

## WHAT IS CALLED « ORIENTALISM » ?

### *Qu'appelle-t-on « Orientalisme »?*

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**Abstract:** This paper undertakes a comparative and complimentary reading of Edward Said's analysis of Orientalism and the philosophical problem of orientation in Kant, especially Kant's discussion of this in "What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?". Although Said has been seen by some critics as a thinker of radical alterity, this paper will contest this claim and show that he is best thought of as defending auto-determination and self-positing. Furthermore, it analyzes the important defense of knowledge that accompanies Said's critique of oriental sciences. This leads Said to propose an alternate logic of relation as opposed to the logic of representation that structures Orientalism, in this manner shifting the issue of knowledge to what he calls "acknowledgement". Therefore, Said opens up the concept of Orientalism to a transcendental philosophical questioning whose interests would exceed mere positivist critique. This latter tendency has led to a restrained reception of Said's work whereby his analyses have been studied for their empirical interest focusing on his objections to orientalist practices. This paper argues that such a reading, apart from being reductive, mischaracterizes the project undertaken by Said. The objective is not only to read Said's thought through its relation to Kantianism but also to reflect Said's understanding of Orientalism onto Kant and therefore to transform the philosophical reception of the concept of orientation in general. In this way, beyond a simple application of philosophy to issues in relation to the "global south", Said is presented as one of the great figures of the Internationalization of philosophy.

**Keywords:** Edward Said; Orientalism; Immanuel Kant; knowledge; humanism.

**Résumé:** Cet article propose une lecture comparative et complémentaire de l'analyse de l'orientalisme d'Edward Said et du problème philosophique de l'orientation chez Kant, en particulier la discussion de Kant sur le sujet dans « Que signifie s'orienter dans la pensée »? Bien que Said ait été considéré par certains critiques comme un penseur de l'altérité radicale, cet article montrera qu'il est mieux perçu comme un défenseur de l'autodétermination. En outre, cet article analyse sa manière de défendre la connaissance tout en critiquant des sciences orientales. Cela conduit Said à proposer une logique de la relation à l'encontre de la logique de représentation qui structure l'orientalisme, en déplaçant la question de la connaissance (« knowledge ») vers ce qu'il appelle la reconnaissance (« acknowledgement »).

Said ouvre ainsi le concept d'orientalisme à un questionnement philosophique transcendantal dont les intérêts dépassent la simple critique positiviste. Cette dernière propension a conduit à une réception restreinte du travail de Said, d'après laquelle ses analyses ont été étudiées pour leurs intérêts empiriques en se concentrant sur ses objections aux pratiques orientalistes. Cet article soutient qu'une telle lecture, outre qu'elle est réductrice, caractérise mal le projet entrepris par Said. Notre objectif n'est pas seulement de lire la pensée de Said à travers sa relation au kantisme, mais aussi de refléter la compréhension de l'orientalisme de Said sur Kant et donc de transformer la réception philosophique du concept d'orientation en général. Ainsi, au-delà d'une simple application de la philosophie aux questions liées au « sud global », Said est présenté comme l'une des grandes figures de l'Internationalisation de la philosophie.

**Mots clés:** Edward Said; orientalisme; Emmanuel Kant; connaissance; humanisme.

Mais on commença par faire des livres,  
et puis on consulta l'orfèvre

-- Fontanelle, *Histoire des Oracles*

## INTRODUCTION

If the need for orientation is not treated within the purview of a regional science but as a *transcendental* question, would it not, therefore, lead to the conclusion that reason itself – Reason as such -- is oriented? At the heart of this question-hypothesis lies the terrifying grin of the Orientalist ready to wash his hands of history. Yet, the reactionary uses of “common sense” and “immediate affection” in theorizing embodied imagination against the cunning of “Descartes” are merely defensive and rear-guard actions that content themselves with visions of the spirit-seer and the exultations of speculation; ultimately, they conserve what they deny. They satisfy themselves with demonstrating again and again that the speculative use of reason must be oriented towards the Other, i.e. the Other of Science. Yet, like some less talented Conrad, and with less forthrightness, they repeat that there is only ever Orientalism; paradoxically and fatalistically there is either “Orientalism”, or “Orientalism”. Against the Science of the Other, i.e. Orientalism, they oppose the Other’s Science, the Other of Science, another way of saying the same, the Science of the Other, another way of saying “Orientalism”.

On the other hand, a critique of Oriental Reason might then work, as did Edward Said, in two directions: either, affirming that pure concepts cannot be derived from empirical sensibility, or, by analyzing the concept of the understanding ("the Arab", "the Oriental"), and by means of fine distinctions confronting the purity of the concept to its genesis in the denial of its empiricism and historical actuality, showing the concept to have been a prejudice foreclosing transcendentalty. In both cases it is a critique of the drive, it is reason's defense against equivocation, what Kant called the function of purifying reason of its contradictions and defending it against its *own* sophistry, in other words: against the empiricist drive for intuition of the suprasensible, for a determination of orientation, for "Orientalism".

The self-actualisation of philosophy, if philosophy is to be actual and to be actualized, i.e. if it is to determine the *hic et nunc*, cannot be without the "Global South", and it must do so for its being-philosophical, which is to say if it is not to be a regional science. There will be philosophy when and only when it is, in a precise Marxist sense, International. However, to cease to be provincial, philosophy will have to free itself from its regional-scientific applications and practices so charmingly named "theory" but, in fact, variations on the theme of the imperial science called empiricism; philosophy will have to become, once again, philosophical. Edward Said's work is an exemplary event in this internationalization and despite, or rather because of, its "spontaneous"<sup>i</sup> defense of the scientific character an exemplary instance of a man's faith in knowledge. Alongside the caricatures and abuses to which it is often subject, there has been an adamant tendency to correct Said's *Orientalism* on positivist grounds in order to avoid reading him. The work is treated as an empirical study of the history of a particular scientific discipline. Although there is a didacticism in the way Said constructs his archive, the critical impetus to prove the ether, something that Said calls a "style" is underplayed ("Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'." (Said, 2003, p. 2)), his defense of Reason against obscurantism is ignored. In contradiction to critics of Said who see him as thinker *against* knowledge and in favour of "radical alterity", who see him as too much of a "humanist" or not enough of one<sup>ii</sup>, or those like Spivak who reprimand him for failing to see the importance of religious agency<sup>iii</sup>, if today, Edward Said's work remains undeniable it is because he invites us to transform this fatality called Orientalism. A *status quo* to which many Orientals cede unreflectively: the paradox or the paranoia of the Science of the Other. Said's work is a reflection in which the language of a categorical

that he calls “humanism” is mirrored in opposition to the war of Man against Man, the andro-machia, produced by the language of “Oriental humanism”. At the same time, Said’s “humanism” is further from anthropologism than the work of many contemporaries; to begin with, it is avowedly idealist: “By humanism I mean first of all attempting to dissolve Blake’s mind-forg’d manacles so as to be able to use one’s mind historically and rationally for the purposes of reflective understanding and genuine disclosure.”(Said, 1978, p. xvii). On the other hand, the critique of Oriental reason, as we have indicated, proceeds by introducing the empirical into a prejudicial concept (introduces it as already being there); thus, it shows the concept in its contamination and, more so, *denial* of the historical actuality. This critique is accompanied by the affirmation of a “logic” of the auto-determination of the intellectual whose only norms are “freedom and knowledge” (“And what better norm for the scholar than human freedom and knowledge?” (Said, 2003, p. 327)). The ideal humanist norms are then realized in the *practice* of the humanities (“humanism as a useable praxis for intellectuals” (Said, 2004, p. 6)), in the practical knowledge that is “secular criticism”. It is this oscillation between humanism and humanities, this agrammatical effort at pluralizing humanism into the humanities (a humanism that belongs to everyone, a humanism that is not simply the project of conserving western culture at the cost of barbarizing all that is oriental) whilst conserving the humanities as humanism (whilst refusing to cede criticism to the empirical determination) that is heartbeat of Said’s thought. The word “secular”, in this context, is tied to the world and is opposed to the reproductive criticism which takes humanism and the humanities as the private property of a particular “breed” of the human. It is Said’s attempt to move away from a pure textualist exercise, a criticism focusing on filiations and affiliations between texts, in favour of a criticism posting the text in its concern for the world and in its concern *in* the world. Its being in the world as a concern. And if the moniker “situated knowledge” is applicable in this instance, it should not be admitted in a dogmatic manner for that would have been abhorrent to one of Said’s disposition.

