



Revisiting Edward Said: Culture vs Materiality (A study of his positionality Conflicts in *Al-Ahram's* articles)

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received:	September	30,2023
Revised:	October	29,2023
Accepted:	November	30,2023
Available Online:	December	31,2023

ABSTRACT

Keeping in view the distinct status of Edward Said in postcolonial discourse, the contexts of his intellectual endeavors reflect an unconscious or innocent indifference to material issues the post-colonial societies were immediately facing after the end of formal colonization. This research article seeks to understand the politics of discourse that Edward Said's formative works and his Al-Ahram articles exhibit by deconstructing the texts to revisit his celebrated intellectual cum political status among the postcolonial cultural and academic intelligentsia during the previous century. Edward Said seems a significant cultural force behind the curtain who helped the socio-cultural identities of marginalized communities to attain their socio-political exterior in a discourse that was essentially a sovereign attempt to voice the marginalized people enjoying the territorial place only. He substantiated his intellectual position in Culture and Imperialism (1993) and cemented it with historiographic evidence from the text and tradition that constructed the cultural space only, for that matter; but when he started authoring articles for Al-Ahram (An Egyptian Newspaper), he foregrounded his positional interior that was conflicting with his own previously established positions. He shifted the material debate to cultural lifeways, societal experiences, and nativity, and in doing so he innocently facilitated capitalism in establishing the fruitless discourse of cultural politics. but when Edward Said started writing for Al-Ahram, he concentrated more on material issues than cultural debate, especially when he started emphasizing his concerns regarding the Palestine issue. This is what I understand as positionality conflicts. This article attempts to investigate Edward Said's articles to unearth his determined ideological/political narratives constructing cultural discourse and later confrontation with space, place, culture, and identity, which turned out to be more material than mere ideological. In a way, Edward Said realized over time that his earlier works were not grounded which signified the cultural exterior only.

Keywords:

Positionality, Space, Place, Nativity, Materiality



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INTRODUCTION

The most significant debate in the context of post-colonialism and its prime concerns needs to be understood in the light of post-imperial societal issues. If I claim that when the post-colonial societies were facing material challenges, it was Edward Said who sought attention from intellectuals, political, and academic circles across the globe because he believed in the abnegation of absurdity in the social fabric as their concerns were neither grounded nor material then I would be emotionally and intellectually stabbed by the pro-Saidian scholars. Let me clarify at the initial stage of this article that I am neither challenging nor belittling Edward Said, but rather attempting to surface the positionality conflicts from his texts. In this way, I am attempting to further the Saidian discourse.

Edward Said who established a paradigm shift from the politics of language, structured a new intellectual path converting the culture and cultural debate into a socio-political meta-narrative episteme. Before such debate, Marx described a society in material terms, and his discourse established cognizance in the minds of the people in a way that their social position was determined by their hand/tool. In this context, the cultural position should have been considered secondary to the economic one. Edward Said shifted the debate to culture from material and in doing so unwittingly facilitated capitalism by establishing the discourse of cultural politics. His works made people start thinking about their cultures, identity, and origins by marginalizing the concrete and material issues of their society. Identity became the largest product during the 80s. Still, when Edward Said started writing for *Al-Ahram* (A prominent Egyptian Newspaper), he concentrated more on material issues than cultural ones particularly while stressing his concerns about the Palestine issue.

The intellectual positions of Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) are supposedly considered not neutral as they intend to rectify the West's (un)-conscious generalization about the Orient. But scrutiny of *Al-Ahram's* articles reveals the fractured positions that he kept on propagating for some decades. For instance, while talking about the separation between the Palestinian and Israeli-Jewish populations, he finds cultural sharing between them and considers both communities as well-connected. As Bryan Turner states, "At one level *Orientalism* examined the literary conditions by which a static and regressive Orient was constantly reproduced in Western literature but Said had a larger purpose which was to see how scholarship could transcend simple dichotomies of East and West. He looked to the history of philology and Oriental sciences to see how negative Otherness could be transcended by a broader moral vision of the common culture of humanity" (Turner, 2004, p. 2).

