

Edward Said,
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Introduction

I

On a visit to Beirut during the terrible civil war of 1975-1976 a French journalist wrote regretfully of the gutted downtown area that "it had once seemed to belong to . . . the Orient of Chateaubriand and Nerval."¹ He was right about the place, of course, especially so far as a European was concerned. The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences. Now it was disappearing; in a sense it had happened, its time was over. Perhaps it seemed irrelevant that Orientals themselves had something at stake in the process, that even in the time of Chateaubriand and Nerval Orientals had lived there, and that now it was they who were suffering; the main thing for the European visitor was a European representation of the Orient and its contemporary fate, both of which had a privileged communal significance for the journalist and his French readers.

Americans will not feel quite the same about the Orient, which for them is much more likely to be associated very differently with the Far East (China and Japan, mainly). Unlike the Americans, the French and the British—less so the Germans, Russians, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, and Swiss—have had a long tradition of what I shall be calling *Orientalism*, a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West)

as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles. In contrast, the American understanding of the Orient will seem considerably less dense, although our recent Japanese, Korean, and Indochinese adventures ought now to be creating a more sober, more realistic "Oriental" awareness. Moreover, the vastly expanded American political and economic role in the Near East (the Middle East) makes great claims on our understanding of that Orient.

It will be clear to the reader (and will become clearer still throughout the many pages that follow) that by 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. Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient—and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist—either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism. Compared with *Oriental studies* or *area studies*, it is true that the term *Orientalism* is less preferred by specialists today, both because it is too vague and general and because it connotes the high-handed executive attitude of nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century European colonialism. Nevertheless books are written and congresses held with "the Orient" as their main focus, with the Orientalist in his new or old guise as their main authority. The point is that even if it does not survive as it once did, Orientalism lives on academically through its doctrines and theses about the Orient and the Oriental.

Related to this academic tradition, whose fortunes, transmigrations, specializations, and transmissions are in part the subject of this study, is a more general meaning for Orientalism. Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "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. This Orientalism can accommodate Aeschylus, say, and Victor Hugo, Dante and Karl Marx. A little later in this introduction I shall deal with the methodological problems one encounters in so broadly construed a "field" as this.

The interchange between the academic and the more or less imaginative meanings of Orientalism is a constant one, and since the late eighteenth century there has been a considerable, quite disciplined—perhaps even regulated—traffic between the two. Here I come to the third meaning of Orientalism, which is something more historically and materially defined than either of the other two. Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, 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. I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse, as described by him in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish*, to identify Orientalism. My contention is that 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, socio-logically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. Moreover, so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism. In brief, because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action. This is not to say that Orientalism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient, but that it is the whole network of interests inevitably brought to bear on (and therefore always involved in) any occasion when that peculiar entity "the Orient" is in question. How this happens is what this book tries to demonstrate. It also tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.

Historically and culturally there is a quantitative as well as a qualitative difference between the Franco-British involvement in the Orient and—until the period of American ascendancy after

World War II—the involvement of every other European and Atlantic power. To speak of Orientalism therefore is to speak mainly, although not exclusively, of a British and French cultural enterprise, a project whose dimensions take in such disparate realms as the imagination itself, the whole of India and the Levant, the Biblical texts and the Biblical lands, the spice trade, colonial armies and a long tradition of colonial administrators, a formidable scholarly corpus, innumerable Oriental "experts" and "hands," an Oriental professorate, a complex array of "Oriental" ideas (Oriental despotism, Oriental splendor, cruelty, sensuality), many Eastern sects, philosophies, and wisdoms domesticated for local European use—the list can be extended more or less indefinitely. My point is that Orientalism derives from a particular closeness experienced between Britain and France and the Orient, which until the early nineteenth century had really meant only India and the Bible lands. From the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II France and Britain dominated the Orient and Orientalism; since World War II America has dominated the Orient, and approaches it as France and Britain once did. Out of that closeness, whose dynamic is enormously productive even if it always demonstrates the comparatively greater strength of the Occident (British, French, or American), comes the large body of texts I call Orientalist.

It should be said at once that even with the generous number of books and authors that I examine, there is a much larger number that I simply have had to leave out. My argument, however, depends neither upon an exhaustive catalogue of texts dealing with the Orient nor upon a clearly delimited set of texts, authors, and ideas that together make up the Orientalist canon. I have depended instead upon a different methodological alternative—whose backbone in a sense is the set of historical generalizations I have so far been making in this Introduction—and it is these I want now to discuss in more analytical detail.

II

I have begun with the assumption that the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely *there*, just as the Occident itself is not just *there* either. We must take seriously Vico's great obser-

vation that men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities—to say nothing of historical entities—such locales, regions, geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made. Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other.

Having said that, one must go on to state a number of reasonable qualifications. In the first place, it would be wrong to conclude that the Orient was essentially an idea, or a creation with no corresponding reality. When Disraeli said in his novel *Tancred* that the East was a career, he meant that to be interested in the East was something bright young Westerners would find to be an all-consuming passion; he should not be interpreted as saying that the East was only a career for Westerners. There were—and are—cultures and nations whose location is in the East, and their lives, histories, and customs have a brute reality obviously greater than anything that could be said about them in the West. About that fact this study of Orientalism has very little to contribute, except to acknowledge it tacitly. But 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 (the East as career) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a "real" Orient. My point is that Disraeli's statement about the East refers mainly to that created consistency, that regular constellation of ideas as the pre-eminent thing about the Orient, and not to its mere being, as Wallace Stevens's phrase has it.

A second qualification is that ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied. To believe that the Orient was created—or, as I call it, "Orientalized"—and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination, is to be disingenuous. The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony, and is quite accurately indicated in the title of K. M. Panikkar's classic *Asia and Western Dominance*.² The Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be "Oriental" in all those ways considered common-

place by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it *could be*—that is, submitted to being—*made* Oriental. There is very little consent to be found, for example, in the fact that Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced 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. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was “typically Oriental.”^(*) 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.

This brings us to a third qualification. One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away. I myself believe that Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is as a veridic discourse about the Orient (which is what, in its academic or scholarly form, it claims to be). Nevertheless, what we must respect and try to grasp is the sheer knitted-together strength of Orientalist discourse, its very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions, and its redoubtable durability. After all, any system of ideas that can remain unchanged as teachable wisdom (in academies, books, congresses, universities, foreign-service institutes) from the period of Ernest Renan in the late 1840s until the present in the United States must be something more formidable than a mere collection of lies. Orientalism, therefore, is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment. Continued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness, just as that same investment multiplied—indeed, made truly productive—the statements proliferating out from Orientalism into the general culture.

Gramsci has made the useful analytic distinction between civil and political society in which the former is made up of voluntary (or at least rational and noncoercive) affiliations like schools,

(*) And she gave him to (hyp) and he quotes from (hyp) (parties)

families, and unions, the latter of state institutions (the army, the police, the central bureaucracy) whose role in the polity is direct domination. Culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but by what Gramsci calls consent. In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as *hegemony*, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength I have been speaking about so far. Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe,³ a collective notion identifying “us” Europeans as against all “those” non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that 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, usually overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more skeptical, thinker might have had different views on the matter.

In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand. And why should it have been otherwise, especially during the period of extraordinary European ascendancy from the late Renaissance to the present? The scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader, or the soldier was in, or thought about, the Orient because he *could be there*, or could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient's part. Under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient, and within the umbrella of 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 reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural person-

ality, national or religious character. Additionally, the imaginative examination of things Oriental was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an Oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was an Oriental, then according to a detailed logic governed [not simply by empirical reality] but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections. If we can point to great Orientalist works of genuine scholarship like Silvestre de Sacy's *Chrestomathie arabe* or Edward William Lane's *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, we need also to note that Renan's and Gobineau's racial ideas came out of the same impulse, as did a great many Victorian pornographic novels (see the analysis by Steven Marcus of "The Lustful Turk"⁴).

And yet, one must repeatedly ask oneself whether what matters in Orientalism is the general group of ideas overriding the mass of material—about which who could deny that they were shot through with doctrines of European superiority, various kinds of racism, imperialism, and the like, dogmatic views of "the Oriental" as a kind of ideal and unchanging abstraction?—or the much more varied work produced by almost uncountable individual writers, whom one would take up as individual instances of authors dealing with the Orient. In a sense the two alternatives, general and particular, are really two perspectives on the same material: in both instances one would have to deal with pioneers in the field like William Jones, with great artists like Nerval or Flaubert. And why would it not be possible to employ both perspectives together, or one after the other? Isn't there an obvious danger of distortion (of precisely the kind that academic Orientalism has always been prone to) if either too general or too specific a level of description is maintained systematically?

My two fears are distortion and inaccuracy, or rather the kind of inaccuracy produced by too dogmatic a generality and too positivistic a localized focus. In trying to deal with these problems I have tried to deal with three main aspects of my own contemporary reality that seem to me to point the way out of the methodological or perspectival difficulties I have been discussing, difficulties that might force one, in the first instance, into writing a coarse polemic on so unacceptably general a level of description as not to be worth the effort, or in the second instance, into writing so detailed and atomistic a series of analyses as to lose all track of the general

lines of force informing the field, giving it its special cogency. How then to recognize individuality and to reconcile it with its intelligent, and by no means passive or merely dictatorial, general and hegemonic context?

III

I mentioned three aspects of my contemporary reality: I must explain and briefly discuss them now, so that it can be seen how I was led to a particular course of research and writing.

1. The distinction between pure and political knowledge. It is very easy to argue that knowledge about Shakespeare or Wordsworth is not political whereas knowledge about contemporary China or the Soviet Union is. My own formal and professional designation is that of "humanist," a title which indicates the humanities as my field and therefore the unlikely eventuality that there might be anything political about what I do in that field. Of course, all these labels and terms are quite unnuanced as I use them here, but the general truth of what I am pointing to is, I think, widely held. One reason for saying that a humanist who writes about Wordsworth, or an editor whose specialty is Keats, is not involved in anything political is that what he does seems to have no direct political effect upon reality in the everyday sense. A scholar whose field is Soviet economics works in a highly charged area where there is much government interest, and what he might produce in the way of studies or proposals will be taken up by policymakers, government officials, institutional economists, intelligence experts. The distinction between "humanists" and persons whose work has policy implications, or political significance, can be broadened further by saying that the former's ideological color is a matter of incidental importance to politics (although possibly of great moment to his colleagues in the field, who may object to his Stalinism or fascism or too easy liberalism), whereas the ideology of the latter is woven directly into his material—indeed, economics, politics, and sociology in the modern academy are ideological sciences—and therefore taken for granted as being "political."

Nevertheless the determining impingement on most knowledge

produced in the contemporary West (and here I speak mainly about the United States) is that it be nonpolitical, that is, scholarly, academic, impartial, above partisan or small-minded doctrinal belief. One can have no quarrel with such an ambition in theory, perhaps, but in practice the reality is much more problematic. No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of a society. These continue to bear on what he does professionally, even though naturally enough his research and its fruits do attempt to reach a level of relative freedom from the inhibitions and the restrictions of brute, everyday reality. For there is such a thing as knowledge that is less, rather than more, partial than the individual (with his entangling and distracting life circumstances) who produces it. Yet this knowledge is not therefore automatically nonpolitical.

Whether discussions of literature or of classical philology are fraught with—or have unmediated—political significance is a very large question that I have tried to treat in some detail elsewhere.⁵ What I am interested in doing now is suggesting how the general liberal consensus that “true” knowledge is fundamentally non-political (and conversely, that overtly political knowledge is not “true” knowledge) obscures the highly if obscurely organized political circumstances obtaining when knowledge is produced. No one is helped in understanding this today when the adjective “political” is used as a label to discredit any work for daring to violate the protocol of pretended suprapolitical objectivity. We may say, first, that civil society recognizes a gradation of political importance in the various fields of knowledge. To some extent the political importance given a field comes from the possibility of its direct translation into economic terms; but to a greater extent political importance comes from the closeness of a field to ascertainable sources of power in political society. Thus an economic study of long-term Soviet energy potential and its effect on military capability is likely to be commissioned by the Defense Department, and thereafter to acquire a kind of political status impossible for a study of Tolstoi's early fiction financed in part by a foundation. Yet both works belong in what civil society acknowledges to be a similar field, Russian studies, even though one work may be done by a very conservative economist, the other by a radical literary

historian. My point here is that “Russia” as a general subject matter has political priority over nicer distinctions such as “economics” and “literary history,” because political society in Gramsci's sense reaches into such realms of civil society as the academy and saturates them with significance of direct concern to it.

I do not want to press all this any further on general theoretical grounds: it seems to me that the value and credibility of my case can be demonstrated by being much more specific, in the way, for example, Noam Chomsky has studied the instrumental connection between the Vietnam War and the notion of objective scholarship as it was applied to cover state-sponsored military research.⁶ Now because Britain, France, and recently the United States are imperial powers, their political societies impart to their civil societies a sense of urgency, a direct political infusion as it were, where and whenever matters pertaining to their imperial interests abroad are concerned. I doubt that it is controversial, for example, to say that an Englishman in India or Egypt in the later nineteenth century took an interest in those countries that was never far from their status in his mind as British colonies. To say this may seem quite different from saying that all academic knowledge about India and Egypt is somehow tinged and impressed with, violated by, the gross political fact—and yet *that is what I am saying* in this study of Orientalism. For if it is true that no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author's involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances, then it must also be true that for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of *his* actuality: that he comes up against the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second. And to be a European or an American in such a situation is by no means an inert fact. It meant and means being aware, however dimly, that one belongs to a power with definite interests in the Orient, and more important, that one belongs to a part of the earth with a definite history of involvement in the Orient almost since the time of Homer.

Put in this way, these political actualities are still too undefined and general to be really interesting. Anyone would agree to them without necessarily agreeing also that they mattered very much, for instance, to Flaubert as he wrote *Salammbo*, or to H. A. R. Gibb as he wrote *Modern Trends in Islam*. The trouble is that there is too great a distance between the big dominating fact, as I have de-

scribed it, and the details of everyday life that govern the minute discipline of a novel or a scholarly text as each is being written. Yet if we eliminate from the start any notion that "big" facts like imperial domination can be applied mechanically and deterministically to such complex matters as culture and ideas, then we will begin to approach an interesting kind of study. My idea is that European and then American interest in the Orient was political according to some of the obvious historical accounts of it that I have given here, but that it was the culture that created that interest, that acted dynamically along with brute political, economic, and military rationales to make the Orient the varied and complicated place that it obviously was in the field I call Orientalism.

Therefore, Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious "Western" imperialist plot to hold down the "Oriental" world. It is rather a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it *is*, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a 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). Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is—and does not simply represent—a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world.

Because Orientalism is a cultural and a political fact, then, it does not exist in some archival vacuum; quite the contrary, I think it can be shown that what is thought, said, or even done about the Orient follows (perhaps occurs within) certain distinct and intellectually knowable lines. Here too a considerable degree of nuance and elaboration can be seen working as between the broad superstructural pressures and the details of composition, the facts of *textuality*. Most humanistic scholars are, I think, perfectly happy with the notion that texts exist in contexts, that there is such a thing as *intertextuality*, that the pressures of conventions, predecessors, and rhetorical styles limit what Walter Benjamin once called the "overtaxing of the productive person in the name of . . . the principle of 'creativity,'" in which the poet is believed on his own, and out of his pure mind, to have brought forth his work.⁷ Yet there is a reluctance to allow that political, institutional, and ideological constraints act in the same manner on the individual author. A humanist will believe it to be an interesting fact to any interpreter of Balzac that he was influenced in the *Comédie humaine* by the conflict between Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Cuvier, but the same sort of pressure on Balzac of deeply reactionary monarchism is felt in some vague way to demean his literary "genius" and therefore to be less worth serious study. Similarly—as Harry Bracken has been tirelessly showing—philosophers will conduct their discussions of Locke, Hume, and empiricism without ever taking into account that there is an explicit connection in these classic writers between their "philosophic" doctrines and racial theory, justifications of slavery, or arguments for colonial exploitation.⁸ These are common enough ways by which contemporary scholarship keeps itself "pure."

Perhaps it is true that most attempts to rub culture's nose in the mud of politics have been crudely iconoclastic; perhaps also the social interpretation of literature in my own field has simply not kept up with the enormous technical advances in detailed textual analysis. But there is no getting away from the fact that literary studies in general, and American Marxist theorists in particular, have avoided the effort of seriously bridging the gap between the superstructural and the base levels in textual, historical scholarship; on another occasion I have gone so far as to say that the literary-cultural establishment as a whole has declared the serious study of imperialism and culture off limits.⁹ For Orientalism brings one up directly against that question—that is, to realizing

that political imperialism governs an entire field of study, imagination, and scholarly institutions—in such a way as to make its avoidance an intellectual and historical impossibility. Yet there will always remain the perennial escape mechanism of saying that a literary scholar and a philosopher, for example, are trained in literature and philosophy respectively, not in politics or ideological analysis. In other words, the specialist argument can work quite effectively to block the larger and, in my opinion, the more intellectually serious perspective.

Here it seems to me there is a simple two-part answer to be given, at least so far as the study of imperialism and culture (or Orientalism) is concerned. In the first place, nearly every nineteenth-century writer (and the same is true enough of writers in earlier periods) was extraordinarily well aware of the fact of empire: this is a subject not very well studied, but it will not take a modern Victorian specialist long to admit that liberal cultural heroes like John Stuart Mill, Arnold, Carlyle, Newman, Macaulay, Ruskin, George Eliot, and even Dickens had definite views on race and imperialism, which are quite easily to be found at work in their writing. So even a specialist must deal with the knowledge that Mill, for example, made it clear in *On Liberty* and *Representative Government* that his views there could not be applied to India (he was an India Office functionary for a good deal of his life, after all) because the Indians were civilizational, if not racially, inferior. The same kind of paradox is to be found in Marx, as I try to show in this book. In the second place, to believe that politics in the form of imperialism bears upon the production of literature, scholarship, social theory, and history writing is by no means equivalent to saying that culture is therefore a demeaned or denigrated thing. Quite the contrary: my whole point is to say that we can better understand the persistence and the durability of saturating hegemonic systems like culture when we realize that their internal constraints upon writers and thinkers were *productive*, not unilaterally inhibiting. It is this idea that Gramsci, certainly, and Foucault and Raymond Williams in their very different ways have been trying to illustrate. Even one or two pages by Williams on "the uses of the Empire" in *The Long Revolution* tell us more about nineteenth-century cultural richness than many volumes of hermetic textual analyses.¹⁰

Therefore I study Orientalism as a dynamic exchange between

individual authors and the large political concerns shaped by the three great empires—British, French, American—in whose intellectual and imaginative territory the writing was produced. What interests me most as a scholar is not the gross political verity but the detail, as indeed what interests us in someone like Lane or Flaubert or Renan is not the (to him) indisputable truth that Occidentals are superior to Orientals, but the profoundly worked over and modulated evidence of his detailed work within the very wide space opened up by that truth. One need only remember that Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* is a classic of historical and anthropological observation because of its style, its enormously intelligent and brilliant details, not because of its simple reflection of racial superiority, to understand what I am saying here.

The kind of political questions raised by Orientalism, then, are as follows: What other sorts of intellectual, aesthetic, scholarly, and cultural energies went into the making of an imperialist tradition like the Orientalist one? How did philology, lexicography, history, biology, political and economic theory, novel-writing, and lyric poetry come to the service of Orientalism's broadly imperialist view of the world? What changes, modulations, refinements, even revolutions take place within Orientalism? What is the meaning of originality, of continuity, of individuality, in this context? How does Orientalism transmit or reproduce itself from one epoch to another? In fine, how can we treat the cultural, historical phenomenon of Orientalism as a kind of *willed human work*—not of mere unconditioned ratiocination—in all its historical complexity, detail, and worth without at the same time losing sight of the alliance between cultural work, political tendencies, the state, and the specific realities of domination? Governed by such concerns a humanistic study can responsibly address itself to politics *and* culture. But this is not to say that such a study establishes a hard-and-fast rule about the relationship between knowledge and politics. My argument is that each humanistic investigation must formulate the nature of that connection in the specific context of the study, the subject matter, and its historical circumstances.

2. The methodological question. In a previous book I gave a good deal of thought and analysis to the methodological importance for work in the human sciences of finding and formulating a first step, a point of departure, a beginning principle.¹¹ A major lesson

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discourse.

I learned and tried to present was that there is no such thing as a merely given, or simply available, starting point: beginnings have to be made for each project in such a way as to *enable* what follows from them. Nowhere in my experience has the difficulty of this lesson been more consciously lived (with what success—or failure—I cannot really say) than in this study of Orientalism. The idea of beginning, indeed the act of beginning, necessarily involves an act of delimitation by which something is cut out of a great mass of material, separated from the mass, and made to stand for, as well as be, a starting point, a beginning; for the student of texts one such notion of inaugural delimitation is Louis Althusser's idea of the *problematic*, a specific determinate unity of a text, or group of texts, which is something given rise to by analysis.¹² Yet in the case of Orientalism (as opposed to the case of Marx's texts, which is what Althusser studies) there is not simply the problem of finding a point of departure, or problematic, but also the question of designating which texts, authors, and periods are the ones best suited for study.

It has seemed to me foolish to attempt an encyclopedic narrative history of Orientalism, first of all because if my guiding principle was to be "the European idea of the Orient" there would be virtually no limit to the material I would have had to deal with; second, because the narrative model itself did not suit my descriptive and political interests; third, because in such books as Raymond Schwab's *La Renaissance orientale*, Johann Fück's *Die Arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, and more recently, Dorothee Metlitzki's *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England*¹³ there already exist encyclopedic works on certain aspects of the European-Oriental encounter such as make the critic's job, in the general political and intellectual context I sketched above, a different one.

There still remained the problem of cutting down a very fat archive to manageable dimensions, and more important, outlining something in the nature of an intellectual order within that group of texts without at the same time following a mindlessly chronological order. My starting point therefore has been the British, French, and American experience of the Orient taken as a unit, what made that experience possible by way of historical and intellectual background, what the quality and character of the experience has been. For reasons I shall discuss presently I limited that already limited (but still inordinately large) set of questions to

the Anglo-French-American experience of the Arabs and Islam, which for almost a thousand years together stood for the Orient. Immediately upon doing that, a large part of the Orient seemed to have been eliminated—India, Japan, China, and other sections of the Far East—not because these regions were not important (they obviously have been) but because one could discuss Europe's experience of the Near Orient, or of Islam, apart from its experience of the Far Orient. Yet at certain moments of that general European history of interest in the East, particular parts of the Orient like Egypt, Syria, and Arabia cannot be discussed without also studying Europe's involvement in the more distant parts, of which Persia and India are the most important; a notable case in point is the connection between Egypt and India so far as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain was concerned. Similarly the French role in deciphering the Zend-Avesta, the pre-eminence of Paris as a center of Sanskrit studies during the first decade of the nineteenth century, the fact that Napoleon's interest in the Orient was contingent upon his sense of the British role in India: all these Far Eastern interests directly influenced French interest in the Near East, Islam, and the Arabs.

Britain and France dominated the Eastern Mediterranean from about the end of the seventeenth century on. Yet my discussion of that domination and systematic interest does not do justice to (a) the important contributions to Orientalism of Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain, and Portugal and (b) the fact that one of the important impulses toward the study of the Orient in the eighteenth century was the revolution in Biblical studies stimulated by such variously interesting pioneers as Bishop Lowth, Eichhorn, Herder, and Michaelis. In the first place, I had to focus rigorously upon the British-French and later the American material because it seemed inescapably true not only that Britain and France were the pioneer nations in the Orient and in Oriental studies, but that these vanguard positions were held by virtue of the two greatest colonial networks in pre-twentieth-century history; the American Oriental position since World War II has fit—I think, quite self-consciously—in the places excavated by the two earlier European powers. Then too, I believe that the sheer quality, consistency, and mass of British, French, and American writing on the Orient lifts it above the doubtless crucial work done in Germany, Italy, Russia, and elsewhere. But I think it is also true that the major steps in Oriental scholarship were first taken in either Britain and France,

then elaborated upon by Germans. Silvestre de Sacy, for example, was not only the first modern and institutional European Orientalist, who worked on Islam, Arabic literature, the Druze religion, and Sassanid Persia; he was also the teacher of Champollion and of Franz Bopp, the founder of German comparative linguistics. A similar claim of priority and subsequent pre-eminence can be made for William Jones and Edward William Lane.

In the second place—and here the failings of my study of Orientalism are amply made up for—there has been some important recent work on the background in Biblical scholarship to the rise of what I have called modern Orientalism. The best and the most illuminatingly relevant is E. S. Shaffer's impressive "*Kubla Khan*" and *The Fall of Jerusalem*,¹⁴ an indispensable study of the origins of Romanticism, and of the intellectual activity underpinning a great deal of what goes on in Coleridge, Browning, and George Eliot. To some degree Shaffer's work refines upon the outlines provided in Schwab, by articulating the material of relevance to be found in the German Biblical scholars and using that material to read, in an intelligent and always interesting way, the work of three major British writers. Yet what is missing in the book is some sense of the political as well as ideological edge given the Oriental material by the British and French writers I am principally concerned with; in addition, unlike Shaffer I attempt to elucidate subsequent developments in academic as well as literary Orientalism that bear on the connection between British and French Orientalism on the one hand and the rise of an explicitly colonial-minded imperialism on the other. Then too, I wish to show how all these earlier matters are reproduced more or less in American Orientalism after the Second World War.

Nevertheless there is a possibly misleading aspect to my study, where, aside from an occasional reference, I do not exhaustively discuss the German developments after the inaugural period dominated by Sacy. Any work that seeks to provide an understanding of academic Orientalism and pays little attention to scholars like Steinthal, Müller, Becker, Goldziher, Brockelmann, Nöldeke—to mention only a handful—needs to be reproached, and I freely reproach myself. I particularly regret not taking more account of the great scientific prestige that accrued to German scholarship by the middle of the nineteenth century, whose neglect was made into a denunciation of insular British scholars by George Eliot. I have in mind Eliot's unforgettable portrait of Mr. Casaubon in *Middle-*

march. One reason Casaubon cannot finish his Key to All Mythologies is, according to his young cousin Will Ladislaw, that he is unacquainted with German scholarship. For not only has Casaubon chosen a subject "as changing as chemistry: new discoveries are constantly making new points of view": he is undertaking a job similar to a refutation of Paracelsus because "he is not an Orientalist, you know."¹⁵

Eliot was not wrong in implying that by about 1830, which is when *Middlemarch* is set, German scholarship had fully attained its European pre-eminence. Yet at no time in German scholarship during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century could a close partnership have developed between Orientalists and a protracted, sustained *national* interest in the Orient. There was nothing in Germany to correspond to the Anglo-French presence in India, the Levant, North Africa. Moreover, the German Orient was almost exclusively a scholarly, or at least a classical, Orient: it was made the subject of lyrics, fantasies, and even novels, but it was never actual, the way Egypt and Syria were actual for Chateaubriand, Lane, Lamartine, Burton, Disraeli, or Nerval. There is some significance in the fact that the two most renowned German works on the Orient, Goethe's *Westöstlicher Diwan* and Friedrich Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, were based respectively on a Rhine journey and on hours spent in Paris libraries. What German Oriental scholarship did was to refine and elaborate techniques whose application was to texts, myths, ideas, and languages almost literally gathered from the Orient by imperial Britain and France.

Yet what German Orientalism had in common with Anglo-French and later American Orientalism was a kind of intellectual authority over the Orient within Western culture. This authority must in large part be the subject of any description of Orientalism, and it is so in this study. Even the name *Orientalism* suggests a serious, perhaps ponderous style of expertise; when I apply it to modern American social scientists (since they do not call themselves Orientalists, my use of the word is anomalous), it is to draw attention to the way Middle East experts can still draw on the vestiges of Orientalism's intellectual position in nineteenth-century Europe.

There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually

indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces. Above all, authority can, indeed must, be analyzed. All these attributes of authority apply to Orientalism, and much of what I do in this study is to describe both the historical authority in and the personal authorities of Orientalism.