Criticism in short is always situated; it is skeptical, secular, reflectively open to its own failings. This is by no means to say that it is value-free. Quite the contrary, for the inevitable trajectory of critical consciousness is to arrive at some acute sense of what political, social and human values are entailed in the reading, production, and transmission of every text. (Said, 1983, p. 26).

One must be willing to discern the tonality of Said’s dream of a new *humanities* and to recognize in what manner it is related to his new humanism. In so far as Said

wished to return criticism to its concern for the world, he did not wish for humanism to cede to the empirical sciences as the ground of humanistic knowledge. That is not to say that the empirical has no place in Said. Quite the contrary, Said's work aims at giving the empirical its justified place, without submitting to the idea that one can simply replace the humanities with the utility of social sciences, as many are wont to do, simply transposing a literary or artistic work as a product of a fundamental sociological or political reality and determined by that reality.

I have always wondered how and in what ways humanism, normally thought of as a fairly restricted field of endeavor, relates to other dimensions of intellectual undertaking *without becoming* something like sociology or political science[.] (Said, 2004, p. vii; our emphasis).

By determining the cultural practice through a sociological or political fact, such an exercise would not be able to account for the independence that is the very possibility of practice. It would treat all practice as empirically determined and hence deny the very freedom of its own practice, in virtue of which it would annul itself in its own legitimacy. The dogmatism of pure empiricism, in its seeming radicality, merely returns to the deprivation of all meaningful liberty, positing all necessity in a transcendent cause without pushing the problem of causes to its antinomical consequences. A thoroughgoing empiricism is therefore fully at ease with a certain desire for theocracy: it aims to establish order through the transcending authority of the "social" or the "political"; all acts are hitherto grounded and saturated in this authority. Few have recognized this problem better than Said:

To say, with the young Georg Lukacs, that we live in a fragmented world abandoned by God, but not by his many noisy acolytes, is to risk an understatement.

Therefore, against those who can only caricaturize Said's work, we can do little more than underline his courage and his forthrightness of thought. We can only mirror in our own way Said's reflections and reflect ourselves in him, ad-miring him. In this paper, we propose thus that Edward Said not only grants philosophy the chance to pose the classical problem of orientation as inseparably one of Orientalism, what philosophy must hear in his writing and what it must learn to reproduce is the sound of courage -- *for only then can we belong to philosophy, for philosophy already belongs to us, it has been there with Edward Said.*

### 1.0. « Andromaque, je pense à vous »

According to Kant, “discipline” is science charged with posing limits to our knowledge, a “discourse” is charged with extending it. Orientalism is a science in both senses of the term. Its effectivity is the production of difference *as* phenomenon, i.e. objectivizing “the line separating Occident from Orient” (Said, 1985, p. 2). This line is precisely *supra-sensible* for it does not exist in nature in so far as it is not an object of sensible intuition but, on the other hand, without this line there can be no orientation. The line allows for a representation differentiating – and representing difference -- between Subject and Object as two beings really distinct and segregated, as if, Said says evocatively, they were two breeds (Said, 2003, p. 349).

If the line between the Subject and Object is seen as real difference, then the relation between the two can only be war and the term “science” in this scenario is equivocation. Against the imperialist stance of reducing all difference to empirical difference, Said’s gesture is to pose another type of difference, a surplus of difference: there are not only empirical differences but also a difference *between* a logic that relates to difference and one which represents difference. Instead of supposing that the *condition* of knowledge is the opposition between Occident and Orient, Said reads this condition (not as an unchangeable state of world-history but) as the possibility of its determination. The Orient and the Occident are not two identities but two moments of the same *logic* and the difference lies between these two manners of structuring difference. There are two ways of determining orientation in general.

Knowledge requires empirical difference but *the relation* between knower-known/subject-object cannot be another empirical difference as it is the relation that conditions empirical differences. To this Said adds the question of production: how can empirical differences be made (knowledge produced)? How can they be made in an inscribed political context where there are strategies of power? The book *Orientalism* is primarily critical and not constructive but it presumes the division of two structures of difference: a logic of representation and a logic of relations. It is in his literary-critical work that Said tries to synthesize this second logic. In this essay we are primarily interested in the destructive task of *Orientalism*. This is done by introducing a third vector to the representational rapport between Occident and Orient. According to Said, this third vector of the scientific relation is impossible to dismiss but is also the very ground of all

denial – this is the *historical actuality*. It is this concept that allows Said to critique the pretensions of Oriental Science and reduce the prejudicial concepts that are claiming transcendentalism. He recognizes that Orientalism has to be supplemented by the oxymoronic concept of *historical actuality* in order to deconstruct it. This is a major transformation of the French heritage and if followed opens the future of philosophical thought beyond the great French epoch. This is not to say that knowledge is not produced in a representational relation; the actuality of its production is not in question. However, the will to knowledge is will to domination in so far as the transcendental relation is itself made empirical and a *phenomenon of difference* is exposed between orienting-oriented, the multiple forces of orientation in general, segregating them into two beings Occident and Orient. Therefore, what is produced is an empirical orientation, precisely: the notion of an empirical orientation of time and space.

## 2.0. Of Reflection: “For all eyes but these eyes”

In “Orientalism Reconsidered” Said proposes an analogy between a “region” (we leave intact multiple meanings of this term and its role in ontology) and a literary text. A “region”, the Middle-East for example, can be said to be in flux. The historical turbulence cutting through the region renders all definition of the region by a pure act of will or by a sovereign understanding, impossible. There is no “Archimedean point” outside the flux. Furthermore, the observer is caught in the flux of the “region”, he cannot be untouched by the turbulence even if he were outside it (geographically), for example, in some twilight zone “Occident”. Yet following this Said will insist on a paradoxical independence of the region: like a literary text which is constantly a tissue of its interpretations and struggles for its recognition, a region too has an independent existence. However, Said does not project a noumenal textuality in a *topos ouranos* beyond its interpretations. From this multiplicity he draws out an identity which is not the identity of a ground *underlying* the interpretations in a substantial hypostasis. Rather it is an identity *of* the multiplicity itself; multiplicity turning itself into its own identity. Each age re-interprets Shakespeare not because Shakespeare changes, but because there is no fixed object “Shakespeare” and yet it is understood that it remains identical in this difference and as it. On the other hand, the same is not allowed for the “Arabs” and “Islam”. The terms “Arabs” and “Islam” belong to a situation of “open warfare” whereby each attempt at *designation* represents a special interest. The terms are caught up in what is only

nominally an anthropology but is properly speaking an andro-machy over the fate of the “human” and the ends and rights of Man in World-History; they cannot be purified of these polemical mediations that “screen the object” (Said, 1985, p. 4). Politics of the *actual historical*<sup>iv</sup> mediates the science of Orientalism in a manner that does not allow the empirical to be separated from the object of understanding in order to arrive at a pure concept; in other words, Orientalism can function as a science in so far as it *denies* the actuality that resists transcendentalization<sup>v</sup>. Let it be noted that our reading is being accompanied by an underlying debt to Kant’s “Appendix on the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection”<sup>vi</sup> which Said’s work reflects, mirrors, distorts. In keeping with this, our response to Said can be classed as an *ad-miration* of his *reflection*. Reflection is one of his preferred ideas; as it were, it is Said’s word<sup>vii</sup>.