Edward Said seems theoretically decentered when he theorizes the Orient in an apocalyptic way because he conceptually obsolesces the space and materializes only the geographical place in his writings, this indicates a considerable conflict in his positions. He built his argument on differences that were narrowed down after World War II; also got a generalized appreciation from the people who were suffering from Post-World War trauma. There are several conflicts in both of his positions. For instance, he writes about his concept of history in *Orientalism*, "We must take seriously Vico's great observation that men make their 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" (Said, 1978, p. 13).

At this point, his approach is a dispassionate critique of history. Although he does not acknowledge the entire range of the Western ideas upon which the discourse of *Orientalism* was constructed his position contains a conceptual disagreement that makes his stance confrontational. Now I see him discontinuing his previous stance in his article in these words: “My argument is that history is made by men and women, just as it can also be unmade and rewritten, so that “our” East, “our” Orient becomes “ours” to possess and direct. And I have extremely high regard for the powers and gifts of the peoples of that region to struggle on for their vision of what they are and want to” (Said, 2003, p. 11).

Edward Said, who had previously regarded the men only, about the construction of Orient and Occident as man-made, now reassembles his thought and foregrounds the backdrop of this debate, which neglected the territorial/geographical bifurcation, instead, his myth-making process overturns the territorial separation into shared history. He offers an alternative discourse to the spearhead insurrectionists against his previous thoughts by defining Our East, Our Orient as collective cultural possessions. In a way, he claimed that man-made constructs do not acknowledge their legitimacy for a separate geographic place and space. This does not only acknowledge the cultural division as a blessing and beauty but also provides an intellectual shelter if the people collectively struggle to attain a better and homogenous cultural space and one territorial place. In this way, he disregards the entire range of cultural debate upon which is based much of his work.

In his *Al-Ahram* article *Fifty Years of Dispossession*, he observes: “Those of us who for years have argued for a Palestinian state have realized that if such a ‘state’ (the inverted comma here is definitely required) is going to appear out of the shambles of Oslo, it will be weak, economically dependent on Israel, without real sovereignty or power” (Said, 1998, p.7). In a way, he supported Israel to exercise its powers as a legitimate tool to keep the powerless Palestinians at the margins, and even if they get freedom out of the Oslo box, they would lose US willingness to solidify the peace process.

Said’s perspective strengthened the capitalist powers to highlight worries and anxiety for the Palestinian population. He depicted his different positions in *Orientalism* and *Culture & Imperialism*, which lay bare his positional conflicts when he was authoring articles for the leading Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram*. Although a number of his contemporaries questioned the authenticity and legitimacy of evidence from his books, the way Said textualized his conflict with his own earlier positions now foregrounds his constructed sub-consciousness which was rightly exercised in his prime works. He provided a new epicenter to the cultural intelligentsia to focus on abstract and non-material issues such as identity, culture, and representation, instead of basic material and economic troubles the people were randomly facing. Although he did not directly do this after the publication of his books *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), the world was divided into two major groups: the group that held the principal place and the group that resided at the margins [the Others].

To understand these conflicts, deconstruction is an appropriate method to lay bare the linguistic and semantic conflicts from his texts. Therefore, deconstruction provides us with a lens that is required to closely examine any (political) text to question the prime concerns of the author(s)

which are reflected through constructed binaries and hierarchies. This research article identifies the positionality conflicts within the same epistemic center to which Edward Said subscribed, through the close study of his selected text(s).