My principal methodological devices for studying authority here are what can be called *strategic location*, which is a way of describing the author's position in a text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about, and *strategic formation*, which is a way of analyzing the relationship between texts and the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even textual genres, acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large. I use the notion of strategy simply to identify the problem every writer on the Orient has faced: how to get hold of it, how to approach it, how not to be defeated or overwhelmed by its sublimity, its scope, its awful dimensions. Everyone who writes about the Orient must locate himself vis-à-vis the Orient; translated into his text, this location includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kinds of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text—all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf. None of this takes place in the abstract, however. Every writer on the Orient (and this is true even of Homer) assumes some Oriental precedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies. Additionally, each work on the Orient affiliates itself with other works, with audiences, with institutions, with the Orient itself. The ensemble of relationships between works, audiences, and some particular aspects of the Orient therefore constitutes an analyzable formation—for example, that of philological studies, of anthologies of extracts from Oriental literature, of travel books, of Oriental fantasies—whose presence in time, in discourse, in institutions (schools, libraries, foreign services) gives it strength and authority.

It is clear, I hope, that my concern with authority does not entail analysis of what lies hidden in the Orientalist text, but analysis rather of the text's surface, its exteriority to what it describes. I do not think that this idea can be overemphasized. Orientalism is premised upon exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes

the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. He is never concerned with the Orient except as the first cause of what he says. What he says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact. The principal product of this exteriority is of course representation: as early as Aeschylus's play *The Persians* the Orient is transformed from a very far distant and often threatening Otherness into figures that are relatively familiar (in Aeschylus's case, grieving Asiatic women). The dramatic immediacy of representation in *The Persians* obscures the fact that the audience is watching a highly artificial enactment of what a non-Oriental has made into a symbol for the whole Orient. 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. This evidence is found just as prominently in the so-called truthful text (histories, philological analyses, political treatises) as in the avowedly artistic (i.e., openly imaginative) text. The things to look at are style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, not the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original. 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, and *faute de mieux*, for the poor Orient. "Sie können sich nicht vertreten, sie müssen vertreten werden," as Marx wrote in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. "They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented."

Another reason for insisting upon exteriority is that I believe it needs to be made clear about cultural discourse and exchange within a culture that what is commonly circulated by it is not "truth" but representations. It hardly needs to be demonstrated again that language itself is a highly organized and encoded system, which employs many devices to express, indicate, exchange messages and information, represent, and so forth. In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a *re-presentation*, or a representation. The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of a written statement about the Orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend, on the Orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is a presence to the reader by virtue of its having excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such *real thing* as "the Orient." Thus all

of Orientalism stands forth and away from the Orient: that Orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the West than on the Orient, and this sense is directly indebted to various Western techniques of representation that make the Orient visible, clear, "there" in discourse about it. And these representations rely upon institutions, traditions, conventions, agreed-upon codes of understanding for their effects, not upon a distant and amorphous Orient.

The difference between representations of the Orient before the last third of the eighteenth century and those after it (that is, those belonging to what I call modern Orientalism) is that the range of representation expanded enormously in the later period. It is true that after William Jones and Anquetil-Duperron, and after Napoleon's Egyptian expedition, Europe came to know the Orient more scientifically, to live in it with greater authority and discipline than ever before. But what mattered to Europe was the expanded scope and the much greater refinement given its techniques for receiving the Orient. When around the turn of the eighteenth century the Orient definitively revealed the age of its languages—thus outdated Hebrew's divine pedigree—it was a group of Europeans who made the discovery, passed it on to other scholars, and preserved the discovery in the new science of Indo-European philology. A new powerful science for viewing the linguistic Orient was born, and with it, as Foucault has shown in *The Order of Things*, a whole web of related scientific interests. Similarly William Beckford, Byron, Goethe, and Hugo restructured the Orient by their art and made its colors, lights, and people visible through their images, rhythms, and motifs. At most, the "real" Orient provoked a writer to his vision; it very rarely guided it.

Orientalism responded more to the culture that produced it than to its putative object, which was also produced by the West. Thus the history of Orientalism has both an internal consistency and a highly articulated set of relationships to the dominant culture surrounding it. My analyses consequently try to show the field's shape and internal organization, its pioneers, patriarchal authorities, canonical texts, doxological ideas, exemplary figures, its followers, elaborators, and new authorities; I try also to explain how Orientalism borrowed and was frequently informed by "strong" ideas, doctrines, and trends ruling the culture. Thus there was (and is) a linguistic Orient, a Freudian Orient, a Spenglerian Orient, a Darwinian Orient, a racist Orient—and so on. Yet never has there

been such a thing as a pure, or unconditional, Orient; similarly, never has there been a nonmaterial form of Orientalism, much less something so innocent as an "idea" of the Orient. In this underlying conviction and in its ensuing methodological consequences do I differ from scholars who study the history of ideas. For the emphases and the executive form, above all the material effectiveness, of statements made by Orientalist discourse are possible in ways that any hermetic history of ideas tends completely to scant. Without those emphases and that material effectiveness Orientalism would be just another idea, whereas it is and was much more than that. Therefore I set out to examine not only scholarly works but also works of literature, political tracts, journalistic texts, travel books, religious and philological studies. In other words, my hybrid perspective is broadly historical and "anthropological," given that I believe all texts to be worldly and circumstantial in (of course) ways that vary from genre to genre, and from historical period to historical period.

Yet unlike Michel Foucault, to whose work I am greatly indebted, I do believe in the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism. The unity of the large ensemble of texts I analyze is due in part to the fact that they frequently refer to each other: Orientalism is after all a system for citing works and authors. Edward William Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* was read and cited by such diverse figures as Nerval, Flaubert, and Richard Burton. He was an authority whose use was an imperative for anyone writing or thinking about the Orient, not just about Egypt: when Nerval borrows passages verbatim from *Modern Egyptians* it is to use Lane's authority to assist him in describing village scenes in Syria, not Egypt. Lane's authority and the opportunities provided for citing him discriminately as well as indiscriminately were there because Orientalism could give his text the kind of distributive currency that he acquired. There is no way, however, of understanding Lane's currency without also understanding the peculiar features of *his* text; this is equally true of Renan, Sacy, Lamartine, Schlegel, and a group of other influential writers. Foucault believes that in general the individual text or author counts for very little; empirically, in the case of Orientalism (and perhaps nowhere else) I find this not to be so. Accordingly my analyses employ close textual readings

whose goal is to reveal the dialectic between individual text or writer and the complex collective formation to which his work is a contribution.

Yet even though it includes an ample selection of writers, this book is still far from a complete history or general account of Orientalism. Of this failing I am very conscious. The fabric of as thick a discourse as Orientalism has survived and functioned in Western society because of its richness: all I have done is to describe parts of that fabric at certain moments, and merely to suggest the existence of a larger whole, detailed, interesting, dotted with fascinating figures, texts, and events. I have consoled myself with believing that this book is one installment of several, and hope there are scholars and critics who might want to write others. There is still a general essay to be written on imperialism and culture; other studies would go more deeply into the connection between Orientalism and pedagogy, or into Italian, Dutch, German, and Swiss Orientalism, or into the dynamic between scholarship and imaginative writing, or into the relationship between administrative ideas and intellectual discipline. Perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective. (But then one would have to rethink the whole complex problem of knowledge and power.) These are all tasks left embarrassingly incomplete in this study.

The last, perhaps self-flattering, observation on method that I want to make here is that I have written this study with several audiences in mind. For students of literature and criticism, Orientalism offers a marvelous instance of the interrelations between society, history, and textuality; moreover, the cultural role played by the Orient in the West connects Orientalism with ideology, politics, and the logic of power, matters of relevance, I think, to the literary community. For contemporary students of the Orient, from university scholars to policymakers, I have written with two ends in mind: one, to present their intellectual genealogy to them in a way that has not been done; two, to criticize—with the hope of stirring discussion—the often unquestioned assumptions on which their work for the most part depends. For the general reader, this study deals with matters that always compel attention, all of them connected not only with Western conceptions and treatments of the Other but also with the singularly important role played by Western culture

in what Vico called the world of nations. Lastly, for readers in the so-called Third World, this study proposes itself as a step towards an understanding not so much of Western politics and of the non-Western world in those politics as of the *strength* of Western cultural discourse, a strength too often mistaken as merely decorative or “superstructural.” My hope is to illustrate the formidable structure of cultural domination and, specifically for formerly colonized peoples, the dangers and temptations of employing this structure upon themselves or upon others.

The three long chapters and twelve shorter units into which this book is divided are intended to facilitate exposition as much as possible. Chapter One, “The Scope of Orientalism,” draws a large circle around all the dimensions of the subject, both in terms of historical time and experiences and in terms of philosophical and political themes. Chapter Two, “Orientalist Structures and Restructures,” attempts to trace the development of modern Orientalism by a broadly chronological description, and also by the description of a set of devices common to the work of important poets, artists, and scholars. Chapter Three, “Orientalism Now,” begins where its predecessor left off, at around 1870. This is the period of great colonial expansion into the Orient, and it culminates in World War II. The very last section of Chapter Three characterizes the shift from British and French to American hegemony; I attempt there finally to sketch the present intellectual and social realities of Orientalism in the United States.

3. *The personal dimension.* In the *Prison Notebooks* Gramsci says: “The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.” The only available English translation inexplicably leaves Gramsci’s comment at that, whereas in fact Gramsci’s Italian text concludes by adding, “therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.”¹⁶

Much of the personal investment in this study derives from my awareness of being an “Oriental” as a child growing up in two British colonies. All of my education, in those colonies (Palestine and Egypt) and in the United States, has been Western, and yet that deep early awareness has persisted. In many ways my study of Orientalism has been an attempt to inventory the traces upon me, the Oriental subject, of the culture whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Orientals. This is why for me the

Islamic Orient has had to be the center of attention. Whether what I have achieved is the inventory prescribed by Gramsci is not for me to judge, although I have felt it important to be conscious of trying to produce one. Along the way, as severely and as rationally as I have been able, I have tried to maintain a critical consciousness, as well as employing those instruments of historical, humanistic, and cultural research of which my education has made me the fortunate beneficiary. In none of that, however, have I ever lost hold of the cultural reality of, the personal involvement in having been constituted as, "an Oriental."

The historical circumstances making such a study possible are fairly complex, and I can only list them schematically here. Anyone resident in the West since the 1950s, particularly in the United States, will have lived through an era of extraordinary turbulence in the relations of East and West. No one will have failed to note how "East" has always signified danger and threat during this period, even as it has meant the traditional Orient as well as Russia. In the universities a growing establishment of area-studies programs and institutes has made the scholarly study of the Orient a branch of national policy. Public affairs in this country include a healthy interest in the Orient, as much for its strategic and economic importance as for its traditional exoticism. If the world has become immediately accessible to a Western citizen living in the electronic age, the Orient too has drawn nearer to him, and is now less a myth perhaps than a place crisscrossed by Western, especially American, interests.

One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the media's resources have forced information into more and more standardized molds. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of "the mysterious Orient." This is nowhere more true than in the ways by which the Near East is grasped. Three things have contributed to making even the simplest perception of the Arabs and Islam into a highly politicized, almost raucous matter: one, the history of popular anti-Arab and anti-Islamic prejudice in the West, which is immediately reflected in the history of Orientalism; two, the struggle between the Arabs and Israeli Zionism, and its effects upon American Jews as well as upon both the liberal culture and the population at large; three, the almost

total absence of any cultural position making it possible either to identify with or dispassionately to discuss the Arabs or Islam. Furthermore, it hardly needs saying that because the Middle East is now so identified with Great Power politics, oil economics, and the simple-minded dichotomy of freedom-loving, democratic Israel and evil, totalitarian, and terroristic Arabs, the chances of anything like a clear view of what one talks about in talking about the Near East are depressingly small.

My own experiences of these matters are in part what made me write this book. The life of an Arab Palestinian in the West, particularly in America, is disheartening. There exists here an almost unanimous consensus that politically he does not exist, and when it is allowed that he does, it is either as a nuisance or as an Oriental. The web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanizing ideology holding in the Arab or the Muslim is very strong indeed, and it is this web which every Palestinian has come to feel as his uniquely punishing destiny. It has made matters worse for him to remark that no person academically involved with the Near East—no Orientalist, that is—has ever in the United States culturally and politically identified himself wholeheartedly with the Arabs; certainly there have been identifications on some level, but they have never taken an "acceptable" form as has liberal American identification with Zionism, and all too frequently they have been radically flawed by their association either with discredited political and economic interests (oil-company and State Department Arabists, for example) or with religion.

The nexus of knowledge and power creating "the Oriental" and in a sense obliterating him as a human being is therefore not for me an exclusively academic matter. Yet it is an *intellectual* matter of some very obvious importance. I have been able to put to use my humanistic and political concerns for the analysis and description of a very worldly matter, the rise, development, and consolidation of Orientalism. Too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically innocent; it has regularly seemed otherwise to me, and certainly my study of Orientalism has convinced me (and I hope will convince my literary colleagues) that society and literary culture can only be understood and studied together. In addition, and by an almost inescapable logic, I have found myself writing the history of a strange, secret sharer of Western anti-Semitism. That anti-Semitism and, as I have discussed

it in its Islamic branch, Orientalism resemble each other very closely is a historical, cultural, and political truth that needs only to be mentioned to an Arab Palestinian for its irony to be perfectly understood. But what I should like also to have contributed here is a better understanding of the way cultural domination has operated. If this stimulates a new kind of dealing with the Orient, indeed if it eliminates the "Orient" and "Occident" altogether, then we shall have advanced a little in the process of what Raymond Williams has called the "unlearning" of "the inherent dominative mode."¹⁷

1

The Scope of Orientalism

... le génie inquiet et ambitieux de Européens ... impatient d'employer les nouveaux instruments de leur puissance ...

—Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Fourier, *Préface historique* (1809),
Description de l'Egypte

"literature," or "the humanities," and despite its overreaching aspirations, Orientalism is involved in worldly, historical circumstances which it has tried to conceal behind an often pompous scientism and appeals to rationalism. The contemporary intellectual can learn from Orientalism how, on the one hand, either to limit or to enlarge realistically the scope of his discipline's claims, and on the other, to see the human ground (the foul-rag-and-bone shop of the heart, Yeats called it) in which texts, visions, methods, and disciplines begin, grow, thrive, and degenerate. To investigate Orientalism is also to propose intellectual ways for handling the methodological problems that history has brought forward, so to speak, in its subject matter, the Orient. But before that we must virtually see the humanistic values that Orientalism, by its scope, experiences, and structures, has all but eliminated.

2

Orientalist Structures and Restructures

When the seyyid 'Omar, the Nakib el-Ashráf (or chief of the descendants of the Prophet) . . . married a daughter, about forty-five years since, there walked before the procession a young man who had made an incision in his abdomen, and drawn out a large portion of his intestines, which he carried before him on a silver tray. After the procession, he restored them to their proper place, and remained in bed many days before he recovered from the effects of this foolish and disgusting act.

—Edward William Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*

. . . dans le cas de la chute de cet empire, soit par une révolution à Constantinople, soit par un démembrement successif, les puissances européennes prendront chacune, à titre de protectorat, la partie de l'empire qui lui sera assignée par les stipulations du congrès; que ces protectorats, définis et limités, quant aux territoires, selon les voisinages, la sûreté des frontières, l'analogie de religions, de moeurs et d'intérêts . . . ne consacreront que la suzeraineté des puissances. Cette sorte de suzeraineté définie ainsi, et consacrée comme droit européen, consistera principalement dans le droit d'occuper telle partie du territoire ou des côtes, pour y fonder, soit des villes libres, soit des colonies européennes, soit des ports et des échelles de commerce. . . . Ce n'est qu'une tutelle armée et civilisatrice que chaque puissance exercera sur son protectorat; elle garantira son existence et ses éléments de nationalité, sous le drapeau d'une nationalité plus forte. . . .

—Alphonse de Lamartine, *Voyage en Orient*

I

Redrawn Frontiers, Redefined Issues, Secularized Religion

Gustave Flaubert died in 1880 without having finished *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, his comic encyclopedic novel on the degeneration of knowledge and the inanity of human effort. Nevertheless the essential outlines of his vision are clear, and are clearly supported by the ample detail of his novel. The two clerks are members of the bourgeoisie who, because one of them is the unexpected beneficiary of a handsome will, retire from the city to spend their lives on a country estate doing what they please ("nous ferons tout ce que nous plaira!"). As Flaubert portrays their experience, doing as they please involves Bouvard and Pécuchet in a practical and theoretical jaunt through agriculture, history, chemistry, education, archaeology, literature, always with less than successful results; they move through fields of learning like travelers in time and knowledge, experiencing the disappointments, disasters, and letdowns of uninspired amateurs. What they move through, in fact, is the whole disillusioning experience of the nineteenth century, whereby—in Charles Morazé's phrase—"les bourgeois conquerants" turn out to be the bumbling victims of their own leveling incompetence and mediocrity. Every enthusiasm resolves itself into a boring cliché, and every discipline or type of knowledge changes from hope and power into disorder, ruin, and sorrow.

Among Flaubert's sketches for the conclusion of this panorama of despair are two items of special interest to us here. The two men debate the future of mankind. Pécuchet sees "the future of Humanity through a glass darkly," whereas Bouvard sees it "brightly!"

Modern man is progressing, Europe will be regenerated by Asia.
The historical law that civilization moves from Orient to Occident
. . . the two forms of humanity will at last be soldered together.¹

This obvious echo of Quinet represents the start of still another of the cycles of enthusiasm and disillusionment through which the two men will pass. Flaubert's notes indicate that like all his others,

this anticipated project of Bouvard's is rudely interrupted by reality—this time by the sudden appearance of gendarmes who accuse him of debauchery. A few lines later, however, the second item of interest turns up. The two men simultaneously confess to each other that their secret desire is once again to become copyists. They have a double desk made for them, they buy books, pencils, erasers, and—as Flaubert concludes the sketch—"ils s'y mettent": they turn to. From trying to live through and apply knowledge more or less directly, Bouvard and Pécuchet are reduced finally to transcribing it uncritically from one text to another.

Although Bouvard's vision of Europe regenerated by Asia is not fully spelled out, it (and what it comes to on the copyist's desk) can be glossed in several important ways. Like many of the two men's other visions, this one is *global* and it is *reconstructive*; it represents what Flaubert felt to be the nineteenth-century predilection for the rebuilding of the world according to an imaginative vision, sometimes accompanied by a special scientific technique. Among the visions Flaubert has in mind are the utopias of Saint-Simon and Fourier, the scientific regenerations of mankind envisioned by Comte, and all the technical or secular religions promoted by ideologues, positivists, eclectics, occultists, traditionalists, and idealists such as Destutt de Tracy, Cabanis, Michelet, Cousin, Proudhon, Cournot, Cabet, Janet, and Lamennais.² Throughout the novel Bouvard and Pécuchet espouse the various causes of such figures; then, having ruined them, they move on looking for newer ones, but with no better results.

The roots of such revisionist ambitions as these are Romantic in a very specific way. We must remember the extent to which a major part of the spiritual and intellectual project of the late eighteenth century was a reconstituted theology—natural supernaturalism, as M. H. Abrams has called it; this type of thought is carried forward by the typical nineteenth-century attitudes Flaubert satirizes in *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. The notion of regeneration therefore harks back to

a conspicuous Romantic tendency, after the rationalism and decorum of the Enlightenment . . . [to revert] to the stark drama and suprarational mysteries of the Christian story and doctrines and to the violent conflicts and abrupt reversals of the Christian inner life, turning on the extremes of destruction and creation, hell and heaven, exile and reunion, death and rebirth, dejection and joy, paradise lost and paradise regained. . . . But since they

lived, inescapably, after the Enlightenment, Romantic writers revived these ancient matters with a difference: they undertook to save the overview of human history and destiny, the existential paradigms, and the cardinal values of their religious heritage, by reconstituting them in a way that would make them intellectually acceptable, as well as emotionally pertinent, for the time being.³

What Bouvard has in mind—the regeneration of Europe by Asia—was a very influential Romantic idea. Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, for example, urged upon their countrymen, and upon Europeans in general, a detailed study of India because, they said, it was Indian culture and religion that could defeat the materialism and mechanism (and republicanism) of Occidental culture. And from this defeat would arise a new, revitalized Europe: the Biblical imagery of death, rebirth, and redemption is evident in this prescription. Moreover, the Romantic Orientalist project was not merely a specific instance of a general tendency; it was a powerful shaper of the tendency itself, as Raymond Schwab has so convincingly argued in *La Renaissance orientale*. But what mattered was not Asia so much as Asia's *use to* modern Europe. Thus anyone who, like Schlegel or Franz Bopp, mastered an Oriental language was a spiritual hero, a knight-errant bringing back to Europe a sense of the holy mission it had now lost. It is precisely this sense that the later secular religions portrayed by Flaubert carry on in the nineteenth century. No less than Schlegel, Wordsworth, and Chateaubriand, Auguste Comte—like Bouvard—was the adherent and proponent of a secular post-Enlightenment myth whose outlines are unmistakably Christian.

In regularly allowing Bouvard and Pécuchet to go through revisionist notions from start to comically debased finish, Flaubert drew attention to the human flaw common to all projects. He saw perfectly well that underneath the *idée reçue* "Europe-regenerated-by-Asia" lurked a very insidious hubris. Neither "Europe" nor "Asia" was anything without the visionaries' technique for turning vast geographical domains into treatable, and manageable, entities. At bottom, therefore, Europe and Asia were *our* Europe and *our* Asia—*our will* and *representation*, as Schopenhauer had said. Historical laws were in reality *historians'* laws, just as "the two forms of humanity" drew attention less to actuality than to a European capacity for lending man-made distinctions an air of inevitability. As for the other half of the phrase—"will at last be soldered together"—there Flaubert mocked the blithe indifference of science to actuality,

a science which anatomized and melted human entities as if they were so much inert matter. But it was not just any science he mocked: it was enthusiastic, even messianic European science, whose victories included failed revolutions, wars, oppression, and an unteachable appetite for putting grand, bookish ideas quixotically to work immediately. What such science or knowledge never reckoned with was its own deeply ingrained and unself-conscious bad innocence and the resistance to it of reality. When Bouvard plays the scientist he naively assumes that science merely is, that reality is as the scientist says it is, that it does not matter whether the scientist is a fool or a visionary; he (or anyone who thinks like him) cannot see that the Orient may not wish to regenerate Europe, or that Europe was not about to fuse itself democratically with yellow or brown Asians. In short, such a scientist does not recognize in his science the egoistic will to power that feeds his endeavors and corrupts his ambitions.

Flaubert, of course, sees to it that his poor fools are made to rub their noses in these difficulties. Bouvard and Pécuchet have learned that it is better not to traffic in ideas and in reality together. The novel's conclusion is a picture of the two of them now perfectly content to copy their favorite ideas faithfully from book onto paper. 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; they have literally become *idées reçues*: what matters is that they are *there*, to be repeated, echoed, and re-echoed uncritically.

In a highly compressed form this brief episode, taken out of Flaubert's notes for *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, frames the specifically modern structures of Orientalism, which after all is one discipline among the secular (and quasi-religious) faiths of nineteenth-century European thought. We have already characterized the general scope of thought about the Orient that was handed on through the medieval and Renaissance periods, for which Islam was the essential Orient. During the eighteenth century, however, there were a number of new, interlocking elements that hinted at the coming evangelical phase, whose outlines Flaubert was later to re-create.

For one, the Orient was being opened out considerably beyond the Islamic lands. This quantitative change was to a large degree the result of continuing, and expanding, European exploration of

the rest of the world. The increasing influence of travel literature, imaginary utopias, moral voyages, and scientific reporting brought the Orient into sharper and more extended focus. If Orientalism is indebted principally to the fruitful Eastern discoveries of Anquetil and Jones during the latter third of the century, these must be seen in the wider context created by Cook and Bougainville, the voyages of Tournefort and Adanson, by the *Président de Brosses's Histoire des navigations aux terres australes*, by French traders in the Pacific, by Jesuit missionaries in China and the Americas, by William Dampier's explorations and reports, by innumerable speculations on giants, Patagonians, savages, natives, and monsters supposedly residing to the far east, west, south, and north of Europe. But all such widening horizons had Europe firmly in the privileged center, as main observer (or mainly observed, as in Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*). For even as Europe moved itself outwards, its sense of cultural strength was fortified. From travelers' tales, and not only from great institutions like the various India companies, colonies were created and ethnocentric perspectives secured.⁴

For another, a more knowledgeable attitude towards the alien and exotic was abetted not only by travelers and explorers but also by historians for whom European experience could profitably be compared with other, as well as older, civilizations. That powerful current in eighteenth-century historical anthropology, described by scholars as the confrontation of the gods, meant that Gibbon could read the lessons of Rome's decline in the rise of Islam, just as Vico could understand modern civilization in terms of the barbaric, poetic splendor of their earliest beginnings. Whereas Renaissance historians judged the Orient inflexibly as an enemy, those of the eighteenth century confronted the Orient's peculiarities with some detachment and with some attempt at dealing directly with Oriental source material, perhaps because such a technique helped a European to know himself better. George Sale's translation of the Koran and his accompanying preliminary discourse illustrate the change. Unlike his predecessors, Sale tried to deal with Arab history in terms of Arab sources; moreover, he let Muslim commentators on the sacred text speak for themselves.⁵ In Sale, as throughout the eighteenth century, simple comparatism was the early phase of the comparative disciplines (philology, anatomy, jurisprudence, religion) which were to become the boast of nineteenth-century method.

But there was a tendency among some thinkers to exceed comparative study, and its judicious surveys of mankind from "China to Peru," by sympathetic identification. This is a third eighteenth-century element preparing the way for modern Orientalism. What today we call historicism is an eighteenth-century idea; Vico, Herder, and Hamann, among others, believed that all cultures were organically and internally coherent, bound together by a spirit, genius, *Klima*, or national idea which an outsider could penetrate only by an act of historical sympathy. Thus Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–1791) was a panoramic display of various cultures, each permeated by an inimical creative spirit, each accessible only to an observer who sacrificed his prejudices to *Einfühlung*. Imbued with the populist and pluralist sense of history advocated by Herder and others,⁸ an eighteenth-century mind could breach the doctrinal walls erected between the West and Islam and see hidden elements of kinship between himself and the Orient. Napoleon is a famous instance of this (usually selective) identification by sympathy. Mozart is another; *The Magic Flute* (in which Masonic codes intermingle with visions of a benign Orient) and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* locate a particularly magnanimous form of humanity in the Orient. And this, much more than the modish habits of "Turkish" music, drew Mozart sympathetically eastwards.

It is very difficult nonetheless to separate such intuitions of the Orient as Mozart's from the entire range of pre-Romantic and Romantic representations of the Orient as exotic locale. Popular Orientalism during the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth attained a vogue of considerable intensity. But even this vogue, easily identifiable in William Beckford, Byron, Thomas Moore, and Goethe, cannot be simply detached from the interest taken in Gothic tales, pseudomedieval idylls, visions of barbaric splendor and cruelty. Thus in some cases the Oriental representation can be associated with Piranesi's prisons, in others with Tiepolo's luxurious ambiences, in still others with the exotic sublimity of late-eighteenth-century paintings.⁹ Later in the nineteenth century, in the works of Delacroix and literally dozens of other French and British painters, the Oriental genre tableau carried representation into visual expression and a life of its own (which this book unfortunately must scant). Sensuality, promise, terror, sublimity, idyllic pleasure, intense energy: the Orient as a figure in the pre-

Romantic, pretechnical Orientalist imagination of late-eighteenth-century Europe was really a chameleonlike quality called (adjectively) "Oriental."¹⁰ But this free-floating Orient would be severely curtailed with the advent of academic Orientalism.