Orientalism’s pretensions, identified as such directly or indirectly, are simultaneously empirical as well as transcendental and it is so without critical reflection and therefore insistently confusing the two sources. As we have seen Oriental science denies *historical actuality* and draws a line between Orient and Occident, i.e. between Oriental Man and Occidental Man (and it does so in the name of Man, i.e. in the name of “humanism”<sup>viii</sup>). There are two aspects in which Orientalism is a Science. It is firstly a literary science which functions through a limited suspension of designation (in this sense the concept of irony is inherently activated in the literary text). Secondly, it is a social/moral science. But speculatively Orientalism is also a meta-science in so far as it is making a claim about origins and the origins of science as such: it is determining *the scientific* as such. Therefore, it is at this “second level” that it is making transcendental claims, passing from epistemological propositions to ontological propositions. Furthermore, it is *designating* the ontological propositions as empirically present. This force of designation is a manifestation of interest. And in a turn of phrase that is exceedingly courageous, Edward Said mirrors the criticisms of his work, he *reflects*, the names one would wish to give to his “prelude”; and in an effect of reverse hypostasis the accusers *become* their critiques, they are made to take responsibility for it:

Some attack Orientalism [the book] as a prelude to assertions about the virtues of one or another native culture: these are the nativists. Others criticise Orientalism as a defence against attacks on one or another political creed: these are the nationalists. Still others criticise Orientalism for falsifying the nature of Islam: these are, grosso modo, the believers.

No matter the abuse, the objective force of his courage will remain undeniable. And then Said adds:



I will not adjudicate between these claims, except to say that I have avoided taking stands on such matters as the real, true or authentic Islamic or Arab world. But, in common with all the recent critics of Orientalism, I think that two things are especially important one, a methodological vigilance that construes Orientalism *less as a positive than as a critical discipline* and therefore makes it subject to *intense scrutiny*, [our emphasis]

It is here that Said is drawing his critique of Oriental Reason away from merely positivist critique. Therefore, having read this impetus in his work it would be shallow to interpret requirement of "intense scrutiny" by means of another turn of positivism; the qualification of "intense" to be taken seriously. Continuing the previous citation:

and two, a determination not to allow the segregation and confinement of the Orient to go on without challenge. My understanding of this second point has led me entirely *to refuse designations like 'Orient' and 'Occident'*<sup>ix</sup> (Said, 1985, p. 5).

The problem of designation is on the side of the Orientalists and the neo-Orientalists calling Said's work a "prelude" to reactionism. Said's critique is interested in the transcendental relation between the *a priori* and the empirical; his methodology requires the suspension of designation whereas on the part of the Orientalists the concept is re-designated as empirically present as the Oriental and transcendently present as the being of the Oriental: empirically and transcendently *in* the Oriental (the pre-positional ambiguity of this "in" being determinant). The pure general logic of Oriental *literature* is *a priori* (it is not determined by empirical psychology) and presents a limited suspension of designation whereas the applied logic of Oriental *science* implies rules of logic *in concreto*, in a context for example, and, therefore, it is a representation of the understanding of the rules under contingent conditions of the empirical ego. And yet, as the humanist critic knows, both pure logic (literature) as well as applied logic (science) are limited by empirical and psychological principles<sup>x</sup>. Orientalism is only possible as a science by means of a denial of these differences and by the sophistry that refuses the distinctions between pure and empirical intuitions, pure and applied logic, and ultimately by means of determining designation in terms of interest, a designation which is structurally a denial. It is not negation but denegative production.

### 3.0. Of Solitude and Science

“Self-conscious critique” or “humanist critique”, as Said would put it, requires a methodological division. On one level there is the reductive act<sup>xi</sup> and on another level, a reconsidered level, it is a creative act: namely, “the creation of objects for a new kind of knowledge” (Said, 1985, p. 3). To avoid misunderstanding, three responses are provided by Said as to how this should be interpreted:

- a) The critique of Oriental science does not posit an alternative “Rationality”; it is not, as many of its critics hold, an anti-Enlightenment project questionably questioning the very nature of Reason by means of Reason. Orientalism does not propose a Lysenkoism<sup>xii</sup>.
- b) In terms of *pure logical form* one might say that Self is constituted by the Other. Logically it might be deduced that Self-representation passes constitutively through the Other and, therefore, this Other re-presents the essential truth of the Self. This logic being pure form, bourgeois formal right as Marx would say, it might be *logically applied* to an indeterminate content, including the Oriental – hence the claim that the Oriental is represented, indeed he must be, by his Other: by the Occident. It is not uncommon to find those who insist upon the first claim and ignore the second; they are imposing an inconsistency that helps no one. Said was more precocious. He understood that formal bourgeois logic could be reflected against the Orient. “Here, of course, is the most familiar of Orientalism’s themes they cannot represent themselves, they must therefore be represented by others who know more about Islam than Islam knows about itself”, Said refuses this. The Other is not *essentially constitutive* in Said. “Now, it is often the case that you can be known by others in different ways than you know yourself, and that valuable insights might be generated accordingly. But that is quite a different thing than pronouncing it as immutable law that outsiders *ipso facto* have a better sense of you as an insider than you do of yourself.” (Said, 1985, p. 7). His ideal is not relation *to* or relation *with* the Other but freedom and knowledge: it is only through this freedom that a relation with the Other as Other can be established. Hence his prescient rejection of the Oslo accords. More than anyone else, Said is a thinker of auto-determination: of Practical Self-Positing<sup>xiii</sup>.

- c) It is not enough to respond to the critique of Orientalism by means of a politics of representation, or that it would be wrong to believe that against the image of the "Arab" it suffices to provide images that break stereotypes and abandon clichés. Worse still it would be egregious to replace politics with public relations as is becoming the norm today and as Said had noted in his time. "[M]any of these disadvantaged post-colonial states and their loyalist intellectuals have, in my opinion, drawn the wrong conclusions, which are that one must either attempt to impose control upon the production of knowledge at the source, or, in the worldwide media market, attempt to improve, enhance, ameliorate the images currently in circulation without doing anything to change the political situation from which they emanate and by which they are sustained." (Said, 1985, p. 10).