Statement of the Problem

Edward Said has been a credible intellectual voice in the postcolonial cultural episteme. He inspired numerous critics and theorists to theorize their inferences, complexities, and positions. Apparently, Said tends to discard the historical and cultural baggage that he reckons as colonizers' constructs from his shoulders while textualizing the positions that equally inspire both the people from West and East but fails to detach himself from his cultural roots. The yardstick for gauging his academic pursuits is Western humanism which has been his academic worth and also the discourse of (Mis)representation, the quest for the 'origin', and his ostensible assertion about the alien culture that is why his conflicting notions seem more legitimate in the realm of postcolonial critical studies. There also appears a transformation in Edward Said's later writings particularly when he started writing for *Al-Ahram*. This 'intrinsic transformation' has not been academically much debated; most of his critics challenge his positions by juxtaposing historiographic evidence from Eurocentric episteme to prove him biased and linear. Such conflicts and instability of intellectual attitude do frame dichotomy and slipperiness in discourse excavating these two attributes of his thought may challenge the overall intellectual stature of Edward Said both in the Oriental and Occidental spheres at the same time. It is difficult for a follower of Edward Said to locate his final ideological overturns while reading his intellectual works both academic and journalistic. So, a positional and philological deconstructive study is the need of the hour to foreground the differences and *différance* in his works. His crucial position attempts to detach the synchronic chain of literary and cultural dialectics and they make the debate simplistic. To define the woven politicality and capitalistic backdrop and his later material debate the theoretical perspectives of Edward Said need to be revisited which is the prime positional fulcrum of this research article.

Research Questions

- 1) How does Edward Said methodologically compromise on his earlier approaches regarding literature, art, culture, ideology, and Palestine while writing for *Al-Ahram*, and what may be the political and economic ambitions behind this complexity of thought?
- 2) How does Edward Said fragmentize the Marxist critique by constructing the theme line of cultural discourse in *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*?

The qualitative research method is employed to examine and interpret the text guided by the research questions of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Daniel Martin Varisco (2011) mentions that "a fair amount of *Orientalism*'s critical wake as "hostile, and some of it abusive" (Varisco, 2011, p. 287). Such hostility against a critically and minutely observed critical work of a globally renowned critic seems disgracing. The denial of research work without presenting strong critical acclaim is catastrophic and unacceptable in the realm of literary criticism. It is against the norms of discourse. Said's perception of his readers

has also played a confusing role. It defines the term bias as most of the Saidian critics did not take his intellectual works seriously, in terms of a discursive approach towards the history and regional historical, cultural, and literary texts. They registered their understanding as reactionary texts on the emotional ground. The spirit de corps of Saidian critics reflects their strong bond with the national identity which does not allow any intellectual to reach a workable solution and result. William Patrick (2001) mentions in his “In general, Said has not been well served by his critics” (2001, p. xxv). The critics who thoroughly opposed him considered his works as inappropriate representations and misrepresentations and they attempted to prove Said as an ill-informed intellectual who had a purpose in exhibiting his intellectualism by providing bifurcation between legitimate history and organizational falsification of the facts. Al-Dabbagh (2010) considers Edward Said’s efforts as a ‘Labor of Love’ (Dabbagh, 2010. p 29).

Nasrullah Mamboral (2020) labeled *Orientalism* as an Arab’s “uniquely punishing destiny” (Said, p.7). The word ‘uniquely’ manifests the ideological discrepancy residing in the textual interplay specifically added with an absurd notion of destiny. It becomes a cauldron of absurdity when used to categorize the works of Edward Said. The intellectual state of mind has also been challenged here by Nasrullah Mamboral when he marks *Orientalism* as, a ‘punishing destiny’. Keeping in view the Greek tragedy he attempted to make Edward Said an equivalent to Oedipus Rex, who was obsessed with Hamartia and who finally faced his punishing destiny. The critics have been regulating their debate by substantiating the idea of authenticity, misrepresentation, generalization, and bias of Edward Said.