A fourth element preparing the way for modern Orientalist structures was the whole impulse to classify nature and man into types. The greatest names are, of course, Linnaeus and Buffon, but the intellectual process by which bodily (and soon moral, intellectual, and spiritual) extension—the typical materiality of an object—could be transformed from mere spectacle to the precise measurement of characteristic elements was very widespread. Linnaeus said that every note made about a natural type "should be a product of number, of form, of proportion, of situation," and indeed, if one looks in Kant or Diderot or Johnson, there is everywhere a similar penchant for dramatizing general features, for reducing vast numbers of objects to a smaller number of orderable and describable types. In natural history, in anthropology, in cultural generalization, a type had a particular *character* which provided the observer with a designation and, as Foucault says, "a controlled derivation." These types and characters belonged to a system, a network of related generalizations. Thus,

all designation must be accomplished by means of a certain relation to all other possible designations. To know what properly appertains to one individual is to have before one the classification—or the possibility of classifying—all others.⁹

In the writing of philosophers, historians, encyclopedists, and essayists we find character-as-designation appearing as physiological-moral classification: there are, for example, the wild men, the Europeans, the Asiatics, and so forth. These appear of course in Linnaeus, but also in Montesquieu, in Johnson, in Blumenbach, in Soemmerring, in Kant. Physiological and moral characteristics are distributed more or less equally: the American is "red, choleric, erect," the Asiatic is "yellow, melancholy, rigid," the African is "black, phlegmatic, lax."¹⁰ But such designations gather power when, later in the nineteenth century, they are allied with character as derivation, as genetic type. In Vico and Rousseau, for example, 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,

even linguistic issues. Thus when an Oriental was referred to, it was in terms of such genetic universals as his "primitive" state, his primary characteristics, his particular spiritual background.

The four elements I have described—expansion, historical confrontation, sympathy, classification—are the currents in eighteenth-century thought on whose presence the specific intellectual and institutional structures of modern Orientalism depend. Without them Orientalism, as we shall see presently, could not have occurred. Moreover, these elements had the effect of releasing the Orient generally, and Islam in particular, from the narrowly religious scrutiny by which it had hitherto been examined (and judged) by the Christian West. In other words, modern Orientalism derives from secularizing elements in eighteenth-century European culture. One, the expansion of the Orient further east geographically and further back temporally loosened, even dissolved, the Biblical framework considerably. Reference points were no longer Christianity and Judaism, with their fairly modest calendars and maps, but India, China, Japan, and Sumer, Buddhism, Sanskrit, Zoroastrianism, and Manu. Two, the capacity for dealing historically (and not reductively, as a topic of ecclesiastical politics) with non-European and non-Judeo-Christian cultures was strengthened as history itself was conceived of more radically than before; to understand Europe properly meant also understanding the objective relations between Europe and its own previously unreachable temporal and cultural frontiers. In a sense, John of Segovia's idea of *contraferentia* between Orient and Europe was realized, but in a wholly secular way; Gibbon could treat Mohammed as a historical figure who influenced Europe and not as a diabolical miscreant hovering somewhere between magic and false prophecy. Three, a selective identification with regions and cultures not one's own wore down the obduracy of self and identity, which had been polarized into a community of embattled believers facing barbarian hordes. The borders of Christian Europe no longer served as a kind of custom house; the notions of human association and of human possibility acquired a very wide general—as opposed to parochial—legitimacy. Four, the classifications of mankind were systematically multiplied as the possibilities of designation and derivation were refined beyond the categories of what Vico called gentile and sacred nations; race, color, origin, temperament, character, and types overwhelmed the distinction between Christians and everyone else.

But if these interconnected elements represent a secularizing

tendency, this is not to say that the old religious patterns of human history and destiny and "the existential paradigms" were simply removed. Far from it: they were reconstituted, redeployed, redistributed in the secular frameworks just enumerated. For anyone who studied the Orient a secular vocabulary in keeping with these frameworks was required. Yet if Orientalism provided the vocabulary, the conceptual repertoire, the techniques—for this is what, from the end of the eighteenth century on, Orientalism *did* and what Orientalism *was*—it also retained, as an undislodged current in its discourse, a reconstructed religious impulse, a naturalized supernaturalism. What I shall try to show is that this impulse in Orientalism resided in the Orientalist's conception of himself, of the Orient, and of his discipline.

The modern Orientalist was, in his view, a hero rescuing the Orient from the obscurity, alienation, and strangeness which he himself had properly distinguished. His research reconstructed the Orient's lost languages, mores, even mentalities, as Champollion reconstructed Egyptian hieroglyphics out of the Rosetta Stone. The specific Orientalist techniques—lexicography, grammar, translation, cultural decoding—restored, fleshed out, reasserted the values both of an ancient, classical Orient and of the traditional disciplines of philology, history, rhetoric, and doctrinal polemic. But in the process, the Orient and Orientalist disciplines changed dialectically, for they could not survive in their original form. The Orient, even in the "classic" form which the Orientalist usually studied, was modernized, restored to the present; the traditional disciplines too were brought into contemporary culture. Yet both bore the traces of *power*—power to have resurrected, indeed created, the Orient, power that dwelt in the new, scientifically advanced techniques of philology and of anthropological generalization. In short, having transported the Orient into modernity, the Orientalist could celebrate his method, and his position, as that of a secular creator, a man who made new worlds as God had once made the old. As for carrying on such methods and such positions beyond the life-span of any individual Orientalist, there would be a secular tradition of continuity, a lay order of disciplined methodologists, whose brotherhood would be based, not on blood lineage, but upon a common discourse, a praxis, a library, a set of received ideas, in short, a doxology, common to everyone who entered the ranks. Flaubert was prescient enough to see that in time the modern Orientalist would become a copyist, like Bouvard and Pécuchet; but during the early days, in

the careers of Silvestre de Sacy and Ernest Renan, no such danger was apparent.

My thesis is that the essential aspects of modern Orientalist theory and praxis (from which present-day Orientalism derives) can be understood, not as a sudden access of objective knowledge about the Orient, but as a set of structures inherited from the past, secularized, redispersed, and re-formed by such disciplines as philology, which in turn were naturalized, modernized, and laicized substitutes for (or versions of) Christian supernaturalism. In the form of new texts and ideas, the East was accommodated to these structures. Linguists and explorers like Jones and Anquetil were contributors to modern Orientalism, certainly, but what distinguishes modern Orientalism as a field, a group of ideas, a discourse, is the work of a later generation than theirs. If we use the Napoleonic expedition (1798–1801) as a sort of first enabling experience for modern Orientalism, we can consider its inaugural heroes—in Islamic studies, Sacy and Renan and Lane—to be builders of the field, creators of a tradition, progenitors of the Orientalist brotherhood. What Sacy, Renan, and Lane did was to place Orientalism on a scientific and rational basis. This entailed not only their own exemplary work but also the creation of a vocabulary and ideas that could be used impersonally by anyone who wished to become an Orientalist. Their inauguration of Orientalism was a considerable feat. It made possible a scientific terminology; it banished obscurity and instated a special form of illumination for the Orient; it established the figure of the Orientalist as central authority *for* the Orient; it legitimized a special kind of specifically coherent Orientalist work; it put into cultural circulation a form of discursive currency by whose presence the Orient henceforth would be *spoken for*; above all, the work of the inaugurers carved out a field of study and a family of ideas which in turn could form a community of scholars whose lineage, traditions, and ambitions were at once internal to the field and external enough for general prestige. The more Europe encroached upon the Orient during the nineteenth century, the more Orientalism gained in public confidence. Yet if this gain coincided with a loss in originality, we should not be entirely surprised, since its mode, from the beginning, was reconstruction and repetition.

One final observation: The late-eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century ideas, institutions, and figures I shall deal with in this chapter are an important part, a crucial elaboration, of the first

phase of the greatest age of territorial acquisition ever known. By the end of World War I Europe had colonized 85 percent of the earth. To say simply that modern Orientalism has been an aspect of both imperialism and colonialism is not to say anything very disputable. Yet it is not enough to say it; it needs to be worked through analytically and historically. I am interested in showing how modern Orientalism, unlike the precolonial awareness of Dante and d'Herbelot, embodies a systematic discipline of *accumulation*. And far from this being exclusively an intellectual or theoretical feature, it made Orientalism fatally tend towards the systematic accumulation of human beings and territories. To reconstruct a dead or lost Oriental language meant ultimately to reconstruct a dead or neglected Orient; it also meant that reconstructive precision, science, even imagination could prepare the way for what armies, administrations, and bureaucracies would later do on the ground, in the Orient. In a sense, the vindication of Orientalism was not only its intellectual or artistic successes but its later effectiveness, its usefulness, its authority. Surely it deserves serious attention on all those counts.

II

Silvestre de Sacy and Ernest Renan: *Rational Anthropology and Philological Laboratory*

The two great themes of Silvestre de Sacy's life are heroic effort and a dedicated sense of pedagogic and rational utility. Born in 1757 into a Jansenist family whose occupation was traditionally that of *notaire*, Antoine-Isaac-Silvestre was privately tutored at a Benedictine abbey, first in Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldean, then in Hebrew. Arabic in particular was the language that opened the Orient to him since it was in Arabic, according to Joseph Reinaud,

body (as they had for Vico) and more to a sightless, imageless, and abstract realm ruled over by such hothouse formulations as race, mind, culture, and nation. In that realm, which was discursively constructed and called the Orient, certain kinds of assertions could be made, all of them possessing the same powerful generality and cultural validity. For all of Renan's effort was to deny Oriental culture the right to be generated, except artificially in the philological laboratory. A man was not a child of the culture; that dynastic conception had been too effectively challenged by philology. Philology taught one how culture is a construct, an *articulation* (in the sense that Dickens used the word for Mr. Venus's profession in *Our Mutual Friend*), even a creation, but not anything more than a quasi-organic structure.

What is specially interesting in Renan is how much he knew himself to be a creature of his time and of his ethnocentric culture. On the occasion of an academic response to a speech made by Ferdinand de Lesseps in 1885, Renan averred as how "it was so sad to be a wiser man than one's nation. . . . One cannot feel bitterness towards one's homeland. Better to be mistaken along with the nation than to be too right with those who tell it hard truths."⁶⁰ The economy of such a statement is almost too perfect to be true. For does not the old Renan say that the best relationship is one of parity with one's own culture, its morality, and its ethos during one's time, that and not a dynastic relation by which one is either the child of his times or their parent? And here we return to the laboratory, for it is there—as Renan thought of it—that filial and ultimately social responsibilities cease and scientific and Orientalist ones take over. His laboratory was the platform from which as an Orientalist he addressed the world; it mediated the statements he made, gave them confidence and general precision, as well as continuity. Thus the philological laboratory as Renan understood it redefined not only his epoch and his culture, dating and shaping them in new ways; it gave his Oriental subject matter a scholarly coherence, and more, it made him (and later Orientalists in his tradition) into the Occidental *cultural* figure he then became. We may well wonder whether this new autonomy within the culture was the freedom Renan hoped his philological Orientalist science would bring or whether, so far as a critical historian of Orientalism is concerned, 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.

III

Oriental Residence and Scholarship: *The Requirements of Lexicography and Imagination*

Renan's views of the Oriental Semites belong, of course, less to the realm of popular prejudice and common anti-Semitism than they do to the realm of scientific Oriental philology. When we read Renan and Sacy, we readily observe the way cultural generalization had begun to acquire the armor of scientific statement and the ambience of corrective study. Like many academic specialties in their early phases, modern Orientalism held its subject matter, which it defined, in a viselike grip which it did almost everything in its power to sustain. Thus a knowing vocabulary developed, and its functions, as much as its style, located the Orient in a *comparative* framework, of the sort employed and manipulated by Renan. Such comparatism is rarely descriptive; most often, it is both evaluative and expository. Here is Renan comparing typically:

One sees that in all things the Semitic race appears to us to be an incomplete race, by virtue of its simplicity. This race—if I dare use the analogy—is to the Indo-European family what a pencil sketch is to painting; it lacks that variety, that amplitude, that abundance of life which is the condition of perfectibility. Like those individuals who possess so little fecundity that, after a gracious childhood, they attain only the most mediocre virility, the Semitic nations experienced their fullest flowering in their first age and have never been able to achieve true maturity.⁶¹

Indo-Europeans are the touchstone here, just as they are when Renan says that the Semitic Oriental sensibility never reached the heights attained by the Indo-Germanic races.

Whether this comparative attitude is principally a scholarly necessity or whether it is disguised ethnocentric race prejudice, we cannot say with absolute certainty. What we can say is that the two

work together, in support of each other. What Renan and Sacy tried to do was to reduce the Orient to a kind of human flatness, which exposed its characteristics easily to scrutiny and removed from it its complicating humanity. In Renan's case, the legitimacy of his efforts was provided by philology, whose ideological tenets encourage the reduction of a language to its roots; thereafter, the philologist finds it possible to connect those linguistics roots, as Renan and others did, to race, mind, character, and temperament at their roots. The affinity between Renan and Gobineau, for example, was acknowledged by Renan to be a common philological and Orientalist perspective;⁶² in subsequent editions of the *Histoire générale* he incorporated some of Gobineau's work within his own. Thus did comparatism in the study of the Orient and Orientals come to be synonymous with the apparent ontological inequality of Occident and Orient.

The main traits of this inequality are worth recapitulating briefly. I have already referred to Schlegel's enthusiasm for India, and then his subsequent revulsion from it and of course from Islam. Many of the earliest Oriental amateurs began by welcoming the Orient as a salutary *dérangement* of their European habits of mind and spirit. The Orient was overvalued for its pantheism, its spirituality, its stability, its longevity, its primitivity, and so forth. Schelling, for example, saw in Oriental polytheism a preparation of the way for Judeo-Christian monotheism: Abraham was prefigured in Brahma. Yet almost without exception such overesteem was followed by a counterresponse: the Orient suddenly appeared lamentably under-humanized, antidemocratic, backward, barbaric, and so forth. A swing of the pendulum in one direction caused an equal and opposite swing back: the Orient was undervalued. 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. Indeed the very project of restriction and restructuring associated with Orientalism can be traced directly to the inequality by which the Orient's comparative poverty (or wealth) besought scholarly, scientific treatment of the kind to be found in disciplines like philology, biology, history, anthropology, philosophy, or economics.

And thus the actual profession of Orientalist enshrined this inequality and the special paradoxes it engendered. Most often an individual entered the profession as a way of reckoning with the Orient's claim on him; yet most often too his Orientalist training

opened his eyes, so to speak, and what he was left with was a sort of debunking project, by which the Orient was reduced to considerably less than the eminence once seen in it. How else is one to explain the enormous labors represented by the work of William Muir (1819–1905), for example, or of Reinhart Dozy (1820–1883), and the impressive antipathy in that work to the Orient, Islam, and the Arabs? Characteristically, Renan was one of Dozy's supporters, just as in Dozy's four-volume *Histoire des Mussulmans d'Espagne, jusqu'à la conquête de l'Andalousie par les Almoravides* (1861) there appear many of Renan's anti-Semitic strictures, compounded in 1864 by a volume arguing that the Jews' primitive God was not Jahweh but Baal, proof for which was to be found in Mecca, of all places. Muir's *Life of Mahomet* (1858–1861) and his *The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall* (1891) are still considered reliable monuments of scholarship, yet his attitude towards his subject matter was fairly put by him when he said that "the sword of Muhammed, and the Kor'ān, are the most stubborn enemies of Civilisation, Liberty, and the Truth which the world has yet known."⁶³ Many of the same notions are to be found in the work of Alfred Lyall, who was one of the authors cited approvingly by Cromer.

Even if the Orientalist does not explicitly judge his material as Dozy and Muir did, the principle of inequality exerts its influence nevertheless. It remains the professional Orientalist's job to piece together a portrait, a restored picture as it were, of the Orient or the Oriental; fragments, such as those unearthed by Sacy, supply the material, but the narrative shape, continuity, and figures are constructed by the scholar, for whom scholarship consists of circumventing the unruly (un-Occidental) nonhistory of the Orient with orderly chronicle, portraits, and plots. Caussin de Perceval's *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'Islamisme, pendant l'époque de Mahomet* (three volumes, 1847–1848) is a wholly professional study, depending for its sources on documents made available internally to the field by other Orientalists (principally Sacy, of course) or documents—like the texts of ibn-Khaldun, upon whom Caussin relied very heavily—reposing in Orientalist libraries in Europe. Caussin's thesis is that the Arabs were made a people by Mohammed, Islam being essentially a political instrument, not by any means a spiritual one. What Caussin strives for is clarity amidst a huge mass of confusing detail. Thus what emerges out of the study of Islam is quite literally a one-dimensional portrait of Mohammed,

who is made to appear at the end of the work (after his death has been described) in precise photographic detail.⁶⁴ Neither a demon, nor a prototype of Cagliostro, Caussin's Mohammed is a man appropriated to a history of Islam (the fittest version of it) as an exclusively political movement, centralized by the innumerable citations that thrust him up and, in a sense, out of the text. Caussin's intention was to leave nothing unsaid about Mohammed; the Prophet is thereby seen in a cold light, stripped both of his immense religious force and of any residual powers to frighten Europeans. The point here is that as a figure for his own time and place Mohammed is effaced, in order for a very slight human miniature of him to be left standing.

A nonprofessional analogue to Caussin's Mohammed is Carlyle's, a Mohammed forced to serve a thesis totally overlooking the historical and cultural circumstances of the Prophet's own time and place. Although Carlyle quotes Sacy, his essay is clearly the product of someone arguing for some general ideas on sincerity, heroism, and prophethood. His attitude is salutary: Mohammed is no legend, no shameful sensualist, no laughable petty sorcerer who trained pigeons to pick peas out of his ear. Rather he is a man of real vision and self-conviction, albeit an author of a book, the Koran, that is "a wearisome confused jumble, crude, incondite; endless iterations, long-windedness, entanglement; most crude, incondite—insupportable stupidity, in short."⁶⁵ Not a paragon of lucidity and stylistic grace himself, Carlyle asserts these things as a way of rescuing Mohammed from the Benthamite standards that would have condemned both Mohammed and him together. Yet Mohammed is a hero, transplanted into Europe out of the same barbaric Orient found wanting by Lord Macaulay in his famous "Minute" of 1835, in which it was asserted that "our native subjects" have more to learn from us than we do from them.⁶⁶

Both Caussin and Carlyle, in other words, show us that the Orient need not cause us undue anxiety, so unequal are Oriental to European achievements. The Orientalist and non-Orientalist perspectives coincide here. For within the comparative field that Orientalism became after the philological revolution of the early nineteenth century, and outside it, either in popular stereotypes or in the figures made of the Orient by philosophers like Carlyle and stereotypes like those of Macaulay, the Orient in itself was subordinated intellectually to the West. As material for study or reflection the Orient acquired all the marks of an inherent weakness. It became

subject to the vagaries of miscellaneous theories that used it for illustration. Cardinal Newman, no great Orientalist, used Oriental Islam as the basis of lectures in 1853 justifying British intervention in the Crimean War.⁶⁷ Cuvier found the Orient useful for his work *Le Règne animal* (1816). The Orient was usefully employed as conversation in the various salons of Paris.⁶⁸ The list of references, borrowings, and transformations that overtook the Oriental idea is immense, but at bottom what the early Orientalist achieved, and what the non-Orientalist in the West exploited, was a reduced model of the Orient suitable for the prevailing, dominant culture and its theoretical (and hard after the theoretical, the practical) exigencies.

Occasionally one comes across exceptions, or if not exceptions then interesting complications, to this unequal partnership between East and West. Karl Marx identified the notion of an Asiatic economic system in his 1853 analyses of British rule in India, and then put beside that immediately the human depredation introduced into this system by English colonial interference, rapacity, and outright cruelty. In article after article he returned with increasing conviction to the idea that even in destroying Asia, Britain was making possible there a real social revolution. Marx's style pushes us right up against the difficulty of reconciling our natural repugnance as fellow creatures to the sufferings of Orientals while their society is being violently transformed with the historical necessity of these transformations.

Now, sickening as it must be to human feeling to witness those myriads of industrious patriarchal and inoffensive social organizations disorganized and dissolved into their units, thrown into a sea of woes, and their individual members losing at the same time their ancient form of civilization and their hereditary means of subsistence, we must not forget that these idyllic village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath the traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies. . . .

England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.

Then, whatever bitterness the spectacle of the crumbling of an ancient world may have for our personal feelings, we have the right, in point of history, to exclaim with Goethe:

Sollte diese Qual uns quälen
 Da sie unsere Lust vermehrt
 Hat nicht Myriaden Seelen
 Timurs Herrschaft aufgeziehrt?⁶⁹

(Should this torture then torment us
 Since it brings us greater pleasure?
 Were not through the rule of Timur
 Souls devoured without measure?)

The quotation, which supports Marx's argument about torment producing pleasure, comes from the *Westöstlicher Diwan* and identifies the sources of Marx's conceptions about the Orient. These are Romantic and even messianic: as human material the Orient is less important than as an element in a Romantic redemptive project. Marx's economic analyses are perfectly fitted thus to a standard Orientalist undertaking, even though Marx's humanity, his sympathy for the misery of people, are clearly engaged. Yet in the end it is the Romantic Orientalist vision that wins out, as Marx's theoretical socio-economic views become submerged in this classically standard image:

England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of the Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia.⁷⁰

The idea of regenerating a fundamentally lifeless Asia is a piece of pure Romantic Orientalism, of course, but coming from the same writer who could not easily forget the human suffering involved, the statement is puzzling. It requires us first to ask how Marx's moral equation of Asiatic loss with the British colonial rule he condemned gets skewed back towards the old inequality between East and West we have so far remarked. Second, it requires us to ask where the human sympathy has gone, into what realm of thought it has disappeared while the Orientalist vision takes its place.

We are immediately brought back to the realization that Orientalists, like many other early-nineteenth-century thinkers, conceive of humanity either in large collective terms or in abstract generalities. Orientalists are neither interested in nor capable of discussing individuals; instead artificial entities, perhaps with their

roots in Herderian populism, predominate. There are Orientals, Asiatics, Semites, Muslims, Arabs, Jews, races, mentalities, nations, and the like, some of them the product of learned operations of the type found in Renan's work. Similarly, the age-old distinction between "Europe" and "Asia" or "Occident" and "Orient" herds beneath very wide labels every possible variety of human plurality, reducing it in the process to one or two terminal, collective abstractions. Marx is no exception. The collective Orient was easier for him to use in illustration of a theory than existential human identities. For between Orient and Occident, as if in a self-fulfilling proclamation, only the vast anonymous collectivity mattered, or existed. No other type of exchange, severely constrained though it may have been, was at hand.

That Marx was still able to sense some fellow feeling, to identify even a little with poor Asia, suggests that something happened before the labels took over, before he was dispatched to Goethe as a source of wisdom on the Orient. It is as if the individual mind (Marx's, in this case) could find a precollective, preofficial individuality in Asia—find and give in to its pressures upon his emotions, feelings, senses—only to give it up when he confronted a more formidable censor in the very vocabulary he found himself forced to employ. What that censor did was to stop and then chase away the sympathy, and this was accompanied by a lapidary definition: Those people, it said, don't suffer—they are Orientals and hence have to be treated in other ways than the ones you've just been using. A wash of sentiment therefore disappeared as it encountered the unshakable definitions built up by Orientalist science, supported by "Oriental" lore (e.g., the *Diwan*) supposed to be appropriate for it. The vocabulary of emotion dissipated as it submitted to the lexicographical police action of Orientalist science and even Orientalist art. An experience was dislodged by a dictionary definition: one can almost see that happen in Marx's Indian essays, where what finally occurs is that something forces him to scurry back to Goethe, there to stand in his protective Orientalized Orient.

In part, of course, Marx was concerned with vindicating his own theses on socio-economic revolution; but in part also he seems to have had easy resource to a massed body of writing, both internally consolidated by Orientalism and put forward by it beyond the field, that controlled any statement made about the Orient. In Chapter One I tried to show how this control had had a general cultural

history in Europe since antiquity; in this chapter my concern has been to show how in the nineteenth century a modern professional terminology and practice were created whose existence dominated discourse about the Orient, whether by Orientalists or non-Orientalists. Sacy and Renan were instances of the way Orientalism fashioned, respectively, a body of texts and a philologically rooted process by which the Orient took on a discursive identity that made it unequal with the West. In using Marx as the case by which a non-Orientalist's human engagements were first dissolved, then usurped by Orientalist generalizations, we find ourselves having to consider the process of lexicographical and institutional consolidation peculiar to Orientalism. What was this operation, by which whenever you discussed the Orient a formidable mechanism of omnicompetent definitions would present itself as the only one having suitable validity for your discussion? And since we must also show how this mechanism operated specifically (and effectively) upon personal human experiences that otherwise contradicted it, we must also show where *they* went and what forms *they* took, while they lasted.

All this is a very difficult and complex operation to describe, at least as difficult and complex as the way any growing discipline crowds out its competitors and acquires authority for its traditions, methods, and institutions, as well as general cultural legitimacy for its statements, personalities, and agencies. But we can simplify a great deal of the sheer narrative complexity of the operation by specifying the kinds of experiences that Orientalism typically employed for its own ends and represented for its wider-than-professional audience. In essence these experiences continue the ones I described as having taken place in Sacy and Renan. But whereas those two scholars represent a wholly bookish Orientalism, since neither claimed any particular expertise with the Orient *in situ*, there is another tradition that claimed its legitimacy from the peculiarly compelling fact of residence in, actual existential contact with, the Orient. Anquetil, Jones, the Napoleonic expedition define the tradition's earliest contours, of course, and these will thereafter retain an unshakable influence on all Orientalist residents. These contours are the ones of European power: to reside in the Orient is to live the privileged life, not of an ordinary citizen, but of a representative European whose empire (French or British) contains the Orient in its military, economic, and above all, cultural arms. Oriental residence, and its scholarly fruits, are thereby fed into the

bookish tradition of the textual attitudes we found in Renan and Sacy: together the two experiences will constitute a formidable library against which no one, not even Marx, can rebel and which no one can avoid.

Residence in the Orient involves personal experience and personal testimony to a certain extent. Contributions to the library of Orientalism and to its consolidation depend on how experience and testimony get converted from a purely personal document into the enabling codes of Orientalist science. In other words, within a text there has to take place a metamorphosis from personal to official statement; the record of Oriental residence and experience by a European must shed, or at least minimize, its purely autobiographical and indulgent descriptions in favor of descriptions on which Orientalism in general and later Orientalists in particular can draw, build, and base further scientific observation and description. So one of the things we can watch for is a more explicit conversion than in Marx of personal sentiments about the Orient into official Orientalist statements.

Now the situation is enriched and complicated by the fact that during the entire nineteenth century the Orient, and especially the Near Orient, was a favorite place for Europeans to travel in and write about. Moreover, there developed a fairly large body of Oriental-style European literature very frequently based on personal experiences in the Orient. Flaubert comes to mind immediately as one prominent source of such literature; Disraeli, Mark Twain, and Kinglake are three other obvious examples. But what is of interest is the difference between writing that is converted from personal to professional Orientalism, and the second type, also based on residence and personal testimony, which remains "literature" and not science: it is this difference that I now want to explore.

To be a European in the Orient *always* involves being a consciousness set apart from, and unequal with, its surroundings. But the main thing to note is the intention of this consciousness: What is it in the Orient for? Why does it set itself there even if, as is the case with writers like Scott, Hugo, and Goethe, it travels to the Orient for a very concrete sort of experience without actually leaving Europe? A small number of intentional categories proposed themselves schematically. One: the writer who intends to use his residence for the specific task of providing professional Orientalism with scientific material, who considers his residence a form of scientific observation. Two: the writer who intends the same purpose

but is less willing to sacrifice the eccentricity and style of his individual consciousness to impersonal Orientalist definitions. These latter do appear in his work, but they are disentangled from the personal vagaries of style only with difficulty. Three: the writer for whom a real or metaphorical trip to the Orient is the fulfillment of some deeply felt and urgent project. His text therefore is built on a personal aesthetic, fed and informed by the project. In categories two and three there is considerably more space than in one for the play of a personal—or at least non-Orientalist—consciousness; if we take Edward William Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* as the pre-eminent example of category one, Burton's *Pilgrimage to al-Madinah and Meccah* as belonging to category two, and Nerval's *Voyage en Orient* as representing category three, the relative spaces left in the text for the exercise and display of authorial presence will be clear.

Despite their differences, however, these three categories are not so separate from each other as one would imagine. Nor does each category contain "pure" representative types. For example, works in all three categories rely upon the sheer egoistic powers of the European consciousness at their center. In all cases the Orient is *for* the European observer, and what is more, in the category that contains Lane's *Egyptians*, the Orientalist ego is very much in evidence, however much his style tries for impartial impersonality. Moreover, certain motifs recur consistently in all three types. The Orient as a place of pilgrimage is one; so too is the vision of Orient as spectacle, or *tableau vivant*. Every work on the Orient in these categories tries to characterize the place, of course, but what is of greater interest is the extent to which the work's internal structure is in some measure synonymous with a comprehensive *interpretation* (or an attempt at it) of the Orient. Most of the time, not surprisingly, this interpretation is a form of Romantic restructuring of the Orient, a re-vision of it, which restores it redemptively to the present. Every interpretation, every structure created for the Orient, then, is a reinterpretation, a rebuilding of it.