Negatively then, these are the interpretations to avoid. But then what is the positive manner in which the self-conscious transcendental logic is thought? It is thought, firstly, at the level of its discursive possibility: historicism<sup>xiv</sup>. Orientalism *as well as its critique* are both possible because of the epistemological condition of historicism<sup>xv</sup>. In this sense "Oriental science" is a secular science of World-History because it is the retreat of Providence – the relation between historicism and secularism is essential. On the other hand, Said would say that Marxism too, as a critique of Orientalism, is also based on the same epistemological condition. In other words, the archive of Orientalism is the same as the archive of anti-Orientalist discourse of World-History – it is the archive of the "people without a history". Said would say that anti-imperialist world-history has focused on economic and political practices paying little attention to Orientalist ethnography which "in genealogical fact fathered world history itself" (Said, 1985, p. 11). In lieu of this, Said's work is an epistemological critique in a more radical sense: it is not historicist so much as it is hyper-historicist – the archive of the "people without a history" is the very possibility of historicism, imperialist and anti-imperialist, it is very condition of the becoming of the world in its actuality: historical actuality. The possibility of historicism is not an empirical condition it is, according to Said, the *a priori* that is *a priori* related to Oriental Science. Critically determined in this manner one is confronted then by a radical difficulty. If historicism, secularization through history, is both the condition of Orientalism and all hitherto existing anti-Orientalisms, how is a Practical Self-Positing of the Oriental possible? Can the subaltern speak? The hyperbolic excess of historicism is

the pretention to produce the transcendental concept: in so doing it hypostasizes epistemological difference as ontology, transforming empirical difference into phenomenal transcendental difference (we have discussed this above). Historicism is in many ways the being of modern science – the *a priori* possibility of our *actuality*.

The curious result is that the theories of accumulation on a world scale, or the capitalist world system, or lineages of absolutism (a) depend on the same percipient and historicist observer who had been an Orientalist or colonial traveler three generations ago; (b) they depend also on a homogenising and incorporating world historical scheme that assimilated non-synchronous developments, histories, cultures and peoples to it; and (c) they block and suppress latent epistemological critiques of the institutional, cultural and disciplinary instruments linking the incorporative practice of world history with, on one hand, partial knowledges like Orientalism, and on the other, with continued 'western' hegemony of the non-European, 'peripheral' world (Said, 1985, p. 11).

A transcendental doctrine of Science, in Said's sense, must break this hyperbolic Unity. He proposes therefore critique as means of division: "process of breaking up, *dissolving and methodologically as well as critically* re-conceiving the unitary field ruled hitherto by Orientalism, historicism and what could be called essentialist universalism" [my emphasis]. Against the division that divides Man into the ando-machy of segregating peoples and cultures into opposing "breeds and essences" (Said, 2003, p. 349) he proposes a surplus of division – a proliferation of the sciences by a process of transcendental differentiation which is "neither purely methodological nor purely reactive in intent" (Said 1985, 12), "*Andromaque, je pense à vous*". Yet, Said's prudence is equally sharp: the transcendental doctrine of these New Sciences (lest we forget Said's admiration for Vico) cannot be phenomenologized in terms of moral sentiment or, more precisely, as "nativist sentiment" guided by "nativist ideology". Nativism and Self-positing are at odds:

You do not respond, for example, to the tyrannical conjuncture of colonial power with scholarly Orientalism simply by proposing an alliance between nativist sentiment buttressed by some variety of native ideology to combat them (Said, 1985, p. 12).

The self-conscious response, as opposed to nativist reaction, would be an *act* of thought. Historicism itself reposes on a material (an archive). This material of historicism must be "dissipate[d] and re-dispose[d]" into "into radically different pursuits of knowledge". Intellectuals must

self-consciously situate themselves at vulnerable conjunctural nodes of ongoing disciplinary discourses where each of them posits nothing less than new objects of knowledge, new praxes of humanist activity, new theoretical models that upset or, at the very least, radically alter the prevailing paradigmatic norms (Said, 1985, p. 13).

In this sense if Said's work is indeed a "prelude" it is a prelude to transgression. But is this not a return to voluntarism? Is this not once more Kant's Nietzsche or Nietzsche's Kant? And without being Heideggerian, would it not be important to recall his words on the metaphysics of the Will as the last metaphysics? Is the Andromaque of new sciences<sup>xvi</sup>, i.e. a dispersal of the andro-machy of Orientalism sufficient? Our admiration for Said, for his courage to think with violence, in the face of it, along with it, and violently, the same that gives his work its vehemence, the sharpness of his tone, its humour<sup>xvii</sup>, which so many readers have chosen to dismiss, regret, or ignore, is all that can be said. What speaks straight to the heart on reading him is his great sigh "alas" he says, the critics of the critics of Orientalism have "rarely engaged Orientalism's critics in a genuine intellectual exchange" (Said, 1985, p. 6). "On the solitude of Edward Said", who will write this thesis? This essay is perhaps a limited and oblique prelude to such a work.

Yet, the critique of Orientalism is not a transcendental science that simply replaces the Unity of Historicism. It is a part of a larger Science, a System of Science. However, this greater System is not a Science of the One or One Truth.

On the contrary, we note here a plurality of terrains, multiple experiences and different constituencies, each with its admitted (as opposed to denied) interest, political desiderata, disciplinary goals. All these efforts work out of what might be called a decentred consciousness, not less reflective and critical for being decentred, for the most part non- and in some cases anti-totalising and anti-systematic (Said, 1985, p. 14).

This greater Science is what we will call *Science of the Other* (the Other's Science as much as the Science of the Other). It is not a science of sovereign authority, not a science of the State, and instead it offers the possibility of "common grounds of assembly". What are these "common grounds"? Perhaps nothing other than what Said reciting Yeats called "The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor". This greater Science, the Science of the Other is not a "topography commanded by a geographical and historical vision locatable in a known centre of metropolitan power" but "planes of activity and praxis"<sup>xviii</sup>. Marginal or oppositional with reference to authoritarian systems and yet, despite this

agitation, they are, as Said clairvoyantly says: “in the final count paradoxically quietistic”. Obviously, quietism, as Said certainly is aware, is heretical and it is in this sense that the Science of the Other is “*against* the grain, deconstructive, utopian”.

#### 4.0. Of Humanism

Towards the conclusion of the article “Orientalism Reconsidered” Said, returns to his transcendental doctrine where he diagnoses with prescience the dilemma of the New Sciences. It is a problem, he says, of *reification*. There is a dilemma that arrives as a consequence of identifying the science of subaltern groups, a risk that will be our task to diagnose and take up without ceding. “A double kind of possessive exclusivism could set in” (Said, 1985, p. 15). Autonomous experience in the self-posed Other: the Science of the Other, self-identifies itself in the empirical instance. Here is a most strange moment of mirroring where Said’s own critique can be mirrored against itself into the abyss of reflection, its madness and death. In his analysis of T.E. Lawrence in *Orientalism*, Said had written that according to the former the primitive state of the Arab, which is a kind of temporal persistence, a pure experience, exists on two levels: in the concept and in reality. The absolute coincidence between the two is not a *simple coincidence*. The epistemological instruments separate the concept from the empirical accidents in the concept and “the coincidence was a fact uniquely the result of method, tradition, and politics all working together.” (Said, 2003, p. 230). How to read this tortured phrase? Coincidence of the concept and reality, the concept in reality was “a fact uniquely” or was “a fact [and] uniquely the result...”, etc. How should we read or not read the caesura between the words “fact”<sup>xix</sup> and “uniquely”? Is there, can there ever be, anything that is a “fact uniquely”? And would this ever be distinguishable from a miraculation? Not only conceptual purity, Orientalism also pursues purity at the level of sensible intuition, and it is in their absolute coincidence that the difference between type “the Oriental, the Semite, the Arab, the Orient” and “ordinary human reality” is, as Said says, “obliterated”. This can be read in three ways: (a) the distinctions being obliterated, what is obliterated is ordinary human reality and the type (“the Arab”) is produced (b) the distinctions are obliterated, including those between the type *and* the reality, forcing the one to forget that type is not reality, taking the type to be real, *producing* by this coincidence “the Arab”, and thus forgetting reality itself. We think that both interpretations should be maintained.