This has been a consistent dilemma of the postcolonial societies that the people and power have been contesting each other on different fronts and resultantly no material gains were credited to the national integrity and economy. Keeping aside the reality of the political comments it is quite evident that one needs to read it closely and see the politicality of the narratives. Accusing the postcolonial states has been considered a postcolonial syndrome the symptoms of which include blaming the local political parties, charging politicians for corruption, weakening democracy by furthering demographic fragmentation, and so on. This is what Edward Said did especially to the Palestinian liberation movement and its government by placing a concocted charge sheet against the Palestinian leadership. He knew and accepted several times that the contradictions in academic texts are not normal. To some extent it seems normal; however, contradiction as a general behavior of an intellectual is considered a residual fallacy of the author’s magisterial style. This causes a great judgmental fallacy and confusion among the people who blindly follow such texts which create confusion. He was ruthlessly dealt with by different critics and interpreted for his work as mentioned in *Edward Said* (2001), by Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia: To historians, he is unhistorical; to social scientists, he conflates theories; to scholars, he is unscholarly; to literary theorists, he is unreflective and indiscriminate; to Foucauldian, he misuses Foucault; to professional Marxists, he is anti-revolutionary; to professional conservatives, he is a terrorist. (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 70)

As I have already discussed the positional texts are rarely all convincing and globally communicative because they lack the innocence that is indigestible for the class of people which is observed as an apparent operator of ruthless politics and power execution. As mentioned above, Edward Said has been microscopically victimized for all possible reasons of his intellectual self. It is not a matter of wonderment for an intellectual of that worth who could mold the episteme of colonial apparatus to his personal intellectual paranoia. Said’s conviction with

his strange cause and maneuvering expansionism of the vilified concerns forced his critics to dub him as a 'terrorist.' Such attribution is an entirely savage and agenda-based account of a huge character in the global political arena. I am not denying the fact that his works were devastating for both intellectual hemispheres of the world, equally misleading and wicked for several reasons, but such titles for Edward Said are as unjust as Said's works are for some people.

My purpose is to understand Said's text without indulging myself in the state of any bias and projection but by gathering the data from his writings to find his conflicts, either innocent or purposeful. To me, it is a credible way to locate an intellectual's positionality conflicts and methodical positional shifts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Edward Said's works are often academically analyzed or critically examined under postcolonial paradigms, in general. For certain reasons, this approach has been embodying deeply a non-material void in academic and independent texts. However, the underlying and altered realities in Edward Said's *Al-Ahram* articles needed a paradigm shift in understanding his complexity of thoughts and positional shifts in his later intellectual journey. Several Saidian critics have been targeting him for his limited and selected texts which he offered in *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* for strengthening his intellectual position, but none of them has questioned a drift in his dominant intellectual and political thoughts as revealed through *Al-Ahram's* articles. I have focused on Said's articles to understand his self-contained arguments that nullify or question his own intellectual positions generally considered his meta-discourse. For this purpose, the methodology I have chosen for conducting this research is qualitative in nature. To analyze positionality conflicts in his political, social, and ideological conclusions, close reading through the deconstruction method has been done. Deconstruction methodology questions the concept of steady meanings that reside inside the texts and allows the critics to find out the multiplicity of relevant meanings. The chief tenet of the Deconstruction method is that when the words are released on a piece of paper, they lose their author.

In general, the historical or political texts we read, design our meanings with the help of cultural force which the historical timeline materializes. Such unavoidable but unnecessary burdens (seemingly innocent) make the texts quasi-religious absolutes which are hard to question. In the postcolonial paradigm what the people in academia theorize dismantles the critical approach toward deciphering the texts. Deconstruction foregrounds the difference which opens in a temporal chain and due to this temporality, the meanings are delayed. Barbara Johnson defines the term Deconstruction in her book *The Critical Difference* (1980) in such terms: "Deconstruction is not synonymous with 'destruction;' however, it is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word 'analysis' itself, which etymologically means "to undo" (Barbara, 1980, p. 5). It is important to mention here that Derrida focused upon the difference and delayed meanings, but this method may also help to decipher the conflicts of meanings while comparing the same signifiers of an author but from two different text sources. Deconstruction unpacks the internal complexities and contradictions of a textual chain by seeking paradoxes, breaks, shifts in viewpoints, time, and attitude, absences, aporia, and textual disunity by precisely reversing the common binary oppositions the critics generally subscribe to. The people from a constructed Orient took *Orientalism* as a chief source of their identity not knowing that such text[s] may be