Having said that, we return directly to differences between the categories. Lane's book on the Egyptians was influential, it was frequently read and cited (by Flaubert among others), and it established its author's reputation as an eminent figure in Orientalist scholarship. In other words, Lane's authority was gained, not by virtue simply of what he said, but by virtue of how what he said could be adapted to Orientalism. He is quoted as a source of knowl-

edge about Egypt or Arabia, whereas Burton or Flaubert were and are read for what they tell us about Burton and Flaubert over and above their knowledge of the Orient. The author-function in Lane's *Modern Egyptians* is less strong than in the other categories because his work was disseminated into the profession, consolidated by it, institutionalized with it. The authorial identity in a work of professional discipline such as his is subordinated to the demands of the field, as well as to the demands of the subject matter. But this is not done simply, or without raising problems.

Lane's classic, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836), was the self-conscious result of a series of works and of two periods of residence in Egypt (1825–1828 and 1833–1835). One uses the phrase "self-conscious" with some emphasis here because the impression Lane wished to give was that his study was a work of immediate and direct, unadorned and neutral, description, whereas in fact it was the product of considerable editing (the work he wrote was not the one he finally published) and also of a considerable variety of quite special efforts. Nothing in his birth or background seemed to destine him for the Orient, except his methodical studiousness and his capacity for classical studies and for mathematics, which somewhat explain the apparent internal neatness of his book. His preface offers a series of interesting clues about what it was that he did for the book. He went to Egypt originally to study Arabic. Then, after making some notes about modern Egypt, he was encouraged to produce a systematic work on the country and its inhabitants by a committee of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. From being a random set of observations the work was changed into a document of useful knowledge, knowledge arranged for and readily accessible to anyone wishing to know the essentials of a foreign society. The preface makes it clear that such knowledge must somehow dispose of pre-existing knowledge, as well as claim for itself a particularly effective character: here Lane is the subtle polemicist. He must show initially that he did what others before him either could not or did not do, and then, that he was able to acquire information both authentic and perfectly correct. And thus his peculiar authority begins to emerge.

While Lane dallies in his preface with a Dr. Russell's "account of the people of Aleppo" (a forgotten work), it is obvious that the *Description de l'Egypte* is his main antecedent competition. But that work, confined by Lane to a long footnote, is mentioned in contemptuous quotation marks as "the great French work" on

Egypt. That work was at once too philosophically general and too careless, Lane says; and Jacob Burckhardt's famous study was merely a collection of proverbial Egyptian wisdom, "bad tests of the morality of a people." Unlike the French and Burckhardt, Lane was able to submerge himself amongst the natives, to live as they did, to conform to their habits, and "to escape exciting, in strangers, any suspicion of . . . being a person who had no right to intrude among them." Lest that imply Lane's having lost his objectivity, he goes on to say that he conformed only to the *words* (his italics) of the Koran, and that he was always aware of his difference from an essentially alien culture.⁷¹ Thus while one portion of Lane's identity floats easily in the unsuspecting Muslim sea, a submerged part retains its secret European power, to comment on, acquire, possess everything around it.

The Orientalist can imitate the Orient without the opposite being true. What he says about the Orient is therefore to be understood as description obtained in a one-way exchange: as *they* spoke and behaved, *he* observed and wrote down. His power was to have existed amongst them as a native speaker, as it were, and also as a secret writer. And what he wrote was intended as useful knowledge, not for them, but for Europe and its various disseminative institutions. For that is one thing that Lane's prose never lets us forget: that ego, the first-person pronoun moving through Egyptian customs, rituals, festivals, infancy, adulthood, and burial rites, is in reality both an Oriental masquerade and an Orientalist device for capturing and conveying valuable, otherwise inaccessible information. As narrator, Lane is both exhibit and exhibitor, winning two confidences at once, displaying two appetites for experience: the Oriental one for engaging companionship (or so it seems) and the Western one for authoritative, useful knowledge.

Nothing illustrates this better than the last tripartite episode in the preface. Lane there describes his principal informant and friend, Sheikh Ahmed, as companion and as curiosity. Together the two pretend that Lane is a Muslim; yet only after Ahmed conquers his fear, inspired by Lane's audacious mimicry, can he go through the motions of praying by his side in a mosque. This final achievement is preceded by two scenes in which Ahmed is portrayed as a bizarre glass-eater and a polygamist. In all three portions of the Sheikh Ahmed episode the distance between the Muslim and Lane increases, even as in the action itself it decreases. As mediator and translator, so to speak, of Muslim behavior, Lane ironically enters

the Muslim pattern only far enough to be able to describe it in a sedate English prose. His identity as counterfeit believer and privileged European is the very essence of bad faith, for the latter undercuts the former in no uncertain way. Thus what seems to be factual reporting of what *one* rather peculiar Muslim does is made to appear by Lane as the candidly exposed center of *all* Muslim faith. No mind is given by Lane to the betrayal of his friendship with Ahmed or with the others who provide him with information. What matters is that the report seem accurate, general, and dispassionate, that the English reader be convinced that Lane was never infected with heresy or apostasy, and finally, that Lane's text cancel the human content of its subject matter in favor of its scientific validity.

It is for all these ends that the book is organized, not simply as the narrative of Lane's residence in Egypt but as narrative structure overwhelmed by Orientalist restructuring and detail. This, I think, is the central achievement of Lane's work. In outline and shape *Modern Egyptians* follows the routine of an eighteenth-century novel, say one by Fielding. The book opens with an account of country and setting, followed by chapters on "Personal Characteristics" and "Infancy and Early Education." Twenty-five chapters on such things as festivals, laws, character, industry, magic, and domestic life precede the last section, "Death and Funeral Rites." On the face of it, Lane's argument is chronological and developmental. He writes about himself as the observer of scenes that follow the major divisions in the human lifetime: his model is the narrative pattern, as it is in *Tom Jones* with the hero's birth, adventures, marriage, and implied death. Only in Lane's text the narrative voice is ageless; his subject, however, the modern Egyptian, goes through the individual life-cycle. This reversal, by which a solitary individual endows himself with timeless faculties and imposes on a society and people a personal life-span, is but the first of several operations regulating what might have been the mere narration of travels in foreign parts, turning an artless text into an encyclopedia of exotic display and a playground for Orientalist scrutiny.

Lane's control of his material is not only established through his dramatized double presence (as fake Muslim and genuine Westerner) and his manipulation of narrative voice and subject, but also through his use of detail. Each major section in each chapter is invariably introduced with some unsurprising general observation. For example, "it is generally observed that many of the most

remarkable peculiarities in the manners, customs, and character of a nation are attributable to the physical peculiarities of the country."⁷² What follows confirms this easily—the Nile, Egypt's "remarkably salubrious" climate, the peasant's "precise" labor. Yet instead of this leading to the next episode in narrative order, the detail is added to, and consequently the narrative fulfillment expected on purely formal grounds is not given. In other words, although the gross outlines of Lane's text conform to the narrative and causal sequence of birth-life-death, the special detail introduced during the sequence itself foils narrative movement. From a general observation, to a delineation of some aspect of Egyptian character, to an account of Egyptian childhood, adolescence, maturity, and senescence, Lane is always there with great detail to prevent smooth transitions. Shortly after we hear about Egypt's salubrious climate, for instance, we are informed that few Egyptians live beyond a few years, because of fatal illness, the absence of medical aid, and oppressive summer weather. Thereafter we are told that the heat "excites the Egyptian [an unqualified generalization] to intemperance in sensual enjoyments," and soon are bogged down in descriptions, complete with charts and line drawings, of Cairene architecture, decoration, fountains, and locks. When a narrative strain re-emerges, it is clearly only as a formality.

What prevents narrative order, at the very same time that narrative order is the dominating fiction of Lane's text, is sheer, overpowering, monumental description. Lane's objective is to make Egypt and the Egyptians totally visible, to keep nothing hidden from his reader, to deliver the Egyptians without depth, in swollen detail. As rapporteur his propensity is for sadomasochistic colossal tidbits: the self-mutilation of dervishes, the cruelty of judges, the blending of religion with licentiousness among Muslims, the excess of libidinous passions, and so on. Yet no matter how odd and perverse the event and how lost we become in its dizzying detail, Lane is ubiquitous, his job being to reassemble the pieces and enable us to move on, albeit jerkily. To a certain extent he does this by just being a European who can discursively control the passions and excitements to which the Muslims are unhappily subject. But to an even greater extent, Lane's capacity to rein in his profuse subject matter with an unyielding bridle of discipline and detachment depends on his cold distance from Egyptian life and Egyptian productivity.

The main symbolic moment occurs at the beginning of chapter 6,

"Domestic Life—Continued." By now Lane has adopted the narrative convention of taking a walk through Egyptian life, and having reached the end of his tour of the public rooms and habits of an Egyptian household (the social and spatial worlds are mixed together by him), he begins to discuss the intimate side of home life. Immediately, he "must give some account of marriage and the marriage-ceremonies." As usual, the account begins with a general observation: to abstain from marriage "when a man has attained a sufficient age, and when there is no just impediment, is esteemed by the Egyptians improper, and even disreputable." Without transition this observation is applied by Lane to himself, and he is found guilty. For one long paragraph he then recounts the pressures placed on him to get married, which he unflinchingly refuses. Finally, after a native friend even offers to arrange a *mariage de convenance*, also refused by Lane, the whole sequence is abruptly terminated with a period and a dash.⁷³ He resumes his general discussion with another general observation.

Not only do we have here a typical Lane-esque interruption of the main narrative with untidy detail, we have also a firm and literal disengagement of the author from the productive processes of Oriental society. The mini-narrative of his refusal to join the society he describes concludes with a dramatic hiatus: *his* story cannot continue, he seems to be saying, so long as he does not enter the intimacy of domestic life, and so he drops from sight as a candidate for it. He literally abolishes himself as a human subject by refusing to marry into human society. Thus he preserves his authoritative identity as a mock participant and bolsters the objectivity of his narrative. If we already knew that Lane was a non-Muslim, we now know too that in order for him to become an Orientalist—instead of an Oriental—he had to deny himself the sensual enjoyments of domestic life. Moreover, he had also to avoid dating himself by entering the human life-cycle. Only in this negative way could he retain his timeless authority as observer.

Lane's choice was between living without "inconvenience and discomfort" and accomplishing his study of the modern Egyptians. The result of his choice is plainly to have made possible his definition of the Egyptians, since had he become one of them, his perspective would no longer have been antiseptically and asexually lexicographical. In two important and urgent ways, therefore, Lane gains scholarly credibility and legitimacy. First, by interfering with the ordinary narrative course of human life: this is the function of

his colossal detail, in which the observing intelligence of a foreigner can introduce and then piece together massive information. The Egyptians are disemboweled for exposition, so to speak, then put together admonishingly by Lane. Second, by disengaging from the generation of Egyptian-Oriental life: this is the function of his subduing his animal appetite in the interest of disseminating information, not in and for Egypt, but in and for European learning at large. To have achieved both the imposition of a scholarly will upon an untidy reality and an intentional shift away from the place of his residence to the scene of his scholarly reputation is the source of his great fame in the annals of Orientalism. Useful knowledge such as his could only have been obtained, formulated, and diffused by such denials.

Lane's two other major works, his never-completed Arabic lexicon and his uninspired translation of the *Arabian Nights*, consolidated the system of knowledge inaugurated by *Modern Egyptians*. In both of his later works his individuality has disappeared entirely as a creative presence, as of course has the very idea of a narrative work. Lane the man appears only in the official persona of annotator and retranslator (*the Nights*) and impersonal lexicographer. From being an author contemporary with his subject matter, Lane became—as Orientalist scholar of classical Arabic and classical Islam—its survivor. But it is the form of that survival which is of interest. For Lane's legacy as a scholar mattered not to the Orient, of course, but to the institutions and agencies of his European society. And these were either academic—the official Orientalist societies, institutions, and agencies—or they were extra-academic in very particular ways, figuring in the work of later Europeans resident in the Orient.

If we read Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, not as a source of Oriental lore, but as a work directed towards the growing organization of academic Orientalism, we will find it illuminating. The subordination of genetic ego to scholarly authority in Lane corresponds exactly to the increased specialization and institutionalization of knowledge about the Orient represented by the various Oriental societies. The Royal Asiatic Society was founded a decade before Lane's book appeared, but its committee of correspondence—whose “objects were to receive intelligence and inquiries relating to the arts, sciences, literature, history and antiquities” of the Orient⁷⁴—was the structural recipient of Lane's fund of information, processed and formulated as it was. As for the diffusion of such work as

Lane's, there were not only the various societies of useful knowledge but also, in an age when the original Orientalist program of aiding commerce and trade with the Orient had become exhausted, the specialized learned societies whose products were works displaying the potential (if not actual) values of disinterested scholarship. Thus, a program of the Société asiatique states:

To compose or to print grammars, dictionaries, and other elementary books recognized as useful or indispensable for the study of those languages taught by appointed professors [of Oriental languages]; by subscriptions or by other means to contribute to the publication of the same kind of work undertaken in France or abroad; to acquire manuscripts, or to copy either completely or in part those that are to be found in Europe, to translate or to make extracts from them, to multiply their number by reproducing them either by engraving or by lithography; to make it possible for the authors of useful works on geography, history, the arts, and the sciences to acquire the means for the public to enjoy the fruits of their nocturnal labors; to draw the attention of the public, by means of a periodic collection devoted to Asiatic literature, to the scientific, literary, or poetic productions of the Orient and those of the same sort that regularly are produced in Europe, to those facts about the Orient that could be relevant to Europe, to those discoveries and works of all kinds of which the Oriental peoples could become the subject: these are the objectives proposed for and by the Société asiatique.

Orientalism organized itself systematically as the acquisition of Oriental material and its regulated dissemination as a form of specialized knowledge. One copied and printed works of grammar, one acquired original texts, one multiplied their number and diffused them widely, even dispensed knowledge in periodic form. It was into and for this system that Lane wrote his work, and sacrificed his ego. The mode in which his work persisted in the archives of Orientalism was provided for also. There was to be a “museum,” Sacy said,

a vast depot of objects of all kinds, of drawings, of original books, maps, accounts of voyages, all offered to those who wish to give themselves to the study of [the Orient]; in such a way that each of these students would be able to feel himself transported as if by enchantment into the midst of, say, a Mongolian tribe or of the Chinese race, whichever he might have made the object of his studies. . . . It is possible to say . . . that after the publication of

elementary books on . . . the Oriental languages, nothing is more important than to lay the cornerstone of this museum, which I consider a living commentary upon and interpretation [truchement] of the dictionaries.⁷⁵

Truchement derives nicely from the Arabic *turjaman*, meaning "interpreter," "intermediary," or "spokesman." On the one hand, Orientalism acquired the Orient as literally and as widely as possible; on the other, it domesticated this knowledge to the West, filtering it through regulatory codes, classifications, specimen cases, periodical reviews, dictionaries, grammars, commentaries, editions, translations, all of which together formed a simulacrum of the Orient and reproduced it materially in the West, for the West. The Orient, in short, would be converted from the personal, sometimes garbled testimony of intrepid voyagers and residents into impersonal definition by a whole array of scientific workers. It would be converted from the consecutive experience of individual research into a sort of imaginary museum without walls, where everything gathered from the huge distances and varieties of Oriental culture became categorically *Oriental*. It would be reconverted, restructured from the bundle of fragments brought back piecemeal by explorers, expeditions, commissions, armies, and merchants into lexicographical, bibliographical, departmentalized, and *textualized* Orientalist sense. By the middle of the nineteenth century the Orient had become, as Disraeli said, a career, one in which one could remake and restore not only the Orient but also oneself.

IV

Pilgrims and Pilgrimages, British and French

Every European traveler or resident in the Orient has had to protect himself from its unsettling influences. Someone like Lane ultimately rescheduled and resituated the Orient when he came to write about it. The eccentricities of Oriental life, with its odd calendars, its exotic spatial configurations, its hopelessly strange languages, its seemingly perverse morality, were reduced con-

siderably when they appeared as a series of detailed items presented in a normative European prose style. It is correct to say that in Orientalizing the Orient, Lane not only defined but edited it; he excised from it what, in addition to his own human sympathies, might have ruffled the European sensibility. In most cases, the Orient seemed to have offended sexual propriety; everything about the Orient—or at least Lane's Orient-in-Egypt—exuded dangerous sex, threatened hygiene and domestic seemliness with an excessive "freedom of intercourse," as Lane put it more irrepressibly than usual.

But there were other sorts of threats than sex. All of them wore away the European discreteness and rationality of time, space, and personal identity. In the Orient one suddenly confronted unimaginable antiquity, inhuman beauty, boundless distance. These could be put to use more innocently, as it were, if they were thought and written about, not directly experienced. In Byron's "Giaour," in the *Westöstlicher Diwan*, in Hugo's *Orientales*, the Orient is a form of release, a place of original opportunity, whose keynote was struck in Goethe's "Hegire"—

Nord und West Süd zersplittern,
Throne bersten, Reiche zittern,
Fluchte du, in reinen Osten
Patriarchenluft zu kosten!

(North, West, and South disintegrate,
Thrones burst, empires tremble.
Fly away, and in the pure East
Taste the Patriarchs' air.)

One always *returned* to the Orient—"Dort, im Reinen und in Rechten/Will ich menschlichen Geschlechten/In des Ursprungs Tiefe dringen" (There in purity and righteousness will I go back to the profound origins of the human race)—seeing it as completion and confirmation of everything one had imagined:

Gottes ist der Orient!
Gottes ist der Okzident!
Nord und südliches Gelände
Ruht im Frieden seiner Hände.⁷⁶

(God is the Orient!
God is the Occident!
Northern and southern lands
Repose in the peace of His hands.)

The Orient, with its poetry, its atmosphere, its possibilities, was represented by poets like Hafiz—*unbegrenzt*, boundless, Goethe said, older and younger than we Europeans. And for Hugo, in "Cri de guerre du mufti" and "La Douleur du pacha"⁷⁷ the fierceness and the inordinate melancholy of Orientals was mediated, not by actual fear for life or disoriented lostness, but by Volney and George Sale, whose learned work translated barbarous splendor into usable information for the sublimely talented poet.

What Orientalists like Lane, Sacy, Renan, Volney, Jones (not to mention the *Description de l'Egypte*), and other pioneers made available, the literary crowd exploited. We must recall now our earlier discussion of the three types of work dealing with the Orient and based upon actual residence there. The rigorous exigencies of knowledge purged from Orientalist writing an authorial sensibility: hence Lane's self-excision, and hence also the first kind of work we enumerated. As for types two and three, the self is there prominently, subservient to a voice whose job it is to dispense real knowledge (type two), or dominating and mediating everything we are told about the Orient (type three). Yet from one end of the nineteenth century to the other—after Napoleon, that is—the Orient was a place of pilgrimage, and every major work belonging to a genuine if not always to an academic Orientalism took its form, style, and intention from the idea of pilgrimage there. In this idea as in so many of the other forms of Orientalist writing we have been discussing, the Romantic idea of restorative reconstruction (natural supernaturalism) is the principal source.

Every pilgrim sees things his own way, but there are limits to what a pilgrimage can be for, to what shape and form it can take, to what truths it reveals. All pilgrimages to the Orient passed through, or had to pass through, the Biblical lands; most of them in fact were attempts either to relive or to liberate from the large, incredibly fecund Orient some portion of Judeo-Christian/Greco-Roman actuality. For these pilgrims the Orientalized Orient, the Orient of Orientalist scholars, was a gauntlet to be run, just as the Bible, the Crusades, Islam, Napoleon, and Alexander were redoubtable predecessors to be reckoned with. Not only does a learned Orient inhibit the pilgrim's musings and private fantasies; its very antecedence places barriers between the contemporary traveler and his writing, unless, as was the case with Nerval and Flaubert in their use of Lane, Orientalist work is severed from the library and caught in the aesthetic project. Another inhibition is that Orientalist

writing is too circumscribed by the official requirements of Orientalist learning. A pilgrim like Chateaubriand claimed insolently that he undertook his voyages exclusively for his own sake: "j'allais chercher des images: voilà tout."⁷⁸ Flaubert, Vigny, Nerval, Kinglake, Disraeli, Burton, all undertook their pilgrimages in order to dispel the mustiness of the pre-existing Orientalist archive. Their writing was to be a fresh new repository of Oriental experience—but, as we shall see, even this project usually (but not always) resolved itself into the reductionism of the Orientalistic. The reasons are complex, and they have very much to do with the nature of the pilgrim, his mode of writing, and the intentional form of his work.

What was the Orient for the individual traveler in the nineteenth century? Consider first the differences between an English speaker and a French speaker. For the former the Orient was India, of course, an actual British possession; to pass through the Near Orient was therefore to pass en route to a major colony. Already, then, the room available for imaginative play was limited by the realities of administration, territorial legality, and executive power. Scott, Kinglake, Disraeli, Warburton, Burton, and even George Eliot (in whose *Daniel Deronda* the Orient has plans made for it) are writers, like Lane himself and Jones before him, for whom the Orient was defined by material possession, by a material imagination, as it were. England had defeated Napoleon, evicted France: what the English mind surveyed was an imperial domain which by the 1880s had become an unbroken patch of British-held territory, from the Mediterranean to India. To write about Egypt, Syria, or Turkey, as much as traveling in them, was a matter of touring the realm of political will, political management, political definition. The territorial imperative was extremely compelling, even for so unrestrained a writer as Disraeli, whose *Tancred* is not merely an Oriental lark but an exercise in the astute political management of actual forces on actual territories.

In contrast, the French pilgrim was imbued with a sense of acute loss in the Orient. He came there to a place in which France, unlike Britain, had no sovereign presence. The Mediterranean echoed with the sounds of French defeats, from the Crusades to Napoleon. What was to become known as "la mission civilisatrice" began in the nineteenth century as a political second-best to Britain's presence. Consequently French pilgrims from Volney on planned and projected for, imagined, ruminated about places that were principally *in their minds*; they constructed schemes for a typically

French, perhaps even a European, concert in the Orient, which of course they supposed would be orchestrated by them. Theirs was the Orient of memories, suggestive ruins, forgotten secrets, hidden correspondences, and an almost virtuosic style of being, an Orient whose highest literary forms would be found in Nerval and Flaubert, both of whose work was solidly fixed in an imaginative, unrealizable (except aesthetically) dimension.

This was also true to a certain extent of scholarly French travelers in the Orient. Most of them were interested in the Biblical past or in the Crusades, as Henri Bordeaux has argued in his *Voyageurs d'Orient*.⁷⁹ To these names we must add (at Hassan al-Nouty's suggestion) the names of Oriental Semiticists, including Quatremère; Saulcy, the explorer of the Dead Sea; Renan as Phoenician archaeologist; Judas, the student of Phoenician languages; Catafago and Défrémery, who studied the Ansarians, Ismailis, and Seljuks; Clermont-Ganneau, who explored Judea; and the Marquis de Vogüé, whose work centered on Palmyrian epigraphy. In addition there was the whole school of Egyptologists descended from Champollion and Mariette, a school that would later include Maspero and Legrain. As an index of the difference between British realities and French fantasies, it is worthwhile recalling the words in Cairo of the painter Ludovic Lepic, who commented sadly in 1884 (two years after the British occupation had begun): "L'Orient est mort au Caire." Only Renan, ever the realistic racist, condoned the British suppression of Arabi's nationalist rebellion, which, out of his greater wisdom, he said was a "disgrace to civilization."⁸⁰

Unlike Volney and Napoleon, the nineteenth-century French pilgrims did not seek a scientific so much as an exotic yet especially attractive reality. This is obviously true of the literary pilgrims, beginning with Chateaubriand, who found in the Orient a locale sympathetic to their private myths, obsessions, and requirements. Here we notice how all the pilgrims, but especially the French ones, exploit the Orient in their work so as in some urgent way to justify their existential vocation. Only when there is some additional cognitive purpose in writing about the Orient does the outpouring of self seem more under control. Lamartine, for instance, writes about himself, and also about France as a power in the Orient; that second enterprise mutes and finally controls imperatives heaped upon his style by *his* soul, *his* memory, and *his* imagination. No pilgrim, French or English, could so ruthlessly dominate his self or his subject as Lane did. Even Burton and T. E. Lawrence, of

whom the former fashioned a deliberately Muslim pilgrimage and the latter what he called a reverse pilgrimage *away* from Mecca, delivered masses of historical, political, and social Orientalism that were never as free of their egos as Lane's were of his. This is why Burton, Lawrence, and Charles Doughty occupy a middle position between Lane and Chateaubriand.

Chateaubriand's *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem, et de Jérusalem à Paris* (1810–1811) records the details of a journey undertaken in 1805–1806, after he had traveled in North America. Its many hundreds of pages bear witness to its author's admission that "je parle éternellement de moi," so much so that Stendhal, no self-abnegating writer himself, could find Chateaubriand's failure as a knowledgeable traveler to be the result of his "stinking egotism." He brought a very heavy load of personal objectives and suppositions to the Orient, unloaded them there, and proceeded thereafter to push people, places, and ideas around in the Orient as if nothing could resist his imperious imagination. Chateaubriand came to the Orient as a constructed *figure*, not as a true self. For him Bonaparte was the last Crusader; he in turn was "the last Frenchman who left his country to travel in the Holy Land with the ideas, the goals, and the sentiments of a pilgrim of former times." But there were other reasons. Symmetry: having been to the New World and seen its monuments of nature, he needed to complete his circle of studies by visiting the Orient and its monuments of knowledge: as he had studied Roman and Celtic antiquity, all that was left for him was the ruins of Athens, Memphis, and Carthage. Self-completion: he needed to replenish his stock of images. Confirmation of the importance of the religious spirit: "religion is a kind of universal language understood by all men," and where better to observe it than there in the Orient, even in lands where a comparatively low religion like Islam held sway. Above all, the need to see things, not as they were, but as Chateaubriand supposed they were: the Koran was "le livre de Mahomet"; it contained "ni principe de civilisation, ni précepte qui puisse éllever le caractère." "This book," he continued, more or less freely inventing as he went along, "preaches neither hatred of tyranny nor love of liberty."⁸¹

To so preciously constituted a figure as Chateaubriand, the Orient was a decrepit canvas awaiting his restorative efforts. The Oriental Arab was "civilized man fallen again into a savage state": no wonder, then, that as he watched Arabs trying to speak French, Chateaubriand felt like Robinson Crusoe thrilled by hearing his

parrot speak for the first time. True, there were places like Bethlehem (whose etymological meaning Chateaubriand got completely wrong) in which one found again some semblance of real—that is, European—civilization, but those were few and far between. Everywhere, one encountered Orientals, Arabs whose civilization, religion, and manners were so low, barbaric, and antithetical as to merit reconquest. The Crusades, he argued, were not aggression; they were a just Christian counterpart to Omar's arrival in Europe. Besides, he added, even if the Crusades in their modern or original form were aggression, the issue they raised transcended such questions of ordinary mortality:

The Crusades were not only about the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre, but more about knowing which would win on the earth, a cult that was civilization's enemy, systematically favorable to ignorance [this was Islam, of course], to despotism, to slavery, or a cult that had caused to reawaken in modern people the genius of a sage antiquity, and had abolished base servitude.⁸²

This is the first significant mention of an idea that will acquire an almost unbearable, next to mindless authority in European writing: the theme of Europe teaching the Orient the meaning of liberty, which is an idea that Chateaubriand and everyone after him believed that Orientals, and especially Muslims, knew nothing about.

Of liberty, they know nothing; of propriety, they have none: force is their God. When they go for long periods without seeing conquerors who do heavenly justice, they have the air of soldiers without a leader, citizens without legislators, and a family without a father.⁸³

Already in 1810 we have a European talking like Cromer in 1910, arguing that Orientals require conquest, and finding it no paradox that a Western conquest of the Orient was not conquest after all, but liberty. Chateaubriand puts the whole idea in the Romantic redemptive terms of a Christian mission to revive a dead world, to quicken in it a sense of its own potential, one which only a European can discern underneath a lifeless and degenerate surface. For the traveler this means that he must use the Old Testament and the Gospels as his guide in Palestine;⁸⁴ only in this way can the apparent degeneration of the modern Orient be gotten beyond. Yet Chateaubriand senses no irony in the fact that his tour and his vision will reveal nothing to him about the modern Oriental and *his* destiny.