That allows for (c) what is obliterated, denied, is: “The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor” in which, Said says, all *human beings* live.

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 (Said, 2003, p. 230).

What does it mean to relate in this manner, as Said does, human beings to the bestial floor? What form does this existence or ground take? And is it not the case that despite the well-founded limitations of humanism (Heidegger’s “Letter on Humanism” is too often respected in the breach), some critiques of humanism can occasionally be shallower than certain humanisms. Should we presume that we understand what Said means by “human beings”? Is it clear and must this ground of human beings be determined by a common trait that appertains to all humans (for example, bestiality) ? Let us remember the last three lines of Yeats’ poem from which this citation has been taken:

And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,  
Being by Calvary’s turbulence unsatisfied,  
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor (Yeats, 1989, p. 126).

We cannot supply this powerful work with a sufficient reading in this article; the little that we can do is to underline that the “uncontrollable mystery” is not the bestial floor itself. The uncontrollable mystery is not the ground itself but is pre-positionally *on* the floor. “On” it and not “as” it. “The Magi” is a poem that thinks the pre-position. Just as in the penultimate line Being is “by” Calvary’s turbulence. We should not read the “pre-position” in a causal manner as if Being were unsatisfied *because of* Calvary’s turbulence. Being is “by” it, it is beside it. Yeats is giving us to hear “Being” not as underlying substance, *hypokeimenon*-like, but as “on” a bestial floor, as if standing and erect on the floor; but also the “uncontrollable” mystery is like a wild animal, like Being beside us, sharing the floor. Bestial, brutish, “O judgement thou art fled to brutish beasts and men have lost their reason”. “And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more”, a person, an animal, a savage, standing away, beside Calvary’s turbulence, standing solitary beside the whirl and dance and turbulence and cacophony, unsatisfied by all this excess, standing *on* the bestial floor, like an uncontrollable mystery, the solitude whom they see as Being *qua* being. And why “uncontrollable”? Because the turbulence that overwhelms all, that

by its very chaos controls, that by its plenty homogenizes, finds this mystery uncontrollable: Being. Said's humanism is radically transformative. Instead of taking the common denominator to be Being (a common element shared universally), Being is on the bestial floor standing apart: *there*. The turbulence of beings is not substantiated by a Being as ground of their existence, but Being stands solitary *qua* beings on the bestial floor.

According to Said's reading of T.E. Lawrence in *Orientalism*, the obliteration of distinctions leads to the forgetting of the distinction between type and reality and therefore the obliteration of the distinction of the "uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor" and, Said adds with a pre-positional existential turn, "in which all human beings live.". How should one read the "in"? Said is not saying that human beings live *on* the bestial floor, as if now it would be this bestiality that they would have in common, nor are human beings simply an uncontrollable mystery, as if they were some obscurantist enigma that cannot be known, their commonality being determined by this mysterious non-knowing (as if there is something about the being of the human that escapes knowing and remains an uncontrollable mystery, a radical alterity) rather he is saying that the *state*, the *condition*, in which human beings live is that of an "uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor", i.e. human beings live *like* Being. Human beings share its fate. And it is not Being which resembles a human, it is rather the human that resembles Being's solitary presence on the bestial floor. The humanity of the human resides in this solitude. This can be taken to be Said's highest philosophical proposition. Again, there would be multiple ways of reading this speculative proposition: some more conventional than others. That said, the speculative proposition is wholly consonant with Said's view of Man as Self-Positing. We see at work a far more inventive and forceful thinking of auto-determination in Said than versions which interpret this in terms of self-fashioning -- the solitude of the uncontrollable mystery, Being, who is beside the turbulence, a-part.

### 5.0. The Other Science: the Science of the Other

When *Orientalism* speaks of the Orient and the Occident, it seems that what is being spoken of are two positively determinable spaces, one by the other – i.e. sharing a border. This creates simultaneously homogenization in terms of absolute space (the Orient and the Occident exist in space) and a difference (the Orient is essentially different to the Occident). We have discussed the techniques of this movement of identity and



difference above. Said understood that given this condition, this *actual history*, an accord of peace was simply a means of accepting subservience.

What I do argue also is that there is a difference between knowledge of other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes, and on the other hand knowledge — if that is what it is — that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency and outright war (Said, 2003, p. xiv).

We have seen that this condition positing an absolute non-relation between Orient and Occident, such that an orientation can be phenomenologized between Orient and Occident, as the course of history, and perpetuated as Orientalism, is a state of non-relation and, therefore, a state of war. This fundamental existence of war underlying all peace treaties is non-negotiable. Against the representation of accord, Said defended Self-Positing. Without this auto-determination, there is no treaty because there is no equality between the contracting parties; the accord becomes then a name for dominance and subservience and on the part of the dominated the accord would be but an acceptance of the worst. Before there can be *accord* there must be a transformation of Science, there must be -- not recognition and forgiveness but -- *acknowledgement*. Said insisted by means of this wonderful term "acknowledgement" a possibility that would also be the transformation of the representational paradigm of Oriental Science.

However, if we return to what Said described as the risk of reification by means of which a new possessive exclusivism sets into the project of the New Sciences that he otherwise supports and with which he otherwise identifies. What is this reified possessive exclusivism that can be a consequence of the proliferation of subalternist sciences?

[It is] the sense of being an excluding insider *by virtue of experience* (only women can write for and about women, and only literature that treats women or Orientals well is good literature), and second, being an excluding insider *by virtue of method* (only marxists, anti-orientalists, feminists can write about economics, Orientalism, women's literature).[our emphasis] (Said, 1985, p. 15).

By virtue of *experience* and *method* – and what is a subalternist science but the conjunction of experience and method? – otherwise necessary for challenging the hegemony of Orientalism, the speculative interests of the Orientalists, and pretended identity between the Orient and Occident despite the forced non-relation between the two, the denial of relation, the denial of the common ground, the New Sciences produce by means of their auto-determination and self-positing an exclusivism; i.e. by means of

experience and method they produce the contrary of experience and method. By means of science they produce the perpetuation of exclusivism. Said acknowledges this risk. Self-positing, the only possibility of accord and ceasefire, *under certain conditions*<sup>xx</sup> becomes war and discord. The consensus is fatal: without the self-positing of the Other there is no accord (i.e. there is no accord possible in the condition of historical actuality where one is the Master and the other the Bondsman) but fatalistically this very self-positing, i.e. the displacement of the Hegemon, is the possibility of exclusivism and war. Either war, or war. Yet would it not be that this dream of the bestial floor repeats this abyssal dilemma in so far as it ignores *the possibility of this fatality*? The Science of the Other excludes the possibility of the Other of the Other – and it is this *possibility* that is the very possibility of science, knowledge, freedom as *names* of the Other.