misleading and may assist capitalism to exercise its radical processing for economic gain. Friedrich Nietzsche while describing the impossibility of truth argues that: Truth is impossible—there can only be perspective and interpretation, driven by a person's interests or 'will power': Against [empiricism], which halts at [observable] phenomena— 'There are only facts'—I would say, no, the fact is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact 'in itself': perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing. (1901, p. 48). So, the physical environment of truth that the works of Edward Said construct embodies enormous intellectual dilemmas that indicate its endangered omniscient status.

DATA ANALYSIS

From Idealism to Materialism

In *The Guardian*, Noam Chomsky describes Edward Said's cultural position in these words: "Edward's in an ambivalent position about the media and mainstream culture: his contributions are recognized, yet he's the target of constant vilification. It comes with the turf if you separate yourself from the dominant culture" (Jaggi, 1999, para. 4).

Said's unique elegance and grandeur of position always kept him in the media spotlight all around the world; however, due to this image, his positional conflicts remained least projected. Said's appreciation pronounced the global acceptability of his views despite the fact they were misleading for several minds, particularly the ones that were directly suffering from the identity crises. The identity crisis had been constructed after tireless efforts of the minds of people who had lost their space. As Chomsky describes Said's articulation as ambivalent positions both in historical and temporal stages, his claims portray long-time existential disability, resultantly the people like him cannot show affection for their adopted land. If it is accepted as the trauma of a displaced signifier, Said's claims about Palestine turn nullified. Edward Said in *After the Last Sky* (1986) explains his sense of loss least compellingly in these words: "Our truest reality is expressed in the way we [Palestinians] cross over from one place to another. We are migrants and perhaps hybrids, in but not of any situation in which we find ourselves" (Said, 1986, p. 168)

Once he accepted a displaced Palestinian as a hybrid soul then how come his majestic claims can be accepted as a discursive norm of discourse? The self-glorification project of an intellectual cannot derogate the USA's ascendancy on his political grounds. Some intellectuals verify American imperialism for different material reasons as it is 'good for a vast portion of the world's population" (Kagan 1998: 26). Contrary to this claim Klare reveals the US war intentions as, "all about oil" (Klare 2003). The Same political strategy must be applied to the other powerful forces. Edward Said describes political resistance as a better way to struggle against imperialism than armed struggle, in his *Al-Ahram* article entitled *Inside the other Wilaya* (1998, June 4) "Most of the great liberation struggles of the twentieth century were unconventional in that they were ultimately won not by armies but by flexible, mobile political forces who relied more on initiative, creativity, and surprise than they did on holding fixed positions, the firepower of conventional armies, and the sheer weight of formal institutions and traditional establishments" (Said, 1998, p. 2).

The liberation struggle in the twentieth century was unconventional in different regions of the world. Said's misconception about the liberation movements seems a political thinker's naive

analysis.

Edward Said's Territorial Worldliness: An Advocacy of Cosmopolitanism

Edward Said ostensibly appears as a theorist who gave life to marginalized people by giving them a voice and helped orientalist to align their assumptions according to the 'facts' that he materialized in his texts. This proves what I have been continually forming as my stance of negating his political position. We need to analyze his texts closely to find his actual position to avoid ambiguity. To me, Said was primarily an advocate of cosmopolitanism. The nationalism, nationhood, and advocacy of the Muslim community by and large seem cosmetics of discourse. He formed the cosmopolitan discourse through educating the extinguishing voices and he especially gave the voice to that community that had taken the charge of designing other's ontological perceptions. Intellectuals are misunderstood and misinterpreted as Immanuel Kant has been considered the founder of contemporary cosmopolitanism. George Cavallar disagrees with it in his book *Kant's Embedded Cosmopolitanism*: "I claim that the interpretation of Kant as the key founding father of the new cosmopolitanism is largely unfounded. Without any doubt, there is some overlap (for instance in terms of normative individualism or the focus on the normative basis of cosmopolitanism). Still, he differs in many aspects from contemporary approaches. (Cavallar, 2015, p. vii)