What matters about the Orient is what it lets happen to Chateaubriand, what it allows his spirit to do, what it permits him to reveal about himself, his ideas, his expectations. The liberty that so concerns him is no more than his own release from the Orient's hostile wastes.

Where his release allows him to go is directly back into the realm of imagination and imaginative interpretation. Description of the Orient is obliterated by the designs and patterns foisted upon it by the imperial ego, which makes no secret of its powers. If in Lane's prose we watch the ego disappear so that the Orient may appear in all its realistic detail, in Chateaubriand the ego dissolves itself in the contemplation of wonders it creates, and then is reborn, stronger than ever, more able to savor its powers and enjoy its interpretations.

When one travels in Judea, at first a great ennui grips the heart; but when, passing from one solitary place to another, space stretches out without limits before you, slowly the ennui dissipates, and one feels a secret terror, which, far from depressing the soul, gives it courage and elevates one's native genius. Extraordinary things are disclosed from all parts of an earth worked over by miracles: the burning sun, the impetuous eagle, the sterile fig tree; all of poetry, all the scenes from Scripture are present there. Every name encloses a mystery; every grotto declares the future; every summit retains within it the accents of a prophet. God Himself has spoken from these shores: the arid torrents, the riven rocks, the open tombs attest to the prodigy; the desert still seems struck dumb with terror, and one would say that it has still not been able to break the silence since it heard the voice of the eternal.⁸⁵

The process of thought in this passage is revealing. An experience of Pascalian terror does not merely reduce one's self-confidence, it miraculously stimulates it. The barren landscape stands forth like an illuminated text presenting itself to the scrutiny of a very strong, refortified ego. Chateaubriand has transcended the abject, if frightening, reality of the contemporary Orient so that he may stand in an original and creative relationship to it. By the end of the passage he is no longer a modern man but a visionary seer more or less contemporary with God; if the Judean desert has been silent since God spoke there, it is Chateaubriand who can hear the silence, understand its meaning, and—to his reader—make the desert speak again.

The great gifts of sympathetic intuition which had enabled Chateaubriand to represent and interpret North American mysteries in *René* and *Atala*, as well as Christianity in *Le Génie du Christianisme*, are aroused to even greater feats of interpretation during the *Itinéraire*. No longer is the author dealing with natural primitivity and romantic sentiment: here he is dealing with eternal creativity and divine originality themselves, for it is in the Biblical Orient that they were first deposited, and they have remained there in unmediated and latent form. Of course, they cannot be simply grasped; they must be aspired to and achieved by Chateaubriand. And it is this ambitious purpose that the *Itinéraire* is made to serve, just as in the text Chateaubriand's ego must be reconstructed radically enough to get the job done. Unlike Lane, Chateaubriand attempts to *consume* the Orient. He not only appropriates it, he represents and speaks for it, not in history but beyond history, in the timeless dimension of a completely healed world, where men and lands, God and men, are as one. In Jerusalem, therefore, at the center of his vision and at the ultimate end of his pilgrimage, he grants himself a sort of total reconciliation with the Orient, the Orient as Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Greek, Persian, Roman, and finally French. He is moved by the plight of the Jews, but he judges that they too serve to illuminate his general vision, and as a further benefit, they give the necessary poignance to his Christian vindictiveness. God, he says, has chosen a new people, and it is not the Jews.⁸⁶

He makes some other concessions to terrestrial reality, however. If Jerusalem is booked into his itinerary as its final extraterrestrial goal, Egypt provides him with material for a political excursus. His ideas about Egypt supplement his pilgrimage nicely. The magnificent Nile Delta moves him to assert that

I found only the memories of my glorious country worthy of those magnificent plains; I saw the remains of monuments of a new civilization, brought to the banks of the Nile by the genius of France.⁸⁷

But these ideas are put in a nostalgic mode because in Egypt Chateaubriand believes he can equate the absence of France with the absence of a free government ruling a happy people. Besides, after Jerusalem, Egypt appears to be only a kind of spiritual anti-climax. After political commentary on its sorry state, Chateaubriand asks himself the routine question about "difference" as a result of

historical development: how can this degenerate stupid mob of "Musulmans" have come to inhabit the same land whose vastly different owners so impressed Herodotus and Diodorus?

This is a fitting valedictory to Egypt, which he leaves for Tunis, Carthaginian ruins, and finally, home. Yet he does one last thing of note in Egypt: unable to do more than look at the Pyramids from a distance, he takes the trouble to send an emissary there, to have him inscribe his (Chateaubriand's) name on the stone, adding for our benefit, "one has to fulfill all the little obligations of a pious traveler." We would not ordinarily give much more than amused attention to this charming bit of touristic banality. As a preparation, however, for the very last page of the *Itinéraire*, it appears more important than at first glance. Reflecting on his twenty-year project to study "tous les hasards et tous les chagrins" as an exile, Chateaubriand notes elegiacally how every one of his books has been in fact a kind of prolongation of his existence. A man with neither a home nor the possibility of acquiring one, he finds himself now well past his youth. If heaven accords him eternal rest, he says, he promises to dedicate himself in silence to erecting a "monument à ma patrie." What he is left with on earth, however, is his writing, which, if his name will live, has been enough, and if it will not live, has been too much.⁸⁸

These closing lines send us back to Chateaubriand's interest in getting his name inscribed on the Pyramids. We will have understood that his egoistic Oriental memoirs supply us with a constantly demonstrated, an indefatigably performed experience of self. Writing was an act of life for Chateaubriand, for whom nothing, not even a distant piece of stone, must remain scriptively untouched by him if he was to stay alive. If the order of Lane's narrative was to be violated by scientific authority and enormous detail, then Chateaubriand's was to be transformed into the asserted will of an egoistic, highly volatile individual. Whereas Lane would sacrifice his ego to the Orientalist canon, Chateaubriand would make everything he said about the Orient wholly dependent on his ego. Yet neither writer could conceive of his posterity as continuing on fruitfully after him. Lane entered the impersonality of a technical discipline: his work would be used, but not as a human document. Chateaubriand, on the other hand, saw that his writing, like the token inscription of his name on a Pyramid, would signify his self; if not, if he had not succeeded in prolonging his life by writing, it would be merely excessive, superfluous.

Even if all travelers to the Orient after Chateaubriand and Lane have taken their work into account (in some cases, even to the extent of copying from them verbatim), their legacy embodies the fate of Orientalism and the options to which it was limited. Either one wrote science like Lane or personal utterance like Chateaubriand. The problems with the former were its impersonal Western confidence that descriptions of general, collective phenomena were possible, and its tendency to make realities not so much out of the Orient as out of its own observations. The problem with personal utterance was that it inevitably retreated into a position equating the Orient with private fantasy, even if that fantasy was of a very high order indeed, aesthetically speaking. In both cases, of course, Orientalism enjoyed a powerful influence on how the Orient was described and characterized. But what that influence always prevented, even until today, was some sense of the Orient that was neither impossibly general nor imperturbably private. To look into Orientalism for a lively sense of an Oriental's human or even social reality—as a contemporary inhabitant of the modern world—is to look in vain.

The influence of the two options I have described, Lane's and Chateaubriand's, British and French, is a great deal of the reason for this omission. The growth of knowledge, particularly specialized knowledge, is a very slow process. Far from being merely additive or cumulative, the growth of knowledge is a process of selective accumulation, displacement, deletion, rearrangement, and insistence within what has been called a research consensus. The legitimacy of such knowledge as Orientalism was during the nineteenth century stemmed not from religious authority, as had been the case before the Enlightenment, but from what we can call the restorative citation of antecedent authority. Beginning with Sacy, the learned Orientalist's attitude was that of a scientist who surveyed a series of textual fragments, which he thereafter edited and arranged as a restorer of old sketches might put a series of them together for the cumulative picture they implicitly represent. Consequently, amongst themselves Orientalists treat each other's work in the same citationary way. Burton, for example, would deal with the *Arabian Nights* or with Egypt indirectly, through Lane's work, by citing his predecessor, challenging him even though he was granting him very great authority. Nerval's own voyage to the Orient was by way of Lamartine's, and the latter's by way of Chateaubriand. In short, as a form of growing knowledge Orientalism resorted mainly to

citations of predecessor scholars in the field for its nutrient. Even when new materials came his way, the Orientalist judged them by borrowing from predecessors (as scholars so often do) their perspectives, ideologies, and guiding theses. In a fairly strict way, then, Orientalists after Sacy and Lane rewrote Sacy and Lane; after Chateaubriand, pilgrims rewrote him. From these complex rewritings the actualities of the modern Orient were systematically excluded, especially when gifted pilgrims like Nerval and Flaubert preferred Lane's descriptions to what their eyes and minds showed them immediately.

In the system of knowledge about the Orient, the Orient is less a place than a *topos*, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these. Direct observation or circumstantial description of the Orient are the fictions presented by writing on the Orient, yet invariably these are totally secondary to systematic tasks of another sort. In Lamartine, Nerval, and Flaubert, the Orient is a re-presentation of canonical material guided by an aesthetic and executive will capable of producing interest in the reader. Yet in all three writers, Orientalism or some aspect of it is asserted, even though, as I said earlier, the narrative consciousness is given a very large role to play. What we shall see is that for all its eccentric individuality, this narrative consciousness will end up by being aware, like Bouvard and Pécuchet, that pilgrimage is after all a form of copying.

When he began his trip to the Orient in 1833, Lamartine did so, he said, as something he had always dreamed about: "un voyage en Orient [était] comme un grand acte de ma vie intérieure." He is a bundle of predispositions, sympathies, biases: he hates the Romans and Carthage, and loves Jews, Egyptians, and Hindus, whose Dante he claims he will become. Armed with a formal verse "Adieu" to France, in which he lists everything that he plans to do in the Orient, he embarks for the East. At first everything he encounters either confirms his poetic predictions or realizes his propensity for analogy. Lady Hester Stanhope is the Circe of the desert; the Orient is the "patrie de mon imagination"; the Arabs are a primitive people; Biblical poetry is engraved on the land of Lebanon; the Orient testifies to the attractive largeness of Asia and to Greece's comparative smallness. Soon after he reaches Palestine, however, he becomes the incorrigible maker of an imaginary Orient. He

alleges that the plains of Canaan appear to best advantage in the works of Poussin and Lorrain. From being a "translation," as he called it earlier, his voyage is now turned into a prayer, which exercises his memory, soul, and heart more than it does his eyes, mind, or spirit.⁸⁰

This candid announcement completely unlooses Lamartine's analogic and reconstructive (and undisciplined) zeal. Christianity is a religion of imagination and recollection, and since Lamartine considers that he typifies the pious believer, he indulges himself accordingly. A catalogue of his tendentious "observations" would be interminable: a woman he sees reminds him of Haidée in *Don Juan*; the relationship between Jesus and Palestine is like that between Rousseau and Geneva; the actual river Jordan is less important than the "mysteries" it gives rise to in one's soul; Orientals, and Muslims in particular, are lazy, their politics are capricious, passionate, and futureless; another woman reminds him of a passage in *Atala*; neither Tasso nor Chateaubriand (whose antecedent travels seem often to harass Lamartine's otherwise heedless egoism) got the Holy Land right—and on and on. His pages on Arabic poetry, about which he discourses with supreme confidence, betray no discomfort at his total ignorance of the language. All that matters to him is that his travels in the Orient reveal to him how the Orient is "la terre des cultes, des prodiges," and that he is its appointed poet in the West. With no trace of self-irony he announces:

This Arab land is the land of prodigies; everything sprouts there, and every credulous or fanatical man can become a prophet there in his turn.⁹⁰

He has become a prophet merely by the fact of residence in the Orient.

By the end of his narrative Lamartine has achieved the purpose of his pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, that beginning and end point of all time and space. He has internalized reality enough to want to retreat from it back into pure contemplation, solitude, philosophy, and poetry.⁹¹

Rising above the merely geographical Orient, he is transformed into a latter-day Chateaubriand, surveying the East as if it were a personal (or at the very least a French) province ready to be disposed of by European powers. From being a traveler and pilgrim in real time and space, Lamartine has become a transpersonal ego

identifying itself in power and consciousness with the whole of Europe. What he sees before him is the Orient in the process of its inevitable future dismemberment, being taken over and consecrated by European suzerainty. Thus in Lamartine's climactic vision the Orient is reborn as European right-to-power over it:

This sort of suzerainty thus defined, and consecrated as a European right, will consist principally in the right to occupy one or another territory, as well as the coasts, in order to found there either free cities, or European colonies, or commercial ports of call. . . .

Nor does Lamartine stop at this. He climbs still higher to the point where the Orient, what he has just seen and where he has just been, is reduced to "nations without territory, *patrie*, rights, laws or security . . . waiting anxiously for the shelter" of European occupation.⁹²

In all the visions of the Orient fabricated by Orientalism there is no recapitulation, literally, as entire as this one. For Lamartine a pilgrimage to the Orient has involved not only the penetration of the Orient by an imperious consciousness but also the virtual elimination of that consciousness as a result of its accession to a kind of impersonal and continental control over the Orient. The Orient's actual identity is withered away into a set of consecutive fragments, Lamartine's recollective observations, which are later to be gathered up and brought forth as a restated Napoleonic dream of world hegemony. Whereas Lane's human identity disappeared into the scientific grid of his Egyptian classifications, Lamartine's consciousness transgresses its normal bounds completely. In so doing, it repeats Chateaubriand's journey and his visions only to move on beyond them, into the sphere of the Shelleyan and Napoleonic abstract, by which worlds and populations are moved about like so many cards on a table. What remains of the Orient in Lamartine's prose is not very substantial at all. Its geopolitical reality has been overlaid with his plans for it; the sites he has visited, the people he has met, the experiences he has had, are reduced to a few echoes in his pompous generalizations. The last traces of particularity have been rubbed out in the "résumé politique" with which the *Voyage en Orient* concludes.

Against the transcendent quasi-national egoism of Lamartine we must place Nerval and Flaubert in contrast. Their Oriental works play a substantial role in their total *oeuvre*, a much greater one than Lamartine's imperialist *Voyage* in his *oeuvre*. Yet both of them,

like Lamartine, came to the Orient prepared for it by voluminous reading in the classics, modern literature, and academic Orientalism; about this preparation Flaubert was much more candid than Nerval, who in *Les Filles du feu* says disingenuously that all he knew about the Orient was a half-forgotten memory from his school education.⁹³ The evidence of his *Voyage en Orient* flatly contradicts this, although it shows a much less systematic and disciplined knowledge of Orientalia than Flaubert's. More important, however, is the fact that both writers (Nerval in 1842–1843 and Flaubert in 1849–1850) had greater personal and aesthetic uses for their visits to the Orient than any other nineteenth-century travelers. It is not inconsequential that both were geniuses to begin with, and that both were thoroughly steeped in aspects of European culture that encouraged a sympathetic, if perverse, vision of the Orient. Nerval and Flaubert belonged to that community of thought and feeling described by Mario Praz in *The Romantic Agony*, a community for which the imagery of exotic places, the cultivation of sadomasochistic tastes (what Praz calls *algolagnia*), a fascination with the macabre, with the notion of a Fatal Woman, with secrecy and occultism, all combined to enable literary work of the sort produced by Gautier (himself fascinated by the Orient), Swinburne, Baudelaire, and Huysmans.⁹⁴ For Nerval and Flaubert, such female figures as Cleopatra, Salomé, and Isis have a special significance; and it was by no means accidental that in their work on the Orient, as well as in their visits to it, they pre-eminently valorized and enhanced female types of this legendary, richly suggestive, and associative sort.

In addition to their general cultural attitudes, Nerval and Flaubert brought to the Orient a personal mythology whose concerns and even structure required the Orient. Both men were touched by the Oriental renaissance as Quinet and others had defined it: they sought the invigoration provided by the fabulously antique and the exotic. For each, however, the Oriental pilgrimage was a quest for something relatively personal: Flaubert seeking a "homeland," as Jean Bruneau has called it,⁹⁵ in the locales of the origin of religions, visions, and classical antiquity; Nerval seeking—or rather following—the traces of his personal sentiments and dreams, like Sterne's Yorick before him. For both writers the Orient was a place therefore of *déjà vu*, and for both, with the artistic economy typical of all major aesthetic imaginations, it was a place often returned to after the actual voyage had been completed. For

neither of them was the Orient exhausted by their uses of it, even if there is often a quality of disappointment, disenchantment, or demystification to be found in their Oriental writings.

The paramount importance of Nerval and Flaubert to a study such as this of the Orientalist mind in the nineteenth century is that they produced work that is connected to and depends upon the kind of Orientalism we have so far discussed, yet remains independent from it. First there is the matter of their work's scope. Nerval produced his *Voyage en Orient* as a collection of travel notes, sketches, stories, and fragments; his preoccupation with the Orient is to be found as well in *Les Chimères*, in his letters, in some of his fiction and other prose writings. Flaubert's writing both before and after his visit is soaked in the Orient. The Orient appears in the *Carnets de Voyage* and in the first version of *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (and in the two later versions), as well as in *Hérodias*, *Salammbo*, and the numerous reading notes, scenarios, and unfinished stories still available to us, which have been very intelligently studied by Bruneau.⁹⁶ There are echoes of Orientalism in Flaubert's other major novels, too. In all, both Nerval and Flaubert continually elaborated their Oriental material and absorbed it variously into the special structures of their personal aesthetic projects. This is not to say, however, that the Orient is incidental to their work. Rather—by contrast with such writers as Lane (from whom both men borrowed shamelessly), Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Renan, Sacy—their Orient was not so much grasped, appropriated, reduced, or codified as lived in, exploited aesthetically and imaginatively as a roomy place full of possibility. What mattered to them was the structure of their work as an independent, aesthetic, and personal fact, and not the ways by which, if one wanted to, one could effectively dominate or set down the Orient graphically. Their egos never absorbed the Orient, nor totally identified the Orient with documentary and textual knowledge of it (with official Orientalism, in short).

On the one hand, therefore, the scope of their Oriental work exceeds the limitations imposed by orthodox Orientalism. On the other hand, the subject of their work is more than Oriental or Orientalistic (even though they do their own Orientalizing of the Orient); it quite consciously plays with the limitations and the challenges presented to them by the Orient and by knowledge about it. Nerval, for example, believes that he has to infuse what he sees with vitality since, he says,

Le ciel et la mer sont toujours là; le ciel d'Orient, la mer d'Ionie se donnent chaque matin le saint baiser d'amour; mais la terre est morte, morte sous la main de l'homme, et les dieux se sont envolés!

(The sky and the sea are still there; the Oriental sky and the Ionian sky give each other the sacred kiss of love each morning; but the earth is dead, dead because man has killed it, and the gods have fled.)

If the Orient is to live at all, now that its gods have fled, it must be through his fertile efforts. In the *Voyage en Orient* the narrative consciousness is a constantly energetic voice, moving through the labyrinths of Oriental existence armed—Nerval tells us—with two Arabic words, *tayeb*, the word for assent, and *mafisch*, the word for rejection. These two words enable him selectively to confront the antithetical Oriental world, to confront it and draw out from it its secret principles. He is predisposed to recognize that the Orient is “le pays des rêves et de l'illusion,” which, like the veils he sees everywhere in Cairo, conceal a deep, rich fund of female sexuality. Nerval repeats Lane's experience of discovering the necessity for marriage in an Islamic society, but unlike Lane he does attach himself to a woman. His liaison with Zaynab is more than socially obligatory:

I must unite with a guileless young girl who is of this sacred soil, which is our first homeland; I must bathe myself in the vivifying springs of humanity, from which poetry and the faith of our fathers flowed forth! . . . I would like to lead my life like a novel, and I willingly place myself in the situation of one of those active and resolute heroes who wish at all costs to create a drama around them, a knot of complexity, in a word, action.⁹⁷

Nerval invests himself in the Orient, producing not so much a novelistic narrative as an everlasting intention—never fully realized—to fuse mind with physical action. This antinarrative, this pilgrimage, is a swerving away from discursive finality of the sort envisioned by previous writers on the Orient.

Connected physically and sympathetically to the Orient, Nerval wanders informally through its riches and its cultural (and principally feminine) ambience, locating in Egypt especially that maternal “center, at once mysterious and accessible” from which all wisdom derives.⁹⁸ His impressions, dreams, and memories alternate with sections of ornate, mannered narrative done in the Oriental style; the hard realities of travel—in Egypt, Lebanon,

Turkey—mingle with the design of a deliberate digression, as if Nerval were repeating Chateaubriand's *Itinéraire* using an underground, though far less imperial and obvious, route. Michel Butor puts it beautifully:

To Nerval's eyes, Chateaubriand's journey remains a voyage along the surface, while his own is calculated, utilizing annex centers, lobbies of ellipses englobing the principal centers; this allows him to place in evidence, by parallax, all the dimensions of the snare harbored by the normal centers. Wandering the streets or environs of Cairo, Beirut, or Constantinople, Nerval is always lying in wait for anything that will allow him to sense a cavern extending beneath Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem [the principal cities of Chateaubriand's *Itinéraire*]. . . .

Just as the three cities of Chateaubriand are in communication—Rome, with its emperors and popes, reassembling the heritage, the testament, of Athens and Jerusalem—the caverns of Nerval . . . become engaged in intercourse.⁹⁹

Even the two large plotted episodes, “The Tale of the Caliph Hakim” and “The Tale of the Queen of the Morning,” that will supposedly convey a durable, solid narrative discourse seem to push Nerval away from “overground” finality, edging him further and further into a haunting internal world of paradox and dream. Both tales deal with multiple identity, one of whose motifs—explicitly stated—is incest, and both return us to Nerval's quintessential Oriental world of uncertain, fluid dreams infinitely multiplying themselves past resolution, definiteness, materiality. When the journey is completed and Nerval arrives in Malta on his way back to the European mainland, he realizes that he is now in “le pays du froid et des orages, et déjà l'Orient n'est plus pour moi qu'un de ses rêves du matin auxquels viennent bientôt succéder les ennus du jour.”¹⁰⁰ His *Voyage* incorporates numerous pages copied out of Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, but even their lucid confidence seems to dissolve in the endlessly decomposing, cavernous element which is Nerval's Orient.

His *carnet* for the *Voyage* supplies us, I think, with two perfect texts for understanding how his Orient untied itself from anything resembling an Orientalist conception of the Orient, even though his work depends on Orientalism to a certain extent. First, his appetites strive to gather in experience and memory indiscriminately: “Je sens le besoin de m'assimiler toute la nature (femmes étrangères). Souvenirs d'y avoir vécu.” The second elaborates a bit

on the first: "Les rêves et la folie . . . Le désir de l'*Orient*. L'Europe s'élève. Le rêve se réalise . . . Elle. Je l'avais fuie, je l'avais perdue . . . Vaisseau d'*Orient*."¹⁰¹ The Orient symbolizes Nerval's dream-quest and the fugitive woman central to it, both as desire and as loss. "Vaisseau d'*Orient*"—vessel of the Orient—refers enigmatically either to the woman as the vessel carrying the Orient, or possibly, to Nerval's own vessel for the Orient, his prose *voyage*. In either case, the Orient is identified with commemorative *absence*.

How else can we explain in the *Voyage*, a work of so original and individual a mind, the lazy use of large swatches of Lane, incorporated without a murmur by Nerval as *his* descriptions of the Orient? It is as if having failed both in his search for a stable Oriental reality and in his intent to give systematic order to his re-presentation of the Orient, Nerval was employing the borrowed authority of a canonized Orientalist text. After his *voyage* the earth remained dead, and aside from its brilliantly crafted but fragmented embodiments in the *Voyage*, his self was no less drugged and worn out than before. Therefore the Orient seemed retrospectively to belong to a negative realm, in which failed narratives, disordered chronicles, mere transcription of scholarly texts, were its only possible vessel. At least Nerval did not try to save his project by wholeheartedly giving himself up to French designs on the Orient, although he did resort to Orientalism to make some of his points.

In contrast to Nerval's negative vision of an emptied Orient, Flaubert's is eminently corporeal. His travel notes and letters reveal a man scrupulously reporting events, persons, and settings, delighting in their *bizarceries*, never attempting to reduce the incongruities before him. In what he writes (or perhaps because he writes), the premium is on the eye-catching, translated into self-consciously worked-out phrases: for example, "Inscriptions and birddroppings are the only two things in Egypt that give any indication of life."¹⁰² His tastes run to the perverse, whose form is often a combination of extreme animality, even of grotesque nastiness, with extreme and sometimes intellectual refinement. Yet this particular kind of perversity was not something merely observed, it was also studied, and came to represent an essential element in Flaubert's fiction. The familiar oppositions, or ambivalences, as Harry Levin has called them, that roam through Flaubert's writing—flesh versus mind, Salomé versus Saint John, Salammbo versus Saint Anthony¹⁰³—are powerfully validated by what he saw in the Orient, what, given

his eclectic learning, he could see there of the partnership between knowledge and carnal grossness. In Upper Egypt he was taken with ancient Egyptian art, its preciousity and deliberate lubricity: "so dirty pictures existed even so far back in antiquity?" How much more the Orient really answered questions than it raised them is evident in the following:

You [Flaubert's mother] ask me whether the Orient is up to what I imagined it to be. Yes, it is; and more than that, it extends far beyond the narrow idea I had of it. I have found, clearly delineated, everything that was hazy in my mind. Facts have taken the place of suppositions—so excellently so that it is often as though I were suddenly coming upon old forgotten dreams.¹⁰⁴

Flaubert's work is so complex and so vast as to make any simple account of his Oriental writing very sketchy and hopelessly incomplete. Nevertheless, in the context created by other writers on the Orient, a certain number of main features in Flaubert's Orientalism can fairly be described. Making allowances for the difference between candidly personal writing (letters, travel notes, diary jottings) and formally aesthetic writing (novels and tales), we can still remark that Flaubert's Oriental perspective is rooted in an eastward and southward search for a "visionary alternative," which "meant gorgeous color, in contrast to the greyish tonality of the French provincial landscape. It meant exciting spectacle instead of humdrum routine, the perennially mysterious in place of the all too familiar."¹⁰⁵ When he actually visited it, however, this Orient impressed him with its decrepitude and senescence. Like every other Orientalism, then, Flaubert's is revivalist: *he* must bring the Orient to life, *he* must deliver it to himself and to his readers, and it is his experience of it in books and on the spot, and his language for it, that will do the trick. His novels of the Orient accordingly were labored historical and learned reconstructions. Carthage in *Salammbo* and the products of Saint Anthony's fevered imagination were authentic fruits of Flaubert's wide reading in the (mainly Western) sources of Oriental religion, warfare, ritual, and societies.

What the formal aesthetic work retains, over and above the marks of Flaubert's voracious readings and recensions, are memories of Oriental travel. The *Bibliothèque des idées reçues* has it that an Orientalist is "un homme qui a beaucoup voyagé,"¹⁰⁶ only unlike most other such travelers Flaubert put his voyages to ingenious use. Most of his experiences are conveyed in theatrical form. He is

interested not only in the content of what he sees but—like Renan—in *how* he sees, the way by which the Orient, sometimes horribly but always attractively, seems to present itself to him. Flaubert is its best audience:

... Kasr el-Aini Hospital. Well maintained. The work of Clot Bey—his hand is still to be seen. Pretty cases of syphilis; in the ward of Abbas's Mamelukes, several have it in the arse. At a sign from the doctor, they all stood up on their beds, undid their trouserbelts (it was like army drill), and opened their anuses with their fingers to show their chancres. Enormous infundibula; one had a growth of hair inside his anus. One old man's prick entirely devoid of skin; I recoiled from the stench. A rachitic: hands curved backward, nails as long as claws; one could see the bone structure of his torso as clearly as a skeleton; the rest of his body, too, was fantastically thin, and his head was ringed with whitish leprosy.