We will return to this by means of a discussion of what Said calls “imaginative geography” but before concluding let us draw some more from our “analogy”<sup>xxi</sup>. Kant did not simply critique the exaltations of speculative orientation, it was his great strength to re-posit the question. As he says in “What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?”: “To orient oneself” (*sich orientieren*) in the proper sense of the word has always meant: to find other regions based on a given region of the sky, especially the Levant. However, this objective orientation which is *geographic* rests on subjective ground of difference (*subjektiven Unterscheidungsgrund*): between my left and my right hand; it is called a *ground* of difference in so far as it is not *caused* by the objective data of intuition (Kant, 2004, p. 37-38). Without this orienting ground (which is *subjective and differential*) it would not be possible to reorient oneself in the case of an alteration that changes only the subjective rapport to the event and not the objective data, one would otherwise be *disoriented*. The extension of this differential ground is not only limited to the geographical and mathematical, rather orientation in thought is by means of pure reason and exceeds the limits of experience. It is pure directionality or indexicality (without an intuited object but only a space of intuiting.). Pure reason as a differential ground guides us to submitting judgements to a determined maxim when, given the insufficiency of objective motivations of reason, reason determines itself subjectively. Kant is quite clear: the subject is nothing but a necessity of Reason, i.e. Reason’s necessity.

In general, to exceed the limits of reason is not a need but a presumption. It is possible to think of multiple supersensible objects (given that objects of intuition do not saturate the field of all possibilities) however reason has no *need* (*Bedürfnis*) to admit the existence of all possible objects. The necessity of *original being*, the unity “in which all

human beings live" (as Said might say), is different. Not only does our reason have the need of positing the concept of an unlimited (uncontrollable) being as ultimate ground, this need also brings us to suppose the existence of this limitlessness. This necessity is not the same as the need earlier discussed but it is the necessity of necessity (a hyper-necessity called "God"). At this stage Kant adds a long footnote that we will comment on before returning to Said. Although, the limits of this article do not permit us to elaborate further Kant's "*Was heisst : sich im Denken orientiern?*" we would like to underline that what is fracturing in Kant is not so much the possible but, in terms of the ideal of pure Reason, the necessary<sup>xxii</sup>. Without this hyper-necessity it is not possible to ground the contingency of the existence of things in the world, i.e. the being of the world as opposed to nothing; and in this manner we ignore (we deny) the order and finality that is everywhere. As Kant will say towards the end of the essay, there must be Law because without it there would be absolutely nothing, not even stupidity. This metaphysical question is at heart where philosophy is to be rewritten. Let us now turn to the footnote.

Reason, firstly, needs to suppose reality as *given* in order to establish the possibility of everything. Secondly, Reason must consider the multiplicity of things (*Verschiedenheit der Dinge*) as a limit because of the added negation (*anhängende Negationen*). Therefore, a unique possibility (*eine einzige Möglichkeit*) becomes necessary, namely limitless being (*als ursprünglich zum Grunde zu legen*). All other things are derived. This ground is the possibility of everything and it must be found in all existence and, as the principal possibility of orientation itself, permits our Reason to orient itself between the possible and the real : the Ground of Orientation as such (*subjektiven Unterscheidungsgrund*). This is Kant's "Orientalism":

we find a subjective ground of necessity, i.e. a need in our reason itself to take the existence of a most real (highest) being as the ground of all possibility (Kant, 1996, p. 11).

This same possibility lends itself to the very negation of this necessity but in the name of necessity and by means of it. It is this *possibility* to which the hyper-necessity is beholden. The subjective ground of necessity can be taken to produce the Cartesian proof of the existence of God. The subjective necessity of the *Unterscheidungsgrund*, i.e. for the use experience (*Erfahrungsgebrauch*), when taken as objective the necessity/need (*Bedürfnis*) itself, it is taken for an insight or a discernment (*Einsicht*) of what is. The

subjective need is turned upon itself as objective being. The possibility of this “mistake” or “error” is radical and suspends the primacy of (hyper-)necessity itself.

The subjective necessity, Said’s reworking of Yeats’ ““uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor,” in which all human beings live.”, its research or its defense, is also the possibility of critique of the exaltations and enthusiasms of Orientalists, i.e. their penchant for vision<sup>xxiii</sup>, but forgetting its subjective and suppositional mode turns it into objective ground, essence and existence are identified, and this is the possibility of Orientalism. It is not by means of knowledge but by a necessity that the Orientalist is oriented without knowing it. He cannot *know* the difference that orients Occident and Orient as this difference does not belong to the objective data but is the subjective *need* of will to knowledge/power. Importantly, it is not that this need is *sensed* (it is not a feeling). “[Reason] has insight into its lack and through the will to knowledge [*Erkenntnistrieb*] it effects the feeling (*Gefühl*) of a need” [translation modified]. It is *faith*. Subjective necessity is faith and as faith it is not knowledge. Rational Faith is opposed to knowledge<sup>xxiv</sup>. By this logic, the very hypothetical structure of this necessity – that it cannot be transformed into an object of knowledge – means that it is also open to disbelief. Kant suggests that disbelief is itself necessary. Hence, the very structure of the critique of Orientalism, and by extension the diffraction of Unity by the pluralization of knowledges, that Said proposes, can only function as critique by this necessary faith (supposing this subjective necessity as ultimate ground without objective existence). Yet, would not this hyper-necessity be necessary for reason? The necessary is necessary. And yet thought can think itself, Reason can auto-determine itself only as liberty. Liberty of thought means that Reason cannot submit itself to any law but the law that it gives itself. But to give a law to itself is Reason’s necessity. Without this subjective necessity of Reason, without Law, there is exaltation of the Orientalist. However, the will to liberty of Reason *from* necessity is the negation of the Law of Reason, is the destruction of Reason’s necessity, and this too is a necessity. It is disbelief and superstition. Hence: “a confusion of language must soon arise among them; each one now follows his own inspiration, and so inner inspirations must ultimately be seen to arise from the testimony of preserved facts, traditions which were chosen originally but with time become intrusive documents - in a word, what results is the complete subjection of reason to facts, i.e. superstition, because this at least has the form of law and so allows tranquility to be restored” (Kant, 1996, p. 17). We are then confronted by a terrifying proposition: there is “Orientalism” or there is “Orientalism”. Either the exaltation of the Orientalist who

objectifies subjective necessity and therefore destroys the Law of Reason and hence produces Orientalism, or the Orient's self-positing (independence or "swaraj") – self-representation -- which in the Absolute is its independence from its own necessity, and therefore from the Law of Reason itself, whereby the Orient can only think itself as Orientalism. Either "Orientalism", or "Orientalism" is Absolute Law. It is this second moment of the dilemma that Said recognized in his remarks regarding the risk of "possessive exclusivism" amongst his fellow critics and subalternists. Therefore "humanist critique", as opposed to the perpetuation of a metaphysics was Said's dream of an antidote to philosophical anthropology and its auto-immune inflation of possessive exclusivism. Therefore, the plurality of New Sciences that dissipate the Unity of Oriental Science must be, for him, a community.

Moreover, humanism is sustained by a sense of community with other interpreters and other societies and periods: strictly speaking therefore, there is no such thing as an isolated humanist (Said, 2003, p. xvii).

The difference between solitude and isolation is the point on which Said's reflection turns.

This humanist antidote also takes the form of an obstinate insistence upon evidence – the sophistries of the Orientalists tell us that "one shouldn't trust the evidence of one's eyes" and that "[t]he worst aspect of this essentializing stuff is that human suffering in all its density and pain is spirited away" (Said, 2003, p. xvi). It is in this sense, above all else, that Orientalism and Imperialism must be seen as "criminal"<sup>xxv</sup>, i.e., in excess of the material and economic plunder. Various strains of thought on Self-positing, of which Said's is exemplary for its insistence on knowledge and facts, have always exceeded the calculation of imperialism in terms of the calculable indicating the incalculability of this *experience*. Colonization is after all an experience. Perhaps, fatalistically, it *is* experience. And that is why hitherto existing critiques of Colonial Reason have had to be *cultural* critiques. Isn't this a tragedy?