There is a dire need to know Edward Said's definite stance. Was he a postcolonial scholar and an advocate of deprived people of Palestine - his old territorial fellows? He was not a parochial scholar though; he had a vast experience of knowing different cultures and ideological outlooks of the societies he had been living in, during his intellectual journey. His arguments regarding the home, as home attributes his territorial attachment to his homeland, reflect indecisive patterns of thought because the dominant element is placed in his claim. Regardless of his strong association with Palestinian politics besides accusations against the Palestinian leadership, the conflicts within his position were no less than a case of self-deception.

The very essence of humanism and cosmopolitanism contest with the compartmentalization of humankind as a whole and representative of a true human reflecting cultural harmony and respect, no segregation, no borders, no dialogical distance, common interests of human development and mutual respect remains a consistent theme of both the humanism and cosmopolitanism. While advancing his approach to Palestine politics on the one hand he favors the armed struggle of the Palestinian people, and on the other hand, he turns defensive by dubbing Palestinians as victims of victims. A single explicit change in an intellectual's position on delicate matters may raise questions and its receptivity in academia and intelligentsia which turns lesser and unregulated. It can simply turn the table of dialogue. Without going deep down into the history of the Holocaust, the Nazi's mass murder and genocide, and religion over nationality, I focused on Edward Said's attempt to maintain equilibrium in his binarism. I derived my claim from his writings for dislodging the binaries as being sympathetic to Israelis. In the territories where dehumanization ideologies persist, the solution seems to be mere in cosmopolitanism. This is what provides opportunities to distribute the sources equally. As far as the idea of humanism is concerned, it is a man-centered approach that provides equal opportunities to all individuals to flourish; and to progress irrespective of ethnic identity, divinity, culture, and other barriers that may alter the human psyche for societal bad.

Edward Said has been a staunch conformer of cultural differences and has provided knowledge to the marred societies to dig out their patron of superiority from the layers of culture and orientalist's misrepresentation. This approach was well celebrated among the marginalized and misrepresented societies, and they started locating their socio-cultural shape as a matter of self-actualization. Contrary to this the idea of humanism seems a secular attempt to level the social deformity and provide them with a therapeutical and acceptable phenomenon. Said illustrates Humanism in his research article *Presidential Address: Humanism and Heroism* (1999): "Humanism is disclosure, it is an agency, it is immersing oneself in the element of history, it is recovering rationality from the turbulent actualities of human life, and then submitting them painstakingly to the rational processes of judgment and criticism" (Said, 1999, p. 285).

Edward Said discarded the concept of self-actualization and preferred rationality. Being rational is an anti-theory perspective. Chaos, fear, and miserable human conditions were not acceptable to him. At the historical juncture of material understanding, he processed a corrective justification to settle down his provocative positions. That is why he finally reached a compromised gesture in his journalistic writings. The prominence of humanism as a doctrine of coexistence in the same region theoretically bridged the distances between ethnically and ideologically different nations. Such a response to the human struggle against prolonged and relatively unrealistic and unachievable dreams was a great move from Said. This hegemonizing of cosmopolitanism had implied economic purposes. In the 1970s after the decline of the 1960s concept of corporate profitability, the concept of internationalization of markets, money, and business emerged. Capitalism functions in different modes and one of the modes is intellectual assistance.