Dissecting room: ... On the table an Arab cadaver, wide open; beautiful black hair. . . .¹⁰⁷

The lurid detail of this scene is related to many scenes in Flaubert's novels, in which illness is presented to us as if in a clinical theater. His fascination with dissection and beauty recalls, for instance, the final scene of *Salammbô*, culminating in Mâtho's ceremonial death. In such scenes, sentiments of repulsion or sympathy are repressed entirely; what matters is the correct rendering of exact detail.

*If critics
will believe*
The most celebrated moments in Flaubert's Oriental travel have to do with Kuchuk Hanem, a famous Egyptian dancer and courtesan, he encountered in Wadi Halfa. He had read in Lane about the *almehs* and the *khawals*, dancing girls and boys respectively, but it was his imagination rather than Lane's that could immediately grasp as well as enjoy the almost metaphysical paradox of the *almeh's* profession and the meaning of her name. (In *Victory*, Joseph Conrad was to repeat Flaubert's observation by making his musician heroine—Alma—irresistibly attractive and dangerous to Axel Heyst.) *Alemah* in Arabic means a learned woman. It was the name given to women in conservative eighteenth-century Egyptian society who were accomplished reciters of poetry. By the mid-nineteenth century the title was used as a sort of guild name for dancers who were also prostitutes, and such was Kuchuk Hanem, whose dance "L'Abeille" Flaubert watched before he slept with her. She was surely the prototype of several of his novels' female characters in her learned sensuality, delicacy, and (accord-

ing to Flaubert) mindless coarseness. What he especially liked about her was that she seemed to place no demands on him, while the "nauseating odor" of her bedbugs mingled enchantingly with "the scent of her skin, which was dripping with sandalwood." After his voyage, he had written Louise Colet reassuringly that "the oriental woman is no more than a machine: she makes no distinction between one man and another man." Kuchuk's dumb and irreducible sexuality allowed Flaubert's mind to wander in ruminations whose haunting power over him reminds us somewhat of Deslauriers and Frédéric Moreau at the end of *l'Education sentimentale*:

As for me, I scarcely shut my eyes. Watching that beautiful creature asleep (she snored, her head against my arm: I had slipped my forefinger under her necklace), my night was one long, infinitely intense reverie—that was why I stayed. I thought of my nights in Paris brothels—a whole series of old memories came back—and I thought of her, of her dance, of her voice as she sang songs that for me were without meaning and even without distinguishable words.¹⁰⁸

The Oriental woman is an occasion and an opportunity for Flaubert's musings; he is entranced by her self-sufficiency, by her emotional carelessness, and also by what, lying next to him, she allows him to think. Less a woman than a display of impressive but verbally inexpessive femininity, Kuchuk is the prototype of Flaubert's Salammbô and Salomé, as well as of all the versions of carnal female temptation to which his Saint Anthony is subject. Like the Queen of Sheba (who also danced "The Bee") she could say—were she able to speak—"Je ne suis pas une femme, je suis un monde."¹⁰⁹ Looked at from another angle Kuchuk is a disturbing symbol of fecundity, peculiarly Oriental in her luxuriant and seemingly unbounded sexuality. Her home near the upper reaches of the Nile occupied a position structurally similar to the place where the veil of Tanit—the goddess described as *Omniféconde*—is concealed in *Salammbô*.¹¹⁰ Yet like Tanit, Salomé, and Salammbô herself, Kuchuk was doomed to remain barren, corrupting, without issue. How much she and the Oriental world she lived in came to intensify for Flaubert his own sense of barrenness is indicated in the following:

We have a large orchestra, a rich palette, a variety of resources. We know many more tricks and dodges, probably, than were ever known before. No, what we lack is the intrinsic principle, the soul

of the thing, the very idea of the subject. We take notes, we make journeys: emptiness! emptiness! We become scholars, archaeologists, historians, doctors, cobblers, people of taste. What is the good of all that? Where is the heart, the verve, the sap? Where to start from? Where to go? We're good at sucking, we play a lot of tongue-games, we pet for hours: but the real thing! To ejaculate, beget the child!¹¹¹

Woven through all of Flaubert's Oriental experiences, exciting or disappointing, is an almost uniform association between the Orient and sex. In making this association Flaubert was neither the first nor the most exaggerated instance of a remarkably persistent motif in Western attitudes to the Orient. And indeed, the motif itself is singularly unvaried, although Flaubert's genius may have done more than anyone else's could have to give it artistic dignity. 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. Nevertheless one must acknowledge its importance as something eliciting complex responses, sometimes even a frightening self-discovery, in the Orientalists, and Flaubert was an interesting case in point.

The Orient threw him back on his own human and technical resources. It did not respond, just as Kuchuk did not, to his presence. Standing before its ongoing life Flaubert, like Lane before him, felt his detached powerlessness, perhaps also his self-induced unwillingness, to enter and become part of what he saw. This of course was Flaubert's perennial problem; it had existed before he went East, and it remained after the visit. Flaubert admitted the difficulty, the antidote to which was in his work (especially in an Oriental work like *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*) to stress the form of encyclopedic presentation of material at the expense of human engagement in life. Indeed, Saint Anthony is nothing if not a man for whom reality is a series of books, spectacles, and pageants unrolling temptingly and at a distance before his eyes. All of Flaubert's immense learning is structured—as Michel Foucault has tellingly noted—like a theatrical, fantastic library, parading before the anchorite's gaze;¹¹² residually, the parade carries in its form Flaubert's memories of Kasr el'Aini (the syphilitics' army drill) and Kuchuk's dance. More to the point, however, is that Saint Anthony

is a celibate to whom temptations are primarily sexual. After putting up with every sort of dangerous charm, he is finally given a glimpse into the biological processes of life; he is delirious at being able to see life being born, a scene for which Flaubert felt himself to be incompetent during his Oriental sojourn. Yet because Anthony is delirious, we are meant to read the scene ironically. What is granted to him at the end, the desire to *become* matter, to become life, is at best a desire—whether realizable and fulfillable or not, we cannot know.

Despite the energy of his intelligence and his enormous power of intellectual absorption, Flaubert felt in the Orient, first, that "the more you concentrate on it [in detail] the less you grasp the whole," and then, second, that "the pieces fall into place of themselves."¹¹³ At best, this produces a *spectacular* form, but it remains barred to the Westerner's full participation in it. On one level this was a personal predicament for Flaubert, and he devised means, some of which we have discussed, for dealing with it. On a more general level, this was an *epistemological* difficulty for which, of course, the discipline of Orientalism existed. At one moment during his Oriental tour he considered what the epistemological challenge could give rise to. Without what he called spirit and style, the mind could "get lost in archaeology": he was referring to a sort of regimented antiquarianism by which the exotic and the strange would get formulated into lexicons, codes, and finally clichés of the kind he was to ridicule in the *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*. Under the influence of such an attitude the world would be "regulated like a college. Teachers will be the law. Everyone will be in uniform."¹¹⁴ As against such an imposed discipline, he no doubt felt that his own treatments of exotic material, notably the Oriental material he had both experienced and read about for years, were infinitely preferable. In those at least there was room for a sense of immediacy, imagination, and flair, whereas in the ranks of archaeological tomes everything but "learning" had been squeezed out. And more than most novelists Flaubert was acquainted with organized learning, its products, and its results: these products are clearly evident in the misfortunes of Bouvard and Pécuchet, but they would have been as comically apparent in fields like Orientalism, whose textual attitudes belonged to the world of *idées reçues*. Therefore one could either construct the world with verve and style, or one could copy it tirelessly according to impersonal academic rules of procedure.

In both cases, with regard to the Orient, there was a frank acknowledgment that it was a world elsewhere, apart from the ordinary attachments, sentiments, and values of *our* world in the West.

In all of his novels Flaubert associates the Orient with the escapism of sexual fantasy. Emma Bovary and Frédéric Moreau pine for what in their drab (or harried) bourgeois lives they do not have, and what they realize they want comes easily to their daydreams packed inside Oriental clichés: harems, princesses, princes, slaves, veils, dancing girls and boys, sherbets, ointments, and so on. The repertoire is familiar, not so much because it reminds us of Flaubert's own voyages in and obsession with the Orient, but because, once again, the association is clearly made between the Orient and the freedom of licentious sex. We may as well recognize that for nineteenth-century Europe, with its increasing *embourgeoisement*, sex had been institutionalized to a very considerable degree. On the one hand, there was no such thing as "free" sex, and on the other, sex in society entailed a web of legal, moral, even political and economic obligations of a detailed and certainly encumbering sort. Just as the various colonial possessions—quite apart from their economic benefit to metropolitan Europe—were useful as places to send wayward sons, superfluous populations of delinquents, poor people, and other undesirables, so the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe. Virtually no European writer who wrote on or traveled to the Orient in the period after 1800 exempted himself or herself from this quest: Flaubert, Nerval, "Dirty Dick" Burton, and Lane are only the most notable. In the twentieth century one thinks of Gide, Conrad, Maugham, and dozens of others. What they looked for often—correctly, I think—was a different type of sexuality, perhaps more libertine and less guilt-ridden; but even that quest, if repeated by enough people, could (and did) become as regulated and uniform as learning itself. In time "Oriental sex" was as standard a commodity as any other available in the mass culture, with the result that readers and writers could have it if they wished without necessarily going to the Orient.

It was certainly true that by the middle of the nineteenth century France, no less than England and the rest of Europe, had a flourishing knowledge industry of the sort that Flaubert feared. Great numbers of texts were being produced, and more important, the agencies and institutions for their dissemination and propagation were everywhere to be found. As historians of science and knowledge have

observed, the organization of scientific and learned fields that took place during the nineteenth century was both rigorous and all-encompassing. Research became a regular activity; there was a regulated exchange of information, and agreement on what the problems were as well as consensus on the appropriate paradigms for research and its results.¹¹⁵ The apparatus serving Oriental studies was part of the scene, and this was one thing that Flaubert surely had in mind when he proclaimed that "everyone will be in uniform." An Orientalist was no longer a gifted amateur enthusiast, or if he was, he would have trouble being taken seriously as a scholar. To be an Orientalist meant university training in Oriental studies (by 1850 every major European university had a fully developed curriculum in one or another of the Orientalist disciplines), it meant subvention for one's travel (perhaps by one of the Asiatic societies or a geographical exploration fund or a government grant), it meant publication in accredited form (perhaps under the imprint of a learned society or an Oriental translation fund). And both within the guild of Orientalist scholars and to the public at large, such uniform accreditation as clothed the work of Orientalist scholarship, not personal testimony nor subjective impressionism, meant Science.

Added to the oppressive regulation of Oriental matters was the accelerated attention paid by the Powers (as the European empires were called) to the Orient, and to the Levant in particular. Ever since the Treaty of Chanak of 1806 between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain, the Eastern Question had hovered ever more prominently on Europe's Mediterranean horizons. Britain's interests were more substantial in the East than France's, but we must not forget Russia's movements into the Orient (Samarkand and Bokhara were taken in 1868; the Transcaspian Railroad was being extended systematically), nor Germany's and Austria-Hungary's. France's North African interventions, however, were not the only components of its Islamic policy. In 1860, during the clashes between Maronites and Druzes in Lebanon (already predicted by Lamartine and Nerval), France supported the Christians, England the Druzes. For standing near the center of all European politics in the East was the question of minorities, whose "interests" the Powers, each in its own way, claimed to protect and represent. Jews, Greek and Russian Orthodox, Druzes, Circassians, Armenians, Kurds, the various small Christian sects: all these were studied, planned for, designed upon by European Powers improvising as well as constructing their Oriental policy.

I mention such matters simply as a way of keeping vivid the sense of layer upon layer of interests, official learning, institutional pressure, that covered the Orient as a subject matter and as a territory during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Even the most innocuous travel book—and there were literally hundreds written after mid-century¹¹⁶—contributed to the density of public awareness of the Orient; a heavily marked dividing line separated the delights, miscellaneous exploits, and testimonial portentousness of individual pilgrims in the East (which included some American voyagers, among them Mark Twain and Herman Melville¹¹⁷) from the authoritative reports of scholarly travelers, missionaries, governmental functionaries, and other expert witnesses. This dividing line existed clearly in Flaubert's mind, as it must have for any individual consciousness that did not have an innocent perspective on the Orient as a terrain for literary exploitation.

English writers on the whole had a more pronounced and harder sense of what Oriental pilgrimages might entail than the French. India was a valuably real constant in this sense, and therefore all the territory between the Mediterranean and India acquired a correspondingly weighty importance. Romantic writers like Byron and Scott consequently had a political vision of the Near Orient and a very combative awareness of how relations between the Orient and Europe would have to be conducted. Scott's historical sense in *The Talisman* and *Count Robert of Paris* allowed him to set these novels in Crusader Palestine and eleventh-century Byzantium, respectively, without at the same time detracting from his canny political appreciation of the way powers act abroad. The failure of Disraeli's *Tancred* can easily be ascribed to its author's perhaps over-developed knowledge of Oriental politics and the British Establishment's network of interests; Tancred's ingenuous desire to go to Jerusalem very soon mires Disraeli in ludicrously complex descriptions of how a Lebanese tribal chieftain tries to manage Druzes, Muslims, Jews, and Europeans to his political advantage. By the end of the novel Tancred's Eastern quest has more or less disappeared because there is nothing in Disraeli's material vision of Oriental realities to nourish the pilgrim's somewhat capricious impulses. Even George Eliot, who never visited the Orient herself, could not sustain the Jewish equivalent of an Oriental pilgrimage in *Daniel Deronda* (1876) without straying into the complexities of British realities as they decisively affected the Eastern project.

Thus whenever the Oriental motif for the English writer was not principally a stylistic matter (as in FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* or in Morier's *Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*), it forced him to confront a set of imposing resistances to his individual fantasy. There are no English equivalents to the Oriental works by Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Nerval, and Flaubert, just as Lane's early Orientalist counterparts—Sacy and Renan—were considerably more aware than he was of how much they were creating what they wrote about. The form of such works as Kinglake's *Eothen* (1844) and Burton's *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* (1855–1856) is rigidly chronological and dutifully linear, as if what the authors were describing was a shopping trip to an Oriental bazaar rather than an adventure. Kinglake's undeservedly famous and popular work is a pathetic catalogue of pompous ethnocentrisms and tiresomely nondescript accounts of the Englishman's East. His ostensible purpose in the book is to prove that travel in the Orient is important to "moulding of your character—that is, your very identity," but in fact this turns out to be little more than solidifying "your" anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and general all-purpose race prejudice. We are told, for instance, that the *Arabian Nights* is too lively and inventive a work to have been created by a "mere Oriental, who, for creative purposes, is a thing dead and dry—a mental mummy." Although Kinglake blithely confesses to no knowledge of any Oriental language, he is not constrained by ignorance from making sweeping generalizations about the Orient, its culture, mentality, and society. Many of the attitudes he repeats are canonical, of course, but it is interesting how little the experience of actually seeing the Orient affected his opinions. Like many other travelers he is more interested in remaking himself and the Orient (dead and dry—a mental mummy) than he is in seeing what there is to be seen. Every being he encounters merely corroborates his belief that Easterners are best dealt with when intimidated, and what better instrument of intimidation than a sovereign Western ego? En route to Suez across the desert, alone, he glories in his self-sufficiency and power: "I was here in this African desert, and I myself, and no other, had charge of my life."¹¹⁸ It is for the comparatively useless purpose of letting Kinglake take hold of himself that the Orient serves him.

Like Lamartine before him, Kinglake comfortably identified his superior consciousness with his nation's, the difference being that

in the Englishman's case his government was closer to settling in the rest of the Orient than France was—for the time being. Flaubert saw this with perfect accuracy:

It seems to me almost impossible that within a short time England won't become mistress of Egypt. She already keeps Aden full of her troops, the crossing of Suez will make it very easy for the redcoats to arrive in Cairo one fine morning—the news will reach France two weeks later and everyone will be very surprised! Remember my prediction: at the first sign of trouble in Europe, England will take Egypt, Russia will take Constantinople, and we, in retaliation, will get ourselves massacred in the mountains of Syria.¹¹⁹

For all their vaunted individuality Kinglake's views express a public and national will over the Orient; his ego is the instrument of this will's expression, not by any means its master. There is no evidence in his writing that he struggled to create a novel opinion of the Orient; neither his knowledge nor his personality was adequate for that, and this is the great difference between him and Richard Burton. As a traveler, Burton was a real adventurer; as a scholar, he could hold his own with any academic Orientalist in Europe; as a character, he was fully aware of the necessity of combat between himself and the uniformed teachers who ran Europe and European knowledge with such precise anonymity and scientific firmness. Everything Burton wrote testifies to this combative ness, rarely with more candid contempt for his opponents than in the preface to his translation of the *Arabian Nights*. He seems to have taken a special sort of infantile pleasure in demonstrating that he knew more than any professional scholar, that he had acquired many more details than they had, that he could handle the material with more wit and tact and freshness than they.

As I said earlier, Burton's work based on his personal experience occupies a median position between Orientalist genres represented on the one hand by Lane and on the other by the French writers I have discussed. His Oriental narratives are structured as pilgrimages and, in the case of *The Land of Midian Revisited*, pilgrimages for a second time to sites of sometimes religious, sometimes political and economic significance. He is present as the principal character of these works, as much the center of fantastic adventure and even fantasy (like the French writers) as the authoritative commentator and detached Westerner on Oriental society and customs (like Lane). He has been rightly considered the first in a series of fiercely

individualistic Victorian travelers in the East (the others being Blunt and Doughty) by Thomas Assad, who bases his work on the distance in tone and intelligence between his writers' work and such works as Austen Layard's *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (1851), Eliot Warburton's celebrated *The Crescent and the Cross* (1844), Robert Curzon's *Visit to the Monasteries of the Levant* (1849), and (a work he does not mention) Thackeray's moderately amusing *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* (1845).¹²⁰ Yet Burton's legacy is more complex than individualism precisely because in his writing we can find exemplified the struggle between individualism and a strong feeling of national identification with Europe (specifically England) as an imperial power in the East. Assad sensitively points out that Burton was an imperialist, for all his sympathetic self-association with the Arabs; but what is more relevant is that Burton thought of himself both as a rebel against authority (hence his identification with the East as a place of freedom from Victorian moral authority) and as a potential agent of authority in the East. It is the *manner* of that coexistence, between two antagonistic roles for himself, that is of interest.

The problem finally reduces itself to the problem of knowledge of the Orient, which is why a consideration of Burton's Orientalism ought to conclude our account of Orientalist structures and restructures in most of the nineteenth century. As a traveling adventurer Burton conceived of himself as sharing the life of the people in whose lands he lived. Far more successfully than T. E. Lawrence, he was able to become an Oriental; he not only spoke the language flawlessly, he was able to penetrate to the heart of Islam and, disguised as an Indian Muslim doctor, accomplish the pilgrimage to Mecca. Yet Burton's most extraordinary characteristic is, I believe, that he was preternaturally knowledgeable about the degree to which human life in society was governed by rules and codes. All of his vast information about the Orient, which dots every page he wrote, reveals that he knew that the Orient in general and Islam in particular were systems of information, behavior, and belief, that to be an Oriental or a Muslim was to know certain things in a certain way, and that these were of course subject to history, geography, and the development of society in circumstances specific to it. Thus his accounts of travel in the East reveal to us a consciousness aware of these things and able to steer a narrative course through them: no man who did not know Arabic and Islam as well as Burton could have gone as far as he did in actually becom-

ing a pilgrim to Mecca and Medina. So what we read in his prose is the history of a consciousness negotiating its way through an alien culture by virtue of having successfully absorbed its systems of information and behavior. Burton's freedom was in having shaken himself loose of his European origins enough to be able to live as an Oriental. Every scene in the *Pilgrimage* reveals him as winning out over the obstacles confronting him, a foreigner, in a strange place. He was able to do this because he had sufficient knowledge of an alien society for this purpose.

In no writer on the Orient so much as in Burton do we feel that generalizations about the Oriental—for example, the pages on the notion of *Kayf* for the Arab or on how education is suited to the Oriental mind (pages that are clearly meant as a rebuttal to Macaulay's simple-minded assertions)¹²¹—are the result of knowledge acquired about the Orient by living there, actually seeing it firsthand, truly trying to see Oriental life from the viewpoint of a person immersed in it. Yet what is never far from the surface of Burton's prose is another sense it radiates, a sense of assertion and domination over all the complexities of Oriental life. Every one of Burton's footnotes, whether in the *Pilgrimage* or in his translation of the *Arabian Nights* (the same is true of his "Terminal Essay" for it¹²²) was meant to be testimony to his victory over the sometimes scandalous system of Oriental knowledge, a system he had mastered by himself. For even in Burton's prose we are never directly given the Orient; everything about it is presented to us by way of Burton's knowledgeable (and often prurient) interventions, which remind us repeatedly how he had taken over the management of Oriental life for the purposes of his narrative. And it is this fact—for in the *Pilgrimage* it is a fact—that elevates Burton's consciousness to a position of supremacy over the Orient. In that position his individuality perforce encounters, and indeed merges with, the voice of Empire, which is itself a system of rules, codes, and concrete epistemological habits. Thus when Burton tells us in the *Pilgrimage* that "Egypt is a treasure to be won," that it "is the most tempting prize which the East holds out to the ambition of Europe, not excepted even the Golden Horn,"¹²³ we must recognize how the voice of the highly idiosyncratic master of Oriental knowledge informs, feeds into the voice of European ambition for rule over the Orient.

Burton's two voices blending into one presage the work of Orientalists—*cum*—imperial agents like T. E. Lawrence, Edward

Henry Palmer, D. G. Hogarth, Gertrude Bell, Ronald Storrs, St. John Philby, and William Gifford Palgrave, to name only some English writers. The double-pronged intention of Burton's work is at the same time to use his Oriental residence for scientific observation *and* not easily to sacrifice his individuality to that end. The second of these two intentions leads him inevitably to submit to the first because, as will appear increasingly obvious, he is a European for whom such knowledge of Oriental society as he has is possible only for a European, with a European's self-awareness of society as a collection of rules and practices. In other words, to be a European in the Orient, and to be one knowledgeably, one must see and know the Orient as a domain ruled over by Europe. Orientalism, which is the system of European or Western knowledge about the Orient, thus becomes synonymous with European domination of the Orient, and this domination effectively overrules even the eccentricities of Burton's personal style.

Burton took the assertion of personal, authentic, sympathetic, and humanistic knowledge of the Orient as far as it would go in its struggle with the archive of official European knowledge about the Orient. In the history of nineteenth-century attempts to restore, restructure, and redeem all the various provinces of knowledge and life, Orientalism—like all the other Romantically inspired learned disciplines—contributed an important share. For not only did the field evolve from a system of inspired observation into what Flaubert called a regulated college of learning, it also reduced the personalities of even its most redoubtable individualists like Burton to the role of imperial scribe. From being a place, the Orient became a domain of actual scholarly rule and potential imperial sway. The role of the early Orientalists like Renan, Sacy, and Lane was to provide their work and the Orient together with a *mise en scène*; later Orientalists, scholarly or imaginative, took firm hold of the scene. Still later, as the scene required management, it became clear that institutions and governments were better at the game of management than individuals. This is the legacy of nineteenth-century Orientalism to which the twentieth century has become inheritor. We must now investigate as exactly as possible the way twentieth-century Orientalism—inaugurated by the long process of the West's occupation of the Orient from the 1880s on—successfully controlled freedom and knowledge; in short, the way Orientalism was fully formalized into a repeatedly produced copy of itself.

3

Orientalism Now

On les apercevait tenant leurs idoles entre leurs bras comme de grands enfants paralytiques.

—Gustave Flaubert, *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselish belief in the idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to. . . .

—Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

I

Latent and Manifest Orientalism

In Chapter One, I tried to indicate the scope of thought and action covered by the word *Orientalism*, using as privileged types the British and French experiences of and with the Near Orient, Islam, and the Arabs. In those experiences I discerned an intimate, perhaps even the most intimate, and rich relationship between Occident and Orient. Those experiences were part of a much wider European or Western relationship with the Orient, but what seems to have influenced Orientalism most was a fairly constant sense of confrontation felt by Westerners dealing with the East. The boundary notion of East and West, the varying degrees of projected inferiority and strength, the range of work done, the kinds of characteristic features ascribed to the Orient: all these testify to a willed imaginative and geographic division made between East and West, and lived through during many centuries. In Chapter Two my focus narrowed a good deal. I was interested in the earliest phases of what I call modern Orientalism, which began during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth. Since I did not intend my study to become a narrative chronicle of the development of Oriental studies in the modern West, I proposed instead an account of the rise, development, and institutions of Orientalism as they were formed against a background of intellectual, cultural, and political history until about 1870 or 1880. Although my interest in Orientalism there included a decently ample variety of scholars and imaginative writers, I cannot claim by any means to have presented more than a portrait of the typical structures (and their ideological tendencies) constituting the field, its associations with other fields, and the work of some of its most influential scholars. My principal operating assumptions were—and continue to be—that fields of learning, as much as the works of even the most eccentric artist, are constrained and acted upon by society, by cultural traditions, by worldly circumstance, and by stabilizing influences like schools, libraries, and governments; moreover, that both learned and imaginative

writing are never free, but are limited in their imagery, assumptions, and intentions; and finally, that the advances made by a "science" like Orientalism in its academic form are less objectively true than we often like to think. In short, my study hitherto has tried to describe the *economy* that makes Orientalism a coherent subject matter, even while allowing that as an idea, concept, or image the word *Orient* has a considerable and interesting cultural resonance in the West.

I realize that such assumptions are not without their controversial side. Most of us assume in a general way that learning and scholarship move forward; they get better, we feel, as time passes and as more information is accumulated, methods are refined, and later generations of scholars improve upon earlier ones. In addition, we entertain a mythology of creation, in which it is believed that artistic genius, an original talent, or a powerful intellect can leap beyond the confines of its own time and place in order to put before the world a new work. It would be pointless to deny that such ideas as these carry some truth. Nevertheless the possibilities for work present in the culture to a great and original mind are never unlimited, just as it is also true that a great talent has a very healthy respect for what others have done before it and for what the field already contains. The work of predecessors, the institutional life of a scholarly field, the collective nature of any learned enterprise: these, to say nothing of economic and social circumstances, tend to diminish the effects of the individual scholar's production. A field like Orientalism has a cumulative and corporate identity, one that is particularly strong given its associations with traditional learning (the classics, the Bible, philology), public institutions (governments, trading companies, geographical societies, universities), and generically determined writing (travel books, books of exploration, fantasy, exotic description). The result for Orientalism has been a sort of consensus: certain things, certain types of statement, certain types of work have seemed for the Orientalist correct. He has built his work and research upon them, and they in turn have pressed hard upon new writers and scholars. Orientalism can thus be regarded as a manner of regularized (or Orientalized) writing, vision, and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases ostensibly suited to the Orient. The Orient is taught, researched, administered, and pronounced upon in certain discrete ways.

The Orient that appears in Orientalism, then, is a system of

representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire. If this definition of Orientalism seems more political than not, that is simply because I think Orientalism was itself a product of certain political forces and activities. Orientalism is a school of interpretation whose material happens to be the Orient, its civilizations, peoples, and localities. Its objective discoveries—the work of innumerable devoted scholars who edited texts and translated them, codified grammars, wrote dictionaries, reconstructed dead epochs, produced positivistically verifiable learning—are and always have been conditioned by the fact that its truths, like any truths delivered by language, are embodied in language, and what is the truth of language, Nietzsche once said, but

a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms—in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are.¹

Perhaps such a view as Nietzsche's will strike us as too nihilistic, but at least it will draw attention to the fact that so far as it existed in the West's awareness, the Orient was a word which later accrued to it a wide field of meanings, associations, and connotations, and that these did not necessarily refer to the real Orient but to the field surrounding the word.

Thus Orientalism is not only a positive doctrine about the Orient that exists at any one time in the West; it is also an influential academic tradition (when one refers to an academic specialist who is called an Orientalist), as well as an area of concern defined by travelers, commercial enterprises, governments, military expeditions, readers of novels and accounts of exotic adventure, natural historians, and pilgrims to whom the Orient is a specific kind of knowledge about specific places, peoples, and civilizations. For the Orient idioms became frequent, and these idioms took firm hold in European discourse. Beneath the idioms there was a layer of doctrine about the Orient; this doctrine was fashioned out of the experiences of many Europeans, all of them converging upon such essential aspects of the Orient as the Oriental character, Oriental despotism, Oriental sensuality, and the like. For any European during the nineteenth century—and I think one

can say this almost without qualification—Orientalism was such a system of truths, truths in Nietzsche's sense of the word. It is therefore correct that every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric. Some of the immediate sting will be taken out of these labels if we recall additionally that human societies, at least the more advanced cultures, have rarely offered the individual anything but imperialism, racism, and ethnocentrism for dealing with "other" cultures. So Orientalism aided and was aided by general cultural pressures that tended to make more rigid the sense of difference between the European and Asiatic parts of the world. My contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness.

