eds.), *Critical Psychology* (pp. 115-138). Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press
- Huntington, S. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*. New York. Touchstone Books
- Husain, M. (2013). Malala: The girl who was shot for going to school. *The BBC*.
- Jabbara, N. W. (2006). Women, words and war: Explaining 9/11 and justifying US military action in Afghanistan and Iraq. *Journal of international women's studies*, 8(1), 236-255.

- Iwabuchi, K. (1994) 'Complicit Exoticism: Japan and Its Other', *Australian Journal of Media & Culture*, 8(2).
- Kabbani, R. (1986). *Europe's Myths of Orient: Devise and Rule*. Springer.
- Kaser, K. (2013). Visual Studies: Their Potential for the Comparative Study of the Late Ottoman Empire. Toward a Comparative Study of the Balkans and the Middle East. *Jerusalem*, 41-58.
- Keck, M. & Sikkink, K. (1998) 'Transnational Advocacy Networks in the Movement Society', in David S. Meyer and Sidney Tarrow (eds) *The Social Movement Society, Contentious Politics for a New Century*, pp. 217–38. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Kendall, G., & Wickham, G. (1999). *Using Foucault's Methods*. London: Sage Publications Ltd
- Khalid, M. (2011). Gender, Orientalism and Representations of the 'Other' in the War on Terror. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 23(1), 15-29.
- Khalid, M. 2014b. "Feminist perspectives on militarism and war: critiques, contradictions and collusions". In R. Baksh & W. Harcourt (Eds.), *Transnational Feminist Movements: Knowledge, Power and Social Change*
- Kipling, R. (1899). "The White Man's Burden: The United States & The Philippine Islands". *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1929).
- King, Angela (2004). The prisoner of gender: Foucault and the disciplining of the female body. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 5(2), 29-39.
- Kirecci, M. (2007). Declines in Discourse and Self-Orientalization in the writings of Al-Tahtawi, Taha Husayn and Ziya Gokalp: A Comparative Study of Modernization in Egypt and Turkey". University of Pennsylvania Dissertation.
- Komel, M. (2012). Orientalism in Bartol's Novel Alamut—"Nothing is true, everything is permitted". *Annales: Anali za Istrske in Mediteranske Studije-Series Historia et Sociologia*, 22, 353-66.

- Koopman, C. (2009). Foucault's historiographical expansion: Adding genealogy to archaeology. *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, 2(3), 338-362.
- Kumar, D. (2017). Liberalism's Spawn: Imperialist Feminism from the Nineteenth Century to the War on Terror. In Abraham-Hamanoiel, A., Freedman, D., Khiabany, G., Nash, K., & Petley, J. (Eds.). (2017). *Liberalism in Neoliberal Times: Dimensions, Contradictions, Limits*. (pp. 239-249). MIT Press.
- Leeuw, M. D., & Wichelen, S. V. (2005). "Please, Go Wake Up!" Submission, Hirsi Ali, and the "War on Terror" in The Netherlands. *Feminist Media Studies*, 5(3), 325-340.
- Lončarević, K. (2013). Foucault's genealogy as epistemology. *Belgrade Philosophical Annual*, (26), 65-81.
- Loomba, A. (1998). *Colonialism-Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge.
- Machiitova, B. (2007) Edward W. Said: Postcolonial Studies and the Politics of Literary Theory. Univerzita Karlova v Praze.
- Mahmood,S. (2009). "Feminism, Democracy, and Empire: Islam and the War on Terror". In *Gendering Religion and Politics: Untangling Modernities*. Hanna Herzog and Ann Braude, eds. New York: Palgrave.
- Maira, S. (2009). "Good" and "Bad" Muslim Citizens: Feminists, Terrorists, and US Orientalisms. *Feminist Studies*, 35(3), 631-656.
- Mbembe, A. (2015). Decolonizing knowledge and the question of the archive. *Aula Magistral Proferida*.
- McVeigh, K. (2013). Drone strikes: tears in Congress as Pakistani family tells of mother's death. *The Guardian*.
- Mehdid, M. (1993). A Western Invention of Arab Womanhood: The 'Oriental' Female. In *Women in the Middle East* (pp. 18-58). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