Said's "humanism" remains somewhere between a dream of the necessary ground and a gesture, or a tendency for the practical use of Reason, more than a substantialist notion of Man : "I have called what I try to do "humanism," a word I continue to use stubbornly<sup>xxvi</sup>". The forgetting of this non-knowledge, this danger, resides at the heart of orientation itself. Perhaps it follows the Kantian suspension of the predicate of real existence from the thesis of Being that is traversing Said's critique (of "the Oriental", or "the Arab"). Yet if there is to be a means beyond this terrifying fatality that structures our

actuality it cannot do without Said, it cannot do without Kant. It can only come by passing through their critiques and to understand sadism it would perhaps be indispensable to read “Kant avec Said”:

For the Orient (“out there” towards the East) is corrected, even penalized, for lying outside the boundaries of European society, “our” world; the Orient is thus *Orientalized*, a process that not only marks the Orient as the province of the Orientalist but also forces the uninitiated Western reader to accept Orientalist codifications (like d’Herbelot’s alphabetized *Bibliothèque*) as the true Orient. Truth, in short, becomes a function of learned judgment, not of the material itself, which in time seems to owe even its existence to the Orientalist (Said, 2003, p. 67).

Can there ever be a philosophy that is not an Orientalism? It is this transcendental possibility that Said opens for us, but which cannot be pursued as a “Science of the Other” (for this is the very structure of Orientalism) but philosophically.

Philosophically, then, the kind of language, thought, and vision that I have been calling Orientalism very generally is a form of radical realism [...] Rhetorically speaking, Orientalism is absolutely anatomical and enumerative: to use its vocabulary is to engage in the particularizing and dividing of things Oriental into manageable parts. *Psychologically, Orientalism is a form of paranoia, knowledge of another kind, say, from ordinary historical knowledge.* These are a few of the results, I think, of imaginative geography and of the dramatic boundaries it draws. There are some specifically modern transmutations of these Orientalized results, however, to which I must now turn. [my emphasis] (Said, 2003, p. 72).

“Orientalism” *remains* “knowledge of another kind”, it is therefore another knowledge as much as the knowledge of the Other, it is, “Orientalism”, the Science of the Other. It is the dialectics of the Other’s Science as the Science of the Other, as the Other of Science – paranoia. As Althusser called this madness, this fatality: structural to an incomplete history. Must philosophy then, in order to avoid the abyss of the Science of the Other, return to the Other as Faith beyond the limits of Science? This would be most fatal of all. Marxism *is* a science, let us remember this, and it is as a science that differentiates itself from socialist utopianism or a messianism.

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<sup>i</sup> Louis Althusser, *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists & Other Essays* (London: Verso, 1990).

<sup>ii</sup> When it comes to the problem of radical alterity it is often occidental critics who are its most trenchant defenders. Clifford questions Said's humanism, saying : "It is still an open question, of course, whether an African pastoralist share the same existential "bestial floor" with an Irish poet and his readers" (Clifford 1988, 262). Young extends Clifford's position claiming that the very possibility of making the assertion that Said makes is "a privilege invented by a totalizing Western liberalism" (Young 1990, 171). One must ask why the defense of radical alterity has been on the side of Said's critics and what is being not mentioned by this philo-alterism. Said's work gives little time to such claims but, we will suggest, he also provides a response to Gyan Prakash's claim that Said lacked a "developed theory of culture as a differentiating and expressive ensemble rather than as simply hegemonic and differentiating." (Prakash 1995, 208). And we will show that this is present from *Orientalism* itself and does not wait its development in his future works.

<sup>iii</sup> Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, "Race Before Racism", in *Edward Said and the work of the critic : Speaking truth to power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 51-65.

<sup>iv</sup> What is most important is to understand how to read this paradoxical structure of Said's writing. Our contention is that Said cannot be read as a true historicist as his gesture is to move beyond historicism. At the same, the confused criticism that a literary critic and man of high culture, failed to read the literary value of Voltaire's irony and assimilated him to Orientalism fails to notice that this paradox is not accidental but constitutive of Said's thought and in so far as it is a question of responding to Said, it is not sufficient to simply *ignore* this. Criticizing an author in this external manner is highly limited.

<sup>v</sup> "[W]hat for the most part got left out of the discipline of Orientalism was the very history that resisted its ideological as well as political encroachments". Edward Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered", in *Race and Class* (1985), 5.

<sup>vi</sup> For Kant, reflection is not turn towards objects in order to obtain concepts from the objects but it consists of the spiritual process that discovers the subjective conditions under which we come to concepts. It is, therefore, the consciousness of the relation that exists between representations and the *sources* of our knowledge. "The action through which I make the comparison of representations in general



with the cognitive power in which they are situated, and through which I distinguish whether they are to be compared to one another as belonging to the pure understanding or to pure intuition, I call transcendental reflection" (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1998), 367). When it is not the *logical form* but the content that is in question, i.e. whether things themselves are identical or different, things can have a twofold relation to our cognitions, i.e. either to sensibility or to understanding. It is based on this difference that one decides how one will relate to the other and it is transcendental reflection that can decide the relation between the two, i.e. *how* they belong to each other. "[T]he relation of given representations to one or the other kind of cognition, that can alone determine their relation among themselves, and whether the things are identical or different, in agreement or in opposition, etc., cannot immediately be made out from the concepts themselves through mere comparison (*comparatio*), but rather only through the distinction of the kind of cognition to which they belong, by means of a transcendental reflection (*reflexio*). In logical reflection we abstract from the source and the concepts are treated univocally whereas the transcendental reflection goes to the designated objects themselves. Kant says: "This transcendental reflection is a duty from which no one can escape if he would judge anything about things *a priori*." (Kant 1998, 368). Said works, as it were, inversely.

vii See Jacques Derrida, "Admiraiton pour Nelson Mandela", in *Psyché* (Paris: Galilée, 1987). For the importance of reflection for Said we provide the following references: "Combative and woefully ignorant policy experts [...] without regard for truthfulness or reflection or real knowledge" (Said 2003, xvi); "*Reflection*, debate, rational argument, moral principle based on a secular notion that human beings must create their own history, have been replaced by abstract ideas [...]" One must also note the polyvalent use that Said makes of this term in his diction and in ways that show that he is well aware that Oriental Science is much more and much less than reflection: "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." (Said 2003, 15). There is also the use which is a more literal metaphor (if one pardons if the oxymoron): "as if each man saw Islam as a *reflection* of his own chosen weakness." (Said 2003, 209). He is also capable of turning the term on itself: "Many of the senior Arabists and Islamicists have responded with the aggrieved outrage that is for them a substitute for selfreflection" (Said 2003, 346). For Said freedom and knowledge are unified in self-reflection. He was conscious that reflection despite the conditions and limitations must find a place. The role of the university in this respect remains central; he is more than once grateful to the American University despite everything: "For all its often noted defects and problems, the American university — and mine, Columbia, in particular — is still one of the few remaining places in the United States where reflection and study can take place in almost a utopian fashion" (Said 2003, xii). Perhaps it would also do to question why it is the "American University" that can provide this place of exception whilst also functioning in keeping with the politics the state of exception and emergency and whether this concept's utopianism is its precise limitation.

viii Pascale Rabault-F Feuerhahn, *Archives of Origins Sanskrit, Philology, Anthropology in 19th Century Germany* (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz Verlag, 2013).

ix Said also says "I emphasize in it accordingly that neither the term Orient nor the concept of the West has any ontological stability" (Said 2003, xi).

x See the difference between General Logic and Transcendental Logic in (Kant 1998, 193-200)

xi "If the first set of questions is concerned with the problems of Orientalism reconsidered from the standpoint of local issues like who writes or studies the Orient, in what institutional or discursive setting, for what audience, and with what ends in mind, the second set of questions takes us to a wider circle of issues." (Said 1985, 2).

xii We are not certain that this virtue can be extended to all of the writers who write under banner of "post-colonialism" or "decolonialism". The tight-fisted reader might say that one "Said" does not make a summer.