This proposition was introduced early in Chapter One, and nearly everything in the pages that followed was intended in part as a corroboration of it. The very presence of a "field" such as Orientalism, with no corresponding equivalent in the Orient itself, suggests the relative strength of Orient and Occident. A vast number of pages on the Orient exist, and they of course signify a degree and quantity of interaction with the Orient that are quite formidable; but the crucial index of Western strength is that there is no possibility of comparing the movement of Westerners eastwards (since the end of the eighteenth century) with the movement of Easterners westwards. Leaving aside the fact that Western armies, consular corps, merchants, and scientific and archaeological expeditions were always going East, the number of travelers from the Islamic East to Europe between 1800 and 1900 is minuscule when compared with the number in the other direction.² Moreover, the Eastern travelers in the West were there to learn from and to gape at an advanced culture; the purposes of the Western travelers in the Orient were, as we have seen, of quite a different order. In addition, it has been estimated that around 60,000 books dealing with the Near Orient were written between 1800 and 1950; there is no remotely comparable figure for Oriental books about the West. As a cultural apparatus Orientalism is all aggression, activity, judgment, will-to-truth, and knowledge. The Orient existed for the West, or so it seemed to countless Orientalists, whose attitude to what they worked on was either paternalistic or candidly condescending—unless, of course, they were antiquarians, in which case the "classical" Orient was a credit to *them* and not to the lamentable modern Orient.

And then, beefing up the Western scholars' work, there were numerous agencies and institutions with no parallels in Oriental society.

Such an imbalance between East and West is obviously a function of changing historical patterns. During its political and military heyday from the eighth century to the sixteenth, Islam dominated both East and West. Then the center of power shifted westwards, and now in the late twentieth century it seems to be directing itself back towards the East again. My account of nineteenth-century Orientalism in Chapter Two stopped at a particularly charged period in the latter part of the century, when the often dilatory, abstract, and projective aspects of Orientalism were about to take on a new sense of worldly mission in the service of formal colonialism. It is this project and this moment that I want now to describe, especially since it will furnish us with some important background for the twentieth-century crises of Orientalism and the resurgence of political and cultural strength in the East.

On several occasions I have alluded to the connections between Orientalism as a body of ideas, beliefs, clichés, or learning about the East, and other schools of thought at large in the culture. Now one of the important developments in nineteenth-century Orientalism was the distillation of essential ideas about the Orient—its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness—into a separate and unchallenged coherence; thus for a writer to use the word *Oriental* was a reference for the reader sufficient to identify a specific body of information about the Orient. This information seemed to be morally neutral and objectively valid; it seemed to have an epistemological status equal to that of historical chronology or geographical location. In its most basic form, then, Oriental material could not really be violated by anyone's discoveries, nor did it seem ever to be reevaluated completely. Instead, the work of various nineteenth-century scholars and of imaginative writers made this essential body of knowledge more clear, more detailed, more substantial—and more distinct from "Occidentalism." Yet Orientalist ideas could enter into alliance with general philosophical theories (such as those about the history of mankind and civilization) and diffuse world-hypotheses, as philosophers sometimes call them; and in many ways the professional contributors to Oriental knowledge were anxious to couch their formulations and ideas, their scholarly work, their considered contemporary observations, in language and

terminology whose cultural validity derived from other sciences and systems of thought.

The distinction I am making is really between an almost unconscious (and certainly an untouchable) positivity, which I shall call *latent* Orientalism, and the various stated views about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology, and so forth, which I shall call *manifest* Orientalism. Whatever change occurs in knowledge of the Orient is found almost exclusively in manifest Orientalism; the unanimity, stability, and durability of latent Orientalism are more or less constant. In the nineteenth-century writers I analyzed in Chapter Two, the differences in their ideas about the Orient can be characterized as exclusively manifest differences, differences in form and personal style, rarely in basic content. 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 Orient, from Renan to Marx (ideologically speaking), or from the most rigorous scholars (Lane and Sacy) to the most powerful imaginations (Flaubert and Nerval), saw the Orient as a locale requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption. The Orient existed as a place isolated from the mainstream of European progress in the sciences, arts, and commerce. Thus whatever good or bad values were imputed to the Orient appeared to be functions of some highly specialized Western interest in the Orient. This was the situation from about the 1870s on through the early part of the twentieth century—but let me give some examples that illustrate what I mean.

Theses of Oriental backwardness, degeneracy, and inequality with the West most easily associated themselves early in the nineteenth century with ideas about the biological bases of racial inequality. Thus the racial classifications found in Cuvier's *Le Règne animal*, Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, and Robert Knox's *The Races of Man* found a willing partner in latent Orientalism. To these ideas was added second-order Darwinism, which seemed to accentuate the "scientific" validity of the division of races into advanced and backward, or European-Aryan and Oriental-African. Thus the whole question of imperialism, as it was debated in the late nineteenth century by pro-imperialists and anti-imperialists alike, carried forward the binary typology of advanced and backward (or subject) races, cultures, and societies. John Westlake's *Chapters on the Principles*

of International Law (1894) argues, for example, that regions of the earth designated as "uncivilized" (a word carrying the freight of Orientalist assumptions, among others) ought to be annexed or occupied by advanced powers. Similarly, the ideas of such writers as Carl Peters, Leopold de Saussure, and Charles Temple draw on the advanced/backward binarism³ so centrally advocated in late-nineteenth-century Orientalism.

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. The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien. 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. The *locus classicus* for such judgment and action is to be found in Gustave Le Bon's *Les Lois psychologiques de l'évolution des peuples* (1894).

But there were other uses for latent Orientalism. If that group of ideas allowed one to separate Orientals from advanced, civilizing powers, and if the "classical" Orient served to justify both the Orientalist and his disregard of modern Orientals, latent Orientalism also encouraged a peculiarly (not to say invidiously) male conception of the world. I have already referred to this in passing during my discussion of Renan. The Oriental male was considered in isolation from the total community in which he lived and which many Orientalists, following Lane, have viewed with something resembling contempt and fear. Orientalism itself, furthermore, was an exclusively male province; like so many professional guilds during the modern period, it viewed itself and its subject matter with sexist blinders. This is especially evident in the writing of travelers and novelists: 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. Flaubert's Kuchuk Hanem is the prototype of such caricatures, which were common

enough in pornographic novels (e.g., Pierre Louÿs's *Aphrodite*) whose novelty draws on the Orient for their interest. Moreover the male conception of the world, in its effect upon the practicing Orientalist, tends to be static, frozen, fixed eternally. The very possibility of development, transformation, human movement—in the deepest sense of the word—is denied the Orient and the Oriental. As a known and ultimately an immobilized or unproductive quality, they come to be identified with a bad sort of eternity: hence, when the Orient is being approved, such phrases as "the wisdom of the East."

Transferred from an implicit social evaluation to a grandly cultural one, this static male Orientalism took on a variety of forms in the late nineteenth century, especially when Islam was being discussed. General cultural historians as respected as Leopold von Ranke and Jacob Burckhardt assailed Islam as if they were dealing not so much with an anthropomorphic abstraction as with a religio-political culture about which deep generalizations were possible and warranted: in his *Weltgeschichte* (1881–1888) Ranke spoke of Islam as defeated by the Germanic-Romanic peoples, and in his "Historische Fragmente" (unpublished notes, 1893) Burckhardt spoke of Islam as wretched, bare, and trivial.⁴ Such intellectual operations were carried out with considerably more flair and enthusiasm by Oswald Spengler, whose ideas about a Magian personality (typified by the Muslim Oriental) infuse *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918–1922) and the "morphology" of cultures it advocates.

What these widely diffused notions of the Orient depended on was the almost total absence in contemporary Western culture of the Orient as a genuinely felt and experienced force. For a number of evident reasons the Orient was always in the position both of outsider and of incorporated weak partner for the West. To the extent that Western scholars were aware of contemporary Orientals or Oriental movements of thought and culture, these were perceived either as silent shadows to be animated by the Orientalist, brought into reality by him, or as a kind of cultural and intellectual proletariat useful for the Orientalist's grander interpretative activity, necessary for his performance as superior judge, learned man, powerful cultural will. I mean to say that in discussions of the Orient, the Orient is all absence, whereas one feels the Orientalist and what he says as presence; yet we must not forget that the Orientalist's presence is enabled by the Orient's effective absence.

This fact of substitution and displacement, as we must call it, clearly places on the Orientalist himself a certain pressure to reduce the Orient in his work, even after he has devoted a good deal of time to elucidating and exposing it. How else can one explain major scholarly production of the type we associate with Julius Wellhausen and Theodor Nöldeke and, overriding it, those bare, sweeping statements that almost totally denigrate their chosen subject matter? Thus Nöldeke could declare in 1887 that the sum total of his work as an Orientalist was to confirm his "low opinion" of the Eastern peoples.⁵ And like Carl Becker, Nöldeke was a philhellenist, who showed his love of Greece curiously by displaying a positive dislike of the Orient, which after all was what he studied as a scholar.

A very valuable and intelligent study of Orientalism—Jacques Waardenburg's *L'Islam dans le miroir de l'Occident*—examines five important experts as makers of an image of Islam. Waardenburg's mirror-image metaphor for late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Orientalism is apt. In the work of each of his eminent Orientalists there is a highly tendentious—in four cases out of the five, even hostile—vision of Islam, as if each man saw Islam as a reflection of his own chosen weakness. Each scholar was profoundly learned, and the style of his contribution was unique. The five Orientalists among them exemplify what was best and strongest in the tradition during the period roughly from the 1880s to the interwar years. Yet Ignaz Goldziher's appreciation of Islam's tolerance towards other religions was undercut by his dislike of Mohammed's anthropomorphisms and Islam's too-exterior theology and jurisprudence; Duncan Black Macdonald's interest in Islamic piety and orthodoxy was vitiated by his perception of what he considered Islam's heretical Christianity; Carl Becker's understanding of Islamic civilization made him see it as a sadly undeveloped one; C. Snouck Hurgronje's highly refined studies of Islamic mysticism (which he considered the essential part of Islam) led him to a harsh judgment of its crippling limitations; and Louis Massignon's extraordinary identification with Muslim theology, mystical passion, and poetic art kept him curiously unforgiving to Islam for what he regarded as its unregenerate revolt against the idea of incarnation. The manifest differences in their methods emerge as less important than their Orientalist consensus on Islam: latent inferiority.⁶

Waardenburg's study has the additional virtue of showing how

these five scholars shared a common intellectual and methodological tradition whose unity was truly international. Ever since the first Orientalist congress in 1873, scholars in the field have known each other's work and felt each other's presence very directly. What Waardenburg does not stress enough is that most of the late-nineteenth-century Orientalists were bound to each other politically as well. Snouck Hurgronje went directly from his studies of Islam to being an adviser to the Dutch government on handling its Muslim Indonesian colonies; Macdonald and Massignon were widely sought after as experts on Islamic matters by colonial administrators from North Africa to Pakistan; and, as Waardenburg says (all too briefly) at one point, all five scholars shaped a coherent vision of Islam that had a wide influence on government circles throughout the Western world.⁷ What we must add to Waardenburg's observation is that these scholars were completing, bringing to an ultimate concrete refinement, the tendency since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to treat the Orient not only as a vague literary problem but—according to Masson-Oursel—as “un ferme propos d'assimiler adéquatement la valeur des langues pour pénétrer les moeurs et les pensées, pour forcer même des secrets de l'histoire.”⁸

I spoke earlier of incorporation and assimilation of the Orient, as these activities were practiced by writers as different from each other as Dante and d'Herbelot. Clearly there is a difference between those efforts and what, by the end of the nineteenth century, had become a truly formidable European cultural, political, and material enterprise. The nineteenth-century colonial “scramble for Africa” was by no means limited to Africa, of course. Neither was the penetration of the Orient entirely a sudden, dramatic after-thought following years of scholarly study of Asia. What we must reckon with is a long and slow process of appropriation by which Europe, or the European awareness of the Orient, transformed itself from being textual and contemplative into being administrative, economic, and even military. The fundamental change was a spatial and geographical one, or rather it was a change in the quality of geographical and spatial apprehension so far as the Orient was concerned. The centuries-old designation of geographical space to the east of Europe as “Oriental” was partly political, partly doctrinal, and partly imaginative; it implied no necessary connection between actual experience of the Orient and knowledge of what is

Oriental, and certainly Dante and d'Herbelot made no claims about their Oriental ideas except that they were corroborated by a long *learned* (and not existential) tradition. But when Lane, Renan, Burton, and the many hundreds of nineteenth-century European travelers and scholars discuss the Orient, we can immediately note a far more intimate and even proprietary attitude towards the Orient and things Oriental. In the classical and often temporally remote form in which it was reconstructed by the Orientalist, in the precisely actual form in which the modern Orient was lived in, studied, or imagined, the *geographical space* of the Orient was penetrated, worked over, taken hold of. The cumulative effect of decades of so sovereign a Western handling turned the Orient from alien into colonial space. What was important in the latter nineteenth century was not whether the West had penetrated and possessed the Orient, but rather how the British and French felt that they had done it.

The British writer on the Orient, and even more so the British colonial administrator, was dealing with territory about which there could be no doubt that English power was truly in the ascendant, even if the natives were on the face of it attracted to France and French modes of thought. So far as the actual space of the Orient was concerned, however, England was really there, France was not, except as a flighty temptress of the Oriental yokels. There is no better indication of this qualitative difference in spatial attitudes than to look at what Lord Cromer had to say on the subject, one that was especially dear to his heart:

The reasons why French civilisation presents a special degree of attraction to Asiatics and Levantines are plain. It is, as a matter of fact, more attractive than the civilisations of England and Germany, and, moreover, it is more easy of imitation. Compare the undemonstrative, shy Englishman, with his social exclusiveness and insular habits, with the vivacious and cosmopolitan Frenchman, who does not know what the word shyness means, and who in ten minutes is apparently on terms of intimate friendship with any casual acquaintance he may chance to make. The semi-educated Oriental does not recognise that the former has, at all events, the merit of sincerity, whilst the latter is often merely acting a part. He looks coldly on the Englishman, and rushes into the arms of the Frenchman.

The sexual innuendoes develop more or less naturally thereafter. The Frenchman is all smiles, wit, grace, and fashion; the English-

man is plodding, industrious, Baconian, precise. Cromer's case is of course based on British solidity as opposed to a French seductiveness without any real presence in Egyptian reality.

Can it be any matter for surprise [Cromer continues] that the Egyptian, with his light intellectual ballast, fails to see that some fallacy often lies at the bottom of the Frenchman's reasoning, or that he prefers the rather superficial brilliancy of the Frenchman to the plodding, unattractive industry of the Englishman or the German? Look, again, at the theoretical perfection of French administrative systems, at their elaborate detail, and at the provision which is apparently made to meet every possible contingency which may arise. Compare these features with the Englishman's practical systems, which lay down rules as to a few main points, and leave a mass of detail to individual discretion. The half-educated Egyptian naturally prefers the Frenchman's system, for it is to all outward appearance more perfect and more easy of application. He fails, moreover, to see that the Englishman desires to elaborate a system which will suit the facts with which he has to deal, whereas the main objection to applying French administrative procedures to Egypt is that the facts have but too often to conform to the ready-made system.

Since there is a real British presence in Egypt, and since that presence—according to Cromer—is there not so much to train the Egyptian's mind as to "form his character," it follows therefore that the ephemeral attractions of the French are those of a pretty damsel with "somewhat artificial charms," whereas those of the British belong to "a sober, elderly matron of perhaps somewhat greater moral worth, but of less pleasing outward appearance."¹⁰

Underlying Cromer's contrast between the solid British nanny and the French coquette is the sheer privilege of British emplacement in the Orient. "The facts with which he [the Englishman] has to deal" are altogether more complex and interesting, by virtue of their possession by England, than anything the mercurial French could point to. Two years after the publication of his *Modern Egypt* (1908), Cromer expatiated philosophically in *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*. Compared with Roman imperialism, with its frankly assimilationist, exploitative, and repressive policies, British imperialism seemed to Cromer to be preferable, if somewhat more wishy-washy. On certain points, however, the British were clear enough, even if "after a rather dim, slipshod, but characteristically Anglo-

Saxon fashion," their Empire seemed undecided between "one of two bases—an extensive military occupation or the principle of nationality [for subject races]." But this indecision was academic finally, for in practice Cromer and Britain itself had opted against "the principle of nationality." And then there were other things to be noted. One point was that the Empire was not going to be given up. Another was that intermarriage between natives and English men and women was undesirable. Third—and most important, I think—Cromer conceived of British imperial presence in the Eastern colonies as having had a lasting, not to say cataclysmic, effect on the minds and societies of the East. His metaphor for expressing this effect is almost theological, so powerful in Cromer's mind was the idea of Western penetration of Oriental expanses. "The country," he says, "over which the breath of the West, heavily charged with scientific thought, has once passed, and has, in passing, left an enduring mark, can never be the same as it was before."¹¹

In such respects as these, nonetheless, Cromer's was far from an original intelligence. What he saw and how he expressed it were common currency among his colleagues both in the imperial Establishment and in the intellectual community. This consensus is notably true in the case of Cromer's viceregal colleagues, Curzon, Swettenham, and Lugard. Lord Curzon in particular always spoke the imperial lingua franca, and more obtrusively even than Cromer he delineated the relationship between Britain and the Orient in terms of possession, in terms of a large geographical space wholly owned by an efficient colonial master. For him, he said on one occasion, the Empire was not an "object of ambition" but "first and foremost, a great historical and political and sociological fact." In 1909 he reminded delegates to the Imperial Press Conference meeting at Oxford that "we train here and we send out to you your governors and administrators and judges, your teachers and preachers and lawyers." And this almost pedagogical view of empire had, for Curzon, a specific setting in Asia, which as he once put it, made "one pause and think."

I sometimes like to picture to myself this great Imperial fabric as a huge structure like some Tennysonian "Palace of Art," of which the foundations are in this country, where they have been laid and must be maintained by British hands, but of which the Colonies are the pillars, and high above all floats the vastness of an Asiatic dome.¹²

With such a Tennysonian Palace of Art in mind, Curzon and Cromer were enthusiastic members together of a departmental committee formed in 1909 to press for the creation of a school of Oriental studies. Aside from remarking wistfully that had he known the vernacular he would have been helped during his "famine tours" in India, Curzon argued for Oriental studies as part of the British responsibility to the Orient. On September 27, 1909, he told the House of Lords that

our familiarity, not merely with the languages of the people of the East but with their customs, their feelings, their traditions, their history and religion, our capacity to understand what may be called the genius of the East, is the sole basis upon which we are likely to be able to maintain in the future the position we have won, and no step that can be taken to strengthen that position can be considered undeserving of the attention of His Majesty's Government or of a debate in the House of Lords.

At a Mansion House conference on the subject five years later, Curzon finally dotted the i's. Oriental studies were no intellectual luxury; they were, he said,

a great Imperial obligation. In my view the creation of a school [of Oriental studies—later to become the London University School of Oriental and African Studies] like this in London is part of the necessary furniture of Empire. Those of us who, in one way or another, have spent a number of years in the East, who regard that as the happiest portion of our lives, and who think that the work that we did there, be it great or small, was the highest responsibility that can be placed upon the shoulders of Englishmen, feel that there is a gap in our national equipment which ought emphatically to be filled, and that those in the City of London who, by financial support or by any other form of active and practical assistance, take their part in filling that gap, will be rendering a patriotic duty to the Empire and promoting the cause and goodwill among mankind.¹²

To a very great extent Curzon's ideas about Oriental studies derive logically from a good century of British utilitarian administration of and philosophy about the Eastern colonies. The influence of Bentham and the Mills on British rule in the Orient (and India particularly) was considerable, and was effective in doing away with too much regulation and innovation; instead, as Eric Stokes has convincingly shown, utilitarianism combined with the legacies

of liberalism and evangelicalism as philosophies of British rule in the East stressed the rational importance of a strong executive armed with various legal and penal codes, a system of doctrines on such matters as frontiers and land rents, and everywhere an irreducible supervisory imperial authority.¹³ The cornerstone of the whole system was a constantly refined knowledge of the Orient, so that as traditional societies hastened forward and became modern commercial societies, there would be no loss of paternal British control, and no loss of revenue either. However, when Curzon referred somewhat inelegantly to Oriental studies as "the necessary furniture of Empire," he was putting into a static image the transactions by which Englishmen and natives conducted their business and kept their places. From the days of Sir William Jones the Orient had been both what Britain ruled and what Britain knew about it: the coincidence between geography, knowledge, and power, with Britain always in the master's place, was complete. To have said, as Curzon once did, that "the East is a University in which the scholar never takes his degree" was another way of saying that the East required one's presence there more or less forever.¹⁴

But then there were the other European powers, France and Russia among them, that made the British presence always a (perhaps marginally) threatened one. Curzon was certainly aware that all the major Western powers felt towards the world as Britain did. The transformation of geography from "dull and pedantic"—Curzon's phrase for what had now dropped out of geography as an academic subject—into "the most cosmopolitan of all sciences" argued exactly that new Western and widespread predilection. Not for nothing did Curzon in 1912 tell the Geographical Society, of which he was president, that

an absolute revolution has occurred, not merely in the manner and methods of teaching geography, but in the estimation in which it is held by public opinion. Nowadays we regard geographical knowledge as an essential part of knowledge in general. By the aid of geography, and in no other way, do we understand the action of great natural forces, the distribution of population, the growth of commerce, the expansion of frontiers, the development of States, the splendid achievements of human energy in its various manifestations.

We recognize geography as the handmaid of history. . . . Geography, too, is a sister science to economics and politics; and

to any of us who have attempted to study geography it is known that the moment you diverge from the geographical field you find yourself crossing the frontiers of geology, zoology, ethnology, chemistry, physics, and almost all the kindred sciences. Therefore we are justified in saying that geography is one of the first and foremost of the sciences: that it is part of the equipment that is necessary for a proper conception of citizenship, and is an indispensable adjunct to the production of a public man.¹⁵

Geography was essentially the material underpinning for knowledge about the Orient. All the latent and unchanging characteristics of the Orient stood upon, were rooted in, its geography. Thus on the one hand the geographical Orient nourished its inhabitants, guaranteed their characteristics, and defined their specificity; on the other hand, the geographical Orient solicited the West's attention, even as —by one of those paradoxes revealed so frequently by organized knowledge—East was East and West was West. The cosmopolitanism of geography was, in Curzon's mind, its universal importance to the whole of the West, whose relationship to the rest of the world was one of frank covetousness. Yet geographical appetite could also take on the moral neutrality of an epistemological impulse to find out, to settle upon, to uncover—as when in *Heart of Darkness* Marlow confesses to having a passion for maps.

I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there.¹⁶

Seventy years or so before Marlow said this, it did not trouble Lamartine that what on a map was a blank space was inhabited by natives; nor, theoretically, had there been any reservation in the mind of Emer de Vattel, the Swiss-Prussian authority on international law, when in 1758 he invited European states to take possession of territory inhabited only by mere wandering tribes.¹⁷ The important thing was to dignify simple conquest with an idea, to turn the appetite for more geographical space into a theory about the special relationship between geography on the one hand and civilized or uncivilized peoples on the other. But to these rationalizations there was also a distinctively French contribution.

By the end of the nineteenth century, political and intellectual circumstances coincided sufficiently in France to make geography, and geographical speculation (in both senses of that word), an attractive national pastime. The general climate of opinion in Europe was propitious; certainly the successes of British imperialism spoke loudly enough for themselves. However, Britain always seemed to France and to French thinkers on the subject to block even a relatively successful French imperial role in the Orient. Before the Franco-Prussian War there was a good deal of wishful political thinking about the Orient, and it was not confined to poets and novelists. Here, for instance, is Saint-Marc Girardin writing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on March 15, 1862:

La France a beaucoup à faire en Orient, parce que l'Orient attend beaucoup d'elle. Il lui demande même plus qu'elle ne peut faire; il lui remettrait volontiers le soin entier de son avenir, ce qui serait pour la France et pour l'Orient un grand danger: pour la France, parce que, disposée à prendre en mains la cause des populations souffrantes, elle se charge le plus souvent de plus d'obligations qu'elle n'en peut remplir; pour l'Orient, parce que tout peuple qui attend sa destinée de l'étranger n'a jamais qu'une condition précaire et qu'il n'y a de salut pour les nations que celui qu'elles se font elles-mêmes.¹⁸

Of such views as this Disraeli would doubtless have said, as he often did, that France had only "sentimental interests" in Syria (which is the "Orient" of which Girardin was writing). The fiction of "populations souffrantes" had of course been used by Napoleon when he appealed to the Egyptians on their behalf against the Turks and for Islam. During the thirties, forties, fifties, and sixties the suffering populations of the Orient were limited to the Christian minorities in Syria. And there was no record of "l'Orient" appealing to France for its salvation. It would have been altogether more truthful to say that Britain stood in France's way in the Orient, for even if France genuinely felt a sense of obligation to the Orient (and there were some Frenchmen who did), there was very little France could do to get between Britain and the huge land mass it commanded from India to the Mediterranean.

Among the most remarkable consequences of the War of 1870 in France were a tremendous efflorescence of geographical societies and a powerfully renewed demand for territorial acquisition. At the end of 1871 the Société de géographie de Paris declared itself

no longer confined to "scientific speculation." It urged the citizenry not to "forget that our former preponderance was contested from the day we ceased to compete . . . in the conquests of civilization over barbarism." Guillaume Depping, a leader of what has come to be called the geographical movement, asserted in 1881 that during the 1870 war "it was the schoolmaster who triumphed," meaning that the real triumphs were those of Prussian scientific geography over French strategic sloppiness. The government's *Journal officiel* sponsored issue after issue centered on the virtues (and profits) of geographical exploration and colonial adventure; a citizen could learn in one issue from de Lesseps of "the opportunities in Africa" and from Garnier of "the exploration of the Blue River." Scientific geography soon gave way to "commercial geography," as the connection between national pride in scientific and civilizational achievement and the fairly rudimentary profit motive was urged, to be channeled into support for colonial acquisition. In the words of one enthusiast, "The geographical societies are formed to break the fatal charm that holds us enchain'd to our shores." In aid of this liberating quest all sorts of schemes were spun out, including the enlisting of Jules Verne—whose "unbelievable success," as it was called, ostensibly displayed the scientific mind at a very high peak of ratiocination—to head "a round-the-world campaign of scientific exploration," and a plan for creating a vast new sea just south of the North African coast, as well as a project for "binding" Algeria to Senegal by railroad—"a ribbon of steel," as the projectors called it.¹⁹

Much of the expansionist fervor in France during the last third of the nineteenth century was generated out of an explicit wish to compensate for the Prussian victory in 1870–1871 and, no less important, the desire to match British imperial achievements. So powerful was the latter desire, and out of so long a tradition of Anglo-French rivalry in the Orient did it derive, that France seemed literally haunted by Britain, anxious in all things connected with the Orient to catch up with and emulate the British. When in the late 1870s, the Société académique indo-chinoise reformulated its goals, it found it important to "bring Indochina into the domain of Orientalism." Why? In order to turn Cochin China into a "French India." The absence of substantial colonial holdings was blamed by military men for that combination of military and commercial weakness in the war with Prussia, to say nothing of long-standing and pronounced colonial inferiority compared with Britain. The

"power of expansion of the Western races," argued a leading geographer, La Roncière Le Noury, "its superior causes, its elements, its influences on human destinies, will be a beautiful study for future historians." Yet only if the white races indulged their taste for voyaging—a mark of their intellectual supremacy—could colonial expansion occur.²⁰

From such theses as this came the commonly held view of the Orient as a geographical space to be cultivated, harvested, and guarded. The images of agricultural care for and those of frank sexual attention to the Orient proliferated accordingly. Here is a typical effusion by Gabriel Charmes, writing in 1880:

On that day when we shall be no longer in the Orient, and when other great European powers will be there, all will be at an end for our commerce in the Mediterranean, for our future in Asia, for the traffic of our southern ports. *One of the most fruitful sources of our national wealth will be dried up.* (Emphasis added)

Another thinker, Leroy-Beaulieu, elaborated this philosophy still further:

A society colonizes, when itself having reached a high degree of maturity and of strength, it procreates, it protects, it places in good conditions of development, and it brings to virility a new society to which it has given birth. Colonization is one of the most complex and delicate phenomena of social physiology.