- Mitchell, L. (2013). The Co-option of Human Rights and Feminist Rhetoric to Justify the War on Terror. Aufsatz vorgetragen auf der Konferenz „Human Rights and Democracy: Two Sides of the Same Coin?. In *Human Rights Law Centre, Nottingham University*.
- Mohanty, C. (1988). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist review*, 30(1), 61-88.
- Möller, F. (2010). Photography after empire: Citizen-photographers or snappers on autopilot? *New Political Science*, 32(4), 501-513.
- Nikhil, V (2002) “Chapter 1: Mapping the Postcolonial” The Ambivalence of Colonialism Discourse: Situating Edward Said in the Postcolonial Studies. Kannu University.
- Nugali, N. (2018). Princess Reema’s views at WEF represent aspirations of young Saudis. *The Rahnuma Daily*.
- Oliver, K. (2007). *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex, and The Media*. Columbia University Press.
- Olssen, Mark (2014) “Discourse, Complexity, Normativity: Tracing the elaboration of Foucault's materialist concept of discourse”. *Open Review of Educational Research*. 1(1), 28–55.
- Pennycook, A. (2002). *English and the Discourses of Colonialism*. Routledge.
- Peterson, V. S. (2010). Gendered identities, ideologies, and practices in the context of war and militarism. *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*, 17-29.
- Porter,C. (2009). Saudi Teenager Who Fled Family Embraces All Things Canadian. (O.K., Maybe Not Winter.). *The New York Times*.
- Rahman, B. H. (2010). Analysis of the coverage of Muslim political women in Time and Newsweek. *Journal of Media Studies*, 25(1), 50-65.
- Rose, N. (1996). *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power and Personhood*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

- Roshanravan, S. (2014). Motivating coalition: Women of color and epistemic disobedience. *Hypatia*, 29(1), 41-58.
- Said, E. (1997) *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Said, Edward (1978) *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books
- Said, E. (1994) *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Vintage.
- Said, E. W. (1998). *Professor Edward Said in Lecture: The Myth of the "Clash of Civilizations"*. Media Education Foundation.
- Said, E. (2000) *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Samman, K. (2015). *Clash of Modernities: The Making and Unmaking of the New Jew, Turk, and Arab and the Islamist Challenge*. Routledge.
- Schwarz, H., & Ray, S. (Eds.). (2008). *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Shaheen, J. G. (2003). Reel bad Arabs: How Hollywood vilifies a people. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 588(1), 171-193.
- Shome, R. (1996). Race and popular cinema: Rhetorical strategies of whiteness in *City of Joy*. *Communication Quarterly*, 44(4), 502–519.
- Sjoberg, L. (2013). *Gendering Global Conflict: Toward A Feminist Theory of War*. Columbia University Press.
- Skehill, C. (2007) 'Researching the history of social work: Exposition of a history of the present approach'. *European Journal of Social Work*, 10(4), 1 – 15.
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). *Subaltern studies: Deconstructing historiography*.
- Stabile, C. A., & Kumar, D. (2005). Unveiling imperialism: media, gender and the on Afghanistan. *Media, Culture & Society*, 27(5), 765-782.

- Tait, G. (2015). *Making Sense of Mass Education*. Cambridge University Press.
- Volpp, L. (2001). Feminism versus multiculturalism. *Columbia Law Review*, 101(5), 1181-1218.
- Yaghi, A. (2015). *A Nation of Narrations: Religion, Hegemony, & Self-identification in Arab American Literature* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Yeğenoğlu, M. (1998). *Colonial Fantasies: Towards A Feminist Reading of Orientalism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Young, R. (1990). *White Mythologies: Writing History and The West*. Routledge.
- Zhong, M. (2012). Self-orientalization and Its Counteraction against the Cultural Purpose of Gu Hongming in His Discourses and Sayings of Confucius. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, 2(11).
- Zhou, Ning. (2004). *Legends of Khitan*. Beijing: Xueyuan Publishing House