<sup>xiii</sup> And if he sometimes uses the word “libertarian” one must wonder how it would be justified to interpret this idea. It is, at the very least, self-critical and honest. It would, nonetheless, be important to differentiate him from a libertarian of anarchy, utopia, and the state. If it should be seen that this libertarianism is structural in the manner of an infantile disorder in response to the difficult relationship with his Father from whom he could not inherit, it should be addressed as a symptom. On Said’s relation with his Father see Edward Said, *Out of Place* (2000).

<sup>xiv</sup> “My argument is that history is made by men and women, just as it can also be unmade and re-written, always with various silences and elisions, always with shapes imposed and disfigurements tolerated, so that ‘our’ East, ‘our’ Orient becomes ‘ours’ to possess and direct”. However, Said’s historicism is methodological and refuses a historicist ontology (it refuses to reduce Truth to historical expedience); this is made possible by a suspension of the ontological thesis of the historical formation, i.e. he does not confuse discourse with the real: “I should say again that I have no ‘real’ Orient to argue for” (Said 2003, xiv).

<sup>xv</sup> “One of the legacies of Orientalism, and indeed one of its epistemological foundations, is historicism, that is, the view propounded by Vico, Hegel, Marx, Ranke, Dilthey and others, that if humankind has a history, it is produced by men and women. and can be understood historically, at given epochs or moments, as possessing a complex, but coherent unity.” (Said 1985, 10)

<sup>xvi</sup> Andromache is the figure of a new humanism. Said had said “Humanists have too often confined their attention to departmentalized topics of research. They have neither watched nor learned from disciplines like Orientalism whose unremitting ambition was to master all of a world, not some easily delimited part of it such as an author or a collection of texts.”

<sup>xvii</sup> An example of the typical and dark and light that colours his tone: “It is quite common to hear high officials in Washington and elsewhere speak of changing the map of the Middle East, as if ancient societies and myriad peoples can be shaken up like so many peanuts in a jar” (Said 2003, xiii).

<sup>xviii</sup> It is also a collective practice: “strictly speaking, therefore, there is no such thing as an isolated humanist”.

<sup>xix</sup> “Fact” is another great word in Said’s diction. “I’ve had a lifelong suspicion—well, not lifelong, but for as long as it’s been around—of deconstruction: people who say, well, it all depends on how you look. I believe in facts and very often the facts get abused, or left out, or embroidered or hidden or forgotten. So, at that very low level of what could perhaps be called resignation, for me that is what that kind of writing is” (Said 2000, 11). What Said means by “deconstruction” should not be assimilated hastily to Derrida.

<sup>xx</sup> This conditionality is key – just because self-positing bears with it a risk does not imply that one abandon it *in toto*. The denial of self-positing of the Other is equally if not more dangerous and oppressive it is the perpetuation of Orientalism, the science of Imperialism. The risk is twofold in the absolute: both absolute self-positing and the absolute denial of self-positing are the worst

<sup>xxi</sup> It is legitimate to modalize this “analogy” between Said and Kant as a relation that transcends positivist or biunivocal correspondence; it is not a case of matching elements by resemblance for that would always beg the question. It would be wrong to take philosophy as a positivist science alongside other sciences for this too would require the modality of the “alongside” or “along with” to be justified and hence would call for philosophy: *ei philosophoteon, philosophoteon, ei me philosophoteon, philosophoteon*. Reading Kant “in” Said or reading Kant “avec” Said or Sade, *du côté chez Kant*, and inversely, can only be justified through a philosophical understanding of the “avec” or the “Mitsein”, but also presupposes the deconstruction of the “chez soi” and “homeliness”, concepts and processes that are being oriented by Said and Kant, as what is called “Orientalism”. Although Said upholds the primacy of Vico in opposition to the Kantian moment the arché-possibility of historicism cannot be thought without Kant.

<sup>xxii</sup> Despite our obvious point of difference we are deeply indebted to the work of Serban. Our focus is on necessity and not on the transformation of possibility and the reasons for this cannot be greatly justified

here instead we give a brief summary of some important points made by Serban. As Kant moved from Rational theology of the pre-critical days to the First Critique, he introduced a fracture in the ontotheological functioning of the possible which is based on positing the existence of a necessary-being based on an ontological determination of the possible. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the dialectical "genesis" of the ideas of Pure Reason we see a new sense of the possible (a transcendental sense of the possible) as orienting towards Supreme Being. Kant proposes two heterogenous types of possibilities: logical possibility of a concept and real possibility of the thing. And no object can be thought without both possibilities simultaneously: that is, total possibility. However, Kant recognizes that this total possibility is nothing but a "transcendental supposition". This supposition indicates and orients, in the manner of a sign; total possibility which is indicated by this "transcendental supposition" submits itself to the sense of critical discourse. This "transcendental supposition" does not have existence and its status is therefore that of a being of Reason. In this manner, the total set of possibilities no longer lead to a necessary being but to an Idea whose necessity is purely subjective. The objectivation of this subjective need must be as "transcendental supposition" however this also means that this need is not to be confused with a feeling: it is not to be objectivized empirically. Furthermore, Kant replaces the *ens realissimum*, understood extensively as *omnitude realitatis* and intensively as *erster Realgrund* by experiences as the only source of phenomenal reality and thus barring the route to pre-critical speculation regarding necessary being.

<sup>xxiii</sup> "Quite aside from the scientific discoveries of things Oriental made by learned professionals during this period in Europe, there was the virtual epidemic of Orientalia affecting every major poet, essayist, and philosopher of the period.". Said also speaks of the period's "professional enthusiasm for everything Asiatic" and "Orientalism was ultimately a political *vision* of reality" [my emphasis] (Said 2003, 51). The theme of vision is recurrent in *Orientalism*.

<sup>xxiv</sup> "[P]ure rational faith can never be transformed into knowledge by any natural data of reason and experience, because here the ground of holding true is merely subjective, namely a necessary need of reason (and as long as we are human beings it will always remain a need) to presuppose the existence of a highest being, but not to demonstrate it." (Kant 1996, 14)

<sup>xxv</sup> As Fanon said: "We should flatly refuse the situation to which the Western countries wish to condemn us. Colonialism and imperialism have not paid their score when they withdraw their flags and their police forces from our territories. For centuries the [foreign] capitalists have behaved in the underdeveloped world like nothing more than criminals." (Fanon 1968, 101).

<sup>xxvi</sup> Stubbornness is an important quality that is not always a stupidity. After the death of two friends Eqbal Ahmad and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Said had said, as he was towards the end of his own life, that the event had "brought sadness and loss, as well as resignation and a certain stubborn will to go on" (Said 2003, xi).