This equation of self-reproduction with colonization led Leroy-Beaulieu to the somewhat sinister idea that whatever is lively in a modern society is "magnified by this pouring out of its exuberant activity on the outside." Therefore, he said,

Colonization is the expansive force of a people; it is its power of reproduction; *it is its enlargement and its multiplication through space;* it is the subjection of the universe or a vast part of it to that people's language, customs, ideas, and laws.²¹

The point here is that the space of weaker or underdeveloped regions like the Orient was viewed as something inviting French interest, penetration, insemination—in short, colonization. Geographical conceptions, literally and figuratively, did away with the discrete entities held in by borders and frontiers. No less than entrepreneurial visionaries like de Lesseps, whose plan was to liberate the Orient and the Occident from their geographical bonds,

French scholars, administrators, geographers, and commercial agents poured out their exuberant activity onto the fairly supine, feminine Orient. There were the geographical societies, whose number and membership outdid those of all Europe by a factor of two; there were such powerful organizations as the Comité de l'Asie française and the Comité d'Orient; there were the learned societies, chief among them the Société asiatique, with its organization and membership firmly embedded in the universities, the institutes, and the government. Each in its own way made French interests in the Orient more real, more substantial. Almost an entire century of what now seemed passive study of the Orient had had to end, as France faced up to its transnational responsibilities during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

In the only part of the Orient where British and French interests literally overlapped, the territory of the now hopelessly ill Ottoman Empire, the two antagonists managed their conflict with an almost perfect and characteristic consistency. Britain was in Egypt and Mesopotamia; through a series of quasi-fictional treaties with local (and powerless) chiefs it controlled the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Suez Canal, as well as most of the intervening land mass between the Mediterranean and India. France, on the other hand, seemed fated to hover over the Orient, descending once in a while to carry out schemes that repeated de Lesseps's success with the canal; for the most part these schemes were railroad projects, such as the one planned across more or less British territory, the Syrian-Mesopotamian line. In addition France saw itself as the protector of Christian minorities—Maronites, Chaldeans, Nestorians. Yet together, Britain and France were agreed in principle on the necessity, when the time came, for the partition of Asiatic Turkey. Both before and during World War I secret diplomacy was bent on carving up the Near Orient first into spheres of influence, then into mandated (or occupied) territories. In France, much of the expansionist sentiment formed during the heyday of the geographical movement focused itself on plans to partition Asiatic Turkey, so much so that in Paris in 1914 "a spectacular press campaign was launched" to this end.²² In England numerous committees were empowered to study and recommend policy on the best ways of dividing up the Orient. Out of such commissions as the Bunsen Committee would come the joint Anglo-French teams of which the most famous was the one headed by Mark Sykes and Georges Picot. Equitable division of geographical space was the

rule of these plans, which were deliberate attempts also at calming Anglo-French rivalry. For, as Sykes put it in a memorandum,

it was clear . . . that an Arab rising was sooner or later to take place, and that the French and ourselves ought to be on better terms if the rising was not to be a curse instead of a blessing. . . .²³

The animosities remained. And to them was added the irritant provided by the Wilsonian program for national self-determination, which, as Sykes himself was to note, seemed to invalidate the whole skeleton of colonial and partitionary schemes arrived at jointly between the Powers. It would be out of place here to discuss the entire labyrinthine and deeply controversial history of the Near Orient in the early twentieth century, as its fate was being decided between the Powers, the native dynasties, the various nationalist parties and movements, the Zionists. What matters more immediately is the peculiar epistemological framework through which the Orient was seen, and out of which the Powers acted. For despite their differences, the British and the French saw the Orient as a geographical—and cultural, political, demographical, sociological, and historical—entity over whose destiny they believed themselves to have traditional entitlement. The Orient to them was no sudden discovery, no mere historical accident, but an area to the east of Europe whose principal worth was uniformly defined in terms of Europe, more particularly in terms specifically claiming for Europe—European science, scholarship, understanding, and administration—the credit for having made the Orient what it was now. And this had been the achievement—inadvertent or not—is beside the point—of modern Orientalism.

There were two principal methods by which Orientalism delivered the Orient to the West in the early twentieth century. One was by means of the disseminative capacities of modern learning, its diffusive apparatus in the learned professions, the universities, the professional societies, the explorational and geographical organizations, the publishing industry. All these, as we have seen, built upon the prestigious authority of the pioneering scholars, travelers, and poets, whose cumulative vision had shaped a quintessential Orient; the doctrinal—or doxological—manifestation of such an Orient is what I have been calling here latent Orientalism. So far as anyone wishing to make a statement of any consequence about the Orient was concerned, latent Orientalism supplied him with an enunciative capacity that could be used, or rather mobilized, and turned into

sensible discourse for the concrete occasion at hand. Thus when Balfour spoke about the Oriental to the House of Commons in 1910, he must surely have had in mind those enunciative capacities in the current and acceptably rational language of his time, by which something called an "Oriental" could be named and talked about without danger of too much obscurity. But like all enunciative capacities and the discourses they enable, latent Orientalism was profoundly conservative—dedicated, that is, to its self-preservation. Transmitted from one generation to another, it was a part of the culture, as much a language about a part of reality as geometry or physics. Orientalism staked its existence, not upon its openness, its receptivity to the Orient, but rather on its internal, repetitious consistency about its constitutive will-to-power over the Orient. In such a way Orientalism was able to survive revolutions, world wars, and the literal dismemberment of empires.

The second method by which Orientalism delivered the Orient to the West was the result of an important convergence. For decades the Orientalists had spoken about the Orient, they had translated texts, they had explained civilizations, religions, dynasties, cultures, mentalities—as academic objects, screened off from Europe by virtue of their inimitable foreignness. The Orientalist was an expert, like Renan or Lane, whose job in society was to interpret the Orient for his compatriots. The relation between Orientalist and Orient was essentially hermeneutical: standing before a distant, barely intelligible civilization or cultural monument, the Orientalist scholar reduced the obscurity by translating, sympathetically portraying, inwardly grasping the hard-to-reach object. Yet the Orientalist remained outside the Orient, which, however much it was made to appear intelligible, remained beyond the Occident. This cultural, temporal, and geographical distance was expressed in metaphors of depth, secrecy, and sexual promise: phrases like "the veils of an Eastern bride" or "the inscrutable Orient" passed into the common language.

Yet the distance between Orient and Occident was, almost paradoxically, in the process of being reduced throughout the nineteenth century. As the commercial, political, and other existential encounters between East and West increased (in ways we have been discussing all along), a tension developed between the dogmas of latent Orientalism, with its support in studies of the "classical" Orient, and the descriptions of a present, modern, manifest Orient

articulated by travelers, pilgrims, statesmen, and the like. At some moment impossible to determine precisely, the tension caused a convergence of the two types of Orientalism. Probably—and this is only a speculation—the convergence occurred when Orientalists, beginning with Sacy, undertook to advise governments on what the modern Orient was all about. Here the role of the specially trained and equipped expert took on an added dimension: the Orientalist could be regarded as the special agent of Western power as it attempted policy vis-à-vis the Orient. Every learned (and not so learned) European traveler in the Orient felt himself to be a representative Westerner who had gotten beneath the films of obscurity. This is obviously true of Burton, Lane, Doughty, Flaubert, and the other major figures I have been discussing.

The discoveries of Westerners about the manifest and modern Orient acquired a pressing urgency as Western territorial acquisition in the Orient increased. Thus what the scholarly Orientalist defined as the "essential" Orient was sometimes contradicted, but in many cases was confirmed, when the Orient became an actual administrative obligation. Certainly Cromer's theories about the Oriental—theories acquired from the traditional Orientalist archive—were vindicated plentifully as he ruled millions of Orientals in actual fact. This was no less true of the French experience in Syria, North Africa, and elsewhere in the French colonies, such as they were. But at no time did the convergence between latent Orientalist doctrine and manifest Orientalist experience occur more dramatically than when, as a result of World War I, Asiatic Turkey was being surveyed by Britain and France for its dismemberment. There, laid out on an operating table for surgery, was the Sick Man of Europe, revealed in all his weakness, characteristics, and topographical outline.

The Orientalist, with his special knowledge, played an inestimably important part in this surgery. Already there had been intimations of his crucial role as a kind of secret agent *inside* the Orient when the British scholar Edward Henry Palmer was sent to the Sinai in 1882 to gauge anti-British sentiment and its possible enlistment on behalf of the Arabi revolt. Palmer was killed in the process, but he was only the most unsuccessful of the many who performed similar services for the Empire, now a serious and exacting business entrusted in part to the regional "expert." Not for nothing was another Orientalist, D. G. Hogarth, author of the

famous account of the exploration of Arabia aptly titled *The Penetration of Arabia* (1904),²⁴ made the head of the Arab Bureau in Cairo during World War I. And neither was it by accident that men and women like Gertrude Bell, T. E. Lawrence, and St. John Philby, Oriental experts all, posted to the Orient as agents of empire, friends of the Orient, formulators of policy alternatives because of their intimate and expert knowledge of the Orient and of Orientals. They formed a "band"—as Lawrence called it once—bound together by contradictory notions and personal similarities: great individuality, sympathy and intuitive identification with the Orient, a jealously preserved sense of personal mission in the Orient, cultivated eccentricity, a final disapproval of the Orient. For them all the Orient was their direct, peculiar experience of it. In them Orientalism and an effective praxis for handling the Orient received their final European form, before the Empire disappeared and passed its legacy to other candidates for the role of dominant power.

Such individualists as these were not academics. We shall soon see that they were the beneficiaries of the academic study of the Orient, without in any sense belonging to the official and professional company of Orientalist scholars. Their role, however, was not to scant academic Orientalism, nor to subvert it, but rather to make it effective. In their genealogy were people like Lane and Burton, as much for their encyclopedic autodidacticism as for the accurate, the quasi-scholarly knowledge of the Orient they had obviously deployed when dealing with or writing about Orientals. For the curricular study of the Orient they substituted a sort of elaboration of latent Orientalism, which was easily available to them in the imperial culture of their epoch. Their scholarly frame of reference, such as it was, was fashioned by people like William Muir, Anthony Bevan, D. S. Margoliouth, Charles Lyall, E. G. Browne, R. A. Nicholson, Guy Le Strange, E. D. Ross, and Thomas Arnold, who also followed directly in the line of descent from Lane. Their imaginative perspectives were provided principally by their illustrious contemporary Rudyard Kipling, who had sung so memorably of holding "dominion over palm and pine."

The difference between Britain and France in such matters was perfectly consistent with the history of each nation in the Orient: the British were there; the French lamented the loss of India and the intervening territories. By the end of the century, Syria had

become the main focus of French activity, but even there it was a matter of common consensus that the French could not match the British either in quality of personnel or in degree of political influence. The Anglo-French competition over the Ottoman spoils was felt even on the field of battle in the Hejaz, in Syria, in Mesopotamia—but in all these places, as astute men like Edmond Bremond noted, the French Orientalists and local experts were outclassed in brilliance and tactical maneuvering by their British counterparts.²⁵ Except for an occasional genius like Louis Massignon, there were no French Lawrences or Sykeses or Bells. But there were determined imperialists like Étienne Flandin and Franklin-Bouillon. Lecturing to the Paris Alliance française in 1913, the Comte de Cressaty, a vociferous imperialist, proclaimed Syria as France's own Orient, the site of French political, moral, and economic interests—interests, he added, that had to be defended during this "âge des envahissants impérialistes"; and yet Cressaty noted that even with French commercial and industrial firms in the Orient, with by far the largest number of native students enrolled in French schools, France was invariably being pushed around in the Orient, threatened not only by Britain but by Austria, Germany, and Russia. If France was to continue to prevent "le retour de l'Islam," it had better take hold of the Orient: this was an argument proposed by Cressaty and seconded by Senator Paul Doumer.²⁶ These views were repeated on numerous occasions, and indeed France did well by itself in North Africa and in Syria after World War I, but the special, concrete management of emerging Oriental populations and theoretically independent territories with which the British always credited themselves was something the French felt had eluded them. Ultimately, perhaps, the difference one always feels between modern British and modern French Orientalism is a stylistic one; the import of the generalizations about Orient and Orientals, the sense of distinction preserved between Orient and Occident, the desirability of Occidental dominance over the Orient—all these are the same in both traditions. For of the many elements making up what we customarily call "expertise," style, which is the result of specific worldly circumstances being molded by tradition, institutions, will, and intelligence into formal articulation, is one of the most manifest. It is to this determinant, to this perceptible and modernized refinement in early-twentieth-century Orientalism in Britain and France, that we must now turn.

II

Style, Expertise, Vision: *Orientalism's Worldliness*

As he appears in several poems, in novels like *Kim*, and in too many catchphrases to be an ironic fiction, Kipling's White Man, as an idea, a persona, a style of being, seems to have served many Britishers while they were abroad. The actual color of their skin set them off dramatically and reassuringly from the sea of natives, but for the Britisher who circulated amongst Indians, Africans, or Arabs there was also the certain knowledge that he belonged to, and could draw upon the empirical and spiritual reserves of, a long tradition of executive responsibility towards the colored races. It was of this tradition, its glories and difficulties, that Kipling wrote when he celebrated the "road" taken by White Men in the colonies:

Now, this is the road that the White Men tread
 When they go to clean a land—
 Iron underfoot and the vine overhead
 And the deep on either hand.
 We have trod that road—and a wet and windy road—
 Our chosen star for guide.
 Oh, well for the world when the White Men tread
 Their highway side by side!²⁷

"Cleaning a land" is best done by White Men in delicate concert with each other, an allusion to the present dangers of European rivalry in the colonies; for failing in the attempt to coordinate policy, Kipling's White Men are quite prepared to go to war: "Freedom for ourselves and freedom for our sons/And, failing freedom, War." Behind the White Man's mask of amiable leadership there is always the express willingness to use force, to kill and be killed. What dignifies his mission is some sense of intellectual dedication; he is a White Man, but not for mere profit, since his "chosen star" presumably sits far above earthly gain. Certainly many White Men often wondered what it was they fought for on that "wet and windy road," and certainly a great number of them must have been puzzled as to how the color of their skins gave them superior ontological status plus great power over much of the inhabited

world. Yet in the end, being a White Man, for Kipling and for those whose perceptions and rhetoric he influenced, was a self-confirming business. One became a White Man because one was a White Man; more important, "drinking that cup," living that unalterable destiny in "the White Man's day," left one little time for idle speculation on origins, causes, historical logic.

Being a White Man was therefore an idea and a reality. It involved a reasoned position towards both the white and the non-white worlds. It meant—in the colonies—speaking in a certain way, behaving according to a code of regulations, and even feeling certain things and not others. It meant specific judgments, evaluations, gestures. It was a form of authority before which nonwhites, and even whites themselves, were expected to bend. In the institutional forms it took (colonial governments, consular corps, commercial establishments) it was an agency for the expression, diffusion, and implementation of policy towards the world, and within this agency, although a certain personal latitude was allowed, the impersonal communal idea of being a White Man ruled. Being a White Man, in short, was a very concrete manner of being-in-the-world, a way of taking hold of reality, language, and thought. It made a specific style possible.

Kipling himself could not merely have happened; the same is true of his White Man. Such ideas and their authors emerge out of complex historical and cultural circumstances, at least two of which have much in common with the history of Orientalism in the nineteenth century. One of them is the culturally sanctioned habit of deploying large generalizations by which reality is divided into various collectives: languages, races, types, colors, mentalities, each category being not so much a neutral designation as an evaluative interpretation. Underlying these categories is the rigidly binomial opposition of "ours" and "theirs," with the former always encroaching upon the latter (even to the point of making "theirs" exclusively a function of "ours"). This opposition was reinforced not only by anthropology, linguistics, and history but also, of course, by the Darwinian theses on survival and natural selection, and—no less decisive—by the rhetoric of high cultural humanism. What gave writers like Renan and Arnold the right to generalities about race was the official character of their formed cultural literacy. "Our" values were (let us say) liberal, humane, correct; they were supported by the tradition of belles-lettres, informed scholarship, rational inquiry; as Europeans (and white men) "we" shared in

them every time their virtues were extolled. Nevertheless, the human partnerships formed by reiterated cultural values excluded as much as they included. For every idea about "our" art spoken for by Arnold, Ruskin, Mill, Newman, Carlyle, Renan, Gobineau, or Comte, another link in the chain binding "us" together was formed while another outsider was banished. Even if this is always the result of such rhetoric, wherever and whenever it occurs, we must remember that for nineteenth-century Europe an imposing edifice of learning and culture was built, so to speak, in the face of actual outsiders (the colonies, the poor, the delinquent), whose role in the culture was to give definition to what *they* were constitutionally unsuited for.²⁸

The other circumstance common to the creation of the White Man and Orientalism is the "field" commanded by each, as well as the sense that such a field entails peculiar modes, even rituals, of behavior, learning, and possession. Only an Occidental could speak of Orientals, for example, just as it was the White Man who could designate and name the coloreds, or nonwhites. Every statement made by Orientalists or White Men (who were usually interchangeable) conveyed a sense of the irreducible distance separating white from colored, or Occidental from Oriental; moreover, behind each statement there resonated the tradition of experience, learning, and education that kept the Oriental-colored to his position of *object studied by the Occidental-white*, instead of vice versa. Where one was in a position of power—as Cromer was, for example—the Oriental belonged to the system of rule whose principle was simply to make sure that no Oriental was ever allowed to be independent and rule himself. The premise there was that since the Orientals were ignorant of self-government, they had better be kept that way for their own good.

Since the White Man, like the Orientalist, lived very close to the line of tension keeping the coloreds at bay, he felt it incumbent on him readily to define and redefine the domain he surveyed. Passages of narrative description regularly alternate with passages of articulated definition and judgment that disrupt the narrative; this is a characteristic style of the writing produced by Oriental experts who operated using Kipling's White Man as a mask. Here is T. E. Lawrence, writing to V. W. Richards in 1918:

... the Arab appealed to my imagination. It is the old, old civilisation, which has refined itself clear of household gods, and

half the trappings which ours hastens to assume. The gospel of bareness in materials is a good one, and it involves apparently a sort of moral bareness too. They think for the moment, and endeavour to slip through life without turning corners or climbing hills. In part it is a mental and moral fatigue, a race trained out, and to avoid difficulties they have to jettison so much that we think honorable and grave: and yet without in any way sharing their point of view, I think I can understand it enough to look at myself and other foreigners from their direction, and without condemning it. I know I am a stranger to them, and always will be; but I cannot believe them worse, any more than I could change to their ways.²⁹

A similar perspective, however different the subject under discussion may seem to be, is found in these remarks by Gertrude Bell:

How many thousand years this state of things has lasted [namely, that Arabs live in "a state of war"], those who shall read the earliest records of the inner desert will tell us, for it goes back to the first of them, but in all the centuries the Arab has bought no wisdom from experience. He is never safe, and yet he behaves as though security were his daily bread.³⁰

To which, as a gloss, we should add her further observation, this time about life in Damascus:

I begin to see dimly what the civilisation of a great Eastern city means, how they live, what they think; and I have got on to terms with them. I believe the fact of my being English is a great help. . . . We have gone up in the world since five years ago. The difference is very marked. I think it is due to the success of our government in Egypt to a great extent. . . . The defeat of Russia stands for a great deal, and my impression is that the vigorous policy of Lord Curzon in the Persian Gulf and on the India frontier stands for a great deal more. No one who does not know the East can realise how it all hangs together. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that if the English mission had been turned back from the gates of Kabul, the English tourist would be frowned upon in the streets of Damascus.³¹

In such statements as these, we note immediately that "the Arab" or "Arabs" have an aura of apartness, definiteness, and collective self-consistency such as to wipe out any traces of individual Arabs with narratable life histories. What appealed to Lawrence's imagination was the clarity of the Arab, both as an image and as a supposed philosophy (or attitude) towards life: in both cases what

Lawrence fastens on is the Arab as if seen from the cleansing perspective of one not an Arab, and one for whom such un-self-conscious primitive simplicity as the Arab possesses is something defined by the observer, in this case the White Man. Yet Arab refinement, which in its essentials corresponds to Yeats's visions of Byzantium where

Flames that no faggot feeds, flint nor steel has lit,
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
Where blood-begotten spirits come
And all complexities of fury leave³²

is associated with Arab perdurability, as if the Arab had not been subject to the ordinary processes of history. Paradoxically, the Arab seems to Lawrence to have exhausted himself in his very temporal persistence. The enormous age of Arab civilization has thus served to refine the Arab down to his quintessential attributes, and to tire him out morally in the process. What we are left with is Bell's Arab: centuries of experience and no wisdom. As a collective entity, then, the Arab accumulates no existential or even semantical thickness. He remains the same, except for the exhausting refinements mentioned by Lawrence, from one end to the other of "the records of the inner desert." We are to assume that if *an* Arab feels joy, if he is sad at the death of his child or parent, if he has a sense of the injustices of political tyranny, then those experiences are necessarily subordinate to the sheer, unadorned, and persistent fact of being an Arab.

The primitiveness of such a state exists simultaneously on at least two levels: one, *in the definition*, which is reductive; and two (according to Lawrence and Bell), *in reality*. This absolute coincidence was itself no simple coincidence. For one, it could only have been made from the outside by virtue of a vocabulary and epistemological instruments designed both to get to the heart of things and to avoid the distractions of accident, circumstance, or experience. For another, the coincidence was a fact uniquely the result of method, tradition, and politics all working together. Each in a sense obliterated the distinctions between the type—*the Oriental*, *the Semite*, *the Arab*, *the Orient*—and ordinary human reality, Yeats's "uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor," in which all human beings live. The scholarly investigator took a type marked "Oriental" for the same thing as any individual Oriental he might encounter. Years of tradition had encrusted discourse about such

matters as the Semitic or Oriental spirit with some legitimacy. And political good sense taught, in Bell's marvelous phrase, that in the East "it all hangs together." Primitiveness therefore inhered in the Orient, *was* the Orient, an idea to which anyone dealing with or writing about the Orient had to return, as if to a touchstone outlasting time or experience.

There is an excellent way of understanding all this as it applied to the white agents, experts, and advisers for the Orient. What mattered to Lawrence and Bell was that their references to Arabs or Orientals belonged to a recognizable, and authoritative, convention of formulation, one that was able to subordinate detail to it. But from where, more particularly, did "the Arab," "the Semite," or "the Oriental" come?

We have remarked how, during the nineteenth century in such writers as Renan, Lane, Flaubert, Caussin de Perceval, Marx, and Lamartine, a generalization about "the Orient" drew its power from the presumed representativeness of everything Oriental; each particle of the Orient told of its Orientalness, so much so that the attribute of being Oriental overrode any countervailing instance. An Oriental man was first an Oriental and only second a man. Such radical typing was naturally reinforced by sciences (or discourses, as I prefer to call them) that took a backward and downward direction towards the species category, which was supposed also to be an ontogenetic explanation for every member of the species. Thus within broad, semipopular designations such as "Oriental" there were some more scientifically valid distinctions being made; most of these were based principally on language types—e.g., Semitic, Dravidic, Hamitic—but they were quickly able to acquire anthropological, psychological, biological, and cultural evidence in their support. Renan's "Semitic," as an instance, was a linguistic generalization which in Renan's hands could add to itself all sorts of parallel ideas from anatomy, history, anthropology, and even geology. "Semitic" could then be employed not only as a simple description or designation; it could be applied to any complex of historical and political events in order to pare them down to a nucleus both antecedent to and inherent in them. "Semitic," therefore, was a transtemporal, transindividual category, purporting to predict every discrete act of "Semitic" behavior on the basis of some pre-existing "Semitic" essence, and aiming as well to interpret all aspects of human life and activity in terms of some common "Semitic" element.

The peculiar hold on late-nineteenth-century liberal European culture of such relatively punitive ideas will seem mysterious unless it is remembered that the appeal of sciences like linguistics, anthropology, and biology was that they were empirical, and by no means speculative or idealistic. Renan's Semitic, like Bopp's Indo-European, was a constructed object, it is true, but it was considered logical and inevitable as a protoform, given the scientifically apprehendable and empirically analyzable data of specific Semitic languages. Thus, in trying to formulate a prototypical and primitive linguistic type (as well as a cultural, psychological, and historical one), there was also an "attempt to define a primary human potential,"³³ out of which completely specific instances of behavior uniformly derived. Now this attempt would have been impossible had it not also been believed—in classical empiricist terms—that mind and body were interdependent realities, both determined originally by a given set of geographical, biological, and quasi-historical conditions.³⁴ From this set, which was not available to the native for discovery or introspection, there was no subsequent escape. The antiquarian bias of Orientalists was supported by these empiricist ideas. In all their studies of "classical" Islam, Buddhism, or Zoroastrianism they felt themselves, as George Eliot's Dr. Casaubon confesses, to be acting "like the ghost of an ancient, wandering about the world and trying mentally to construct it as it used to be, in spite of ruin and confusing changes."³⁵

Were these theses about linguistic, civilizational, and finally racial characteristics merely one side of an academic debate amongst European scientists and scholars, we might dismiss them as furnishing material for an unimportant closet drama. The point is, however, that both the terms of the debate and the debate itself had very wide circulation; in late-nineteenth-century culture, as Lionel Trilling has said, "racial theory, stimulated by a rising nationalism and a spreading imperialism, supported by an incomplete and mal-assimilated science, was almost undisputed."³⁶ Race theory, ideas about primitive origins and primitive classifications, modern decadence, the progress of civilization, the destiny of the white (or Aryan) races, the need for colonial territories—all these were elements in the peculiar amalgam of science, politics, and culture whose drift, almost without exception, was always to raise Europe or a European race to dominion over non-European portions of mankind. There was general agreement too that, according to a strangely transformed variety of Darwinism sanctioned by Darwin

himself, the modern Orientals were degraded remnants of a former greatness; the ancient, or "classical," civilizations of the Orient were perceptible through the disorders of present decadence, but only (a) because a white specialist with highly refined scientific techniques could do the sifting and reconstructing, and (b) because a vocabulary of sweeping generalities (the Semites, the Aryans, the Orientals) referred not to a set of fictions but rather to a whole array of seemingly objective and agreed-upon distinctions. Thus a remark about what Orientals were and were not capable of was supported by biological "truths" such as those spelled out in P. Charles Michel's "A Biological View of Our Foreign Policy" (1896), in Thomas Henry Huxley's *The Struggle for Existence in Human Society* (1888), Benjamin Kidd's *Social Evolution* (1894), John B. Crozier's *History of Intellectual Development on the Lines of Modern Evolution* (1897–1901), and Charles Harvey's *The Biology of British Politics* (1904).³⁷ It was assumed that if languages were as distinct from each other as the linguists said they were, then too the language users—their minds, cultures, potentials, and even their bodies—were different in similar ways. And these distinctions had the force of ontological, empirical truth behind them, together with the convincing demonstration of such truth in studies of origins, development, character, and destiny.

The point to be emphasized is that this truth about the distinctive differences between races, civilizations, and languages was (or pretended to be) radical and ineradicable. It went to the bottom of things, it asserted that there was no escape from origins and the types these origins enabled; it set the real boundaries between human beings, on which races, nations, and civilizations were constructed; it forced vision away from common, as well as plural, human realities like joy, suffering, political organization, forcing attention instead in the downward and backward direction of immutable origins. A scientist could no more escape such origins in his research than an Oriental could escape "the Semites" or "the Arabs" or "the Indians" from which his present reality—debased, colonized, backward—excluded him, except for the white researcher's didactic presentation.

The profession of specialized research conferred unique privileges. We recall that Lane could appear to be an Oriental and yet retain his scholarly detachment. The Orientals he studied became in fact *his* Orientals, for he saw them not only as actual people but as monumentalized objects in his account of them. This double per-