Identity: A Farewell to Absurdity

Yasser Arafat's worldview and the idea of nationalism were precisely Saidian because Arafat was constructing new boundaries of Palestinian identity as Edward Said imagined while deciphering the identity discourse. Because Said's arguments about identity were flexible and lucid, they provided room to exercise the homogeneity of community in more open ways. While attempting to develop his arguments in *Orientalism* and, *Culture & Imperialism*, he used a post-structuralist lens to influence and convince the audience of cosmopolitan globalized culture and created a new center within the center. His paradoxes pragmatically challenge his alchemy of power discourse. Said appears more material and grounded in his article *Fifty Years of Dispossession* when he confuses autonomy and nationhood. The materiality of a system or a nation-state enables the people to target their significant issues which keep them miserable and weak in terms of politico-economic strength. His postcolonial debate gets altered and gets a new shape from the cultural model to the economic model, as depicted in his article: "Balfour's statements in the Declaration take for granted the higher right of a colonial power to dispose of territory as it saw fit. As Balfour himself averred, this was especially true when dealing with such a significant territory as Palestine and with such a momentous idea as the Zionist idea, which saw itself as doing no less than reclaiming a territory promised originally by God to the Jewish people" (Said, 1980, p. 16).

Said called the Balfour Declaration an extension of the British colonial project. He marred the

national sentiments of Israelis by discovering inherited religious authority. He mentioned their urge to relocate themselves to new territories as God's project. Religion is a philosophical idea and in times of skepticism, the profligacy of absurdity to shape the concept of identity by the Zionist apparatus lays bare the confusion about identity. For the inclusion of religious metanarrative to substantiate his theory he challenged his lucid idea. Zeev Sternhell (1998) describes in his book *The Founding Myths of Israel* that Israel brands its movement as nationalist socialism.

The Discourse of Othering

Locating an absolute true, straightforward, and concrete position in Edward Said's intellectual works is a laborious task because he always aggrandizes his signified with a shadowed twist in his positions. He was ambivalent about the liberation struggle of Palestine, and there is no denial of the fact that the Palestinians wanted their land back where they could freely exercise their religion. Let me categorically claim that Edward Said misled not only the Western intellectuals but also the naïve Palestinian political intelligentsia. He problematized the Palestinians' struggle in one of his *Al-Ahram* articles, entitled, *Really, now ----what's next?: The struggle for Palestinian rights is first and above all a modern secular struggle to be a full, participating member in the modern world of nations, from which we have long been excluded. It is not about returning to the past or establishing a parochial little entity whose main purpose is to give the world another airline or bureaucracy or a handsome set of colored postage stamps*" (Said, 1999, p. 7).

Edward Said swept away the elements of the Palestinian liberation movement's basic claims which were to return to their origin, and religious identity but dubbing it as a struggle to attain a modern secular status is entirely a great historical step back. This imposition was the antithesis of the spirit of the entire Palestinian movement, and Said's classification had eclipsed this movement with confusion and absurdity. The last part of the paragraph is entirely dubious and strange because Said had been pursuing the Palestinian people to retrieve their glorious past and had continually propagated his claim by advising Palestinians to never forget their legacy and glorious past. For him having a separate airline, different postage stamps and other symbols of difference add nothing to the identity debate. While talking about secularism he is suggesting that people be secular because the cryptic essence of this suggestive pseudo-epigram is equalizing the disclaimer of the religious past as a start of new material progress and economic development.

By devastating the centrality of religion in the Palestinian struggle, Edward Said academically theorized the death of the liberation movement which was a fatuous move. Edward Said maintains in his *Al-Ahram* article *Thinking about Israel*: "Palestinian struggle against the occupation with terrorism, yet, as far as I know, no concentrated effort is being made through information and addressing Israelis and Americans to restore reality to discourse. The logical assumption seems to be that Israel = military occupation = Palestinian resistance. So, what must become central to Arab efforts now is to disrupt and even destroy the equation, not simply to put forward abstract arguments about the Right of Return for the Palestinian refugees" (Said, 2010, p. 9).

The peace in the region has been underutilized by Edward Said, as his texts cherish the acute absence of pragmatic sensibility. The text here under discussion is about the equation which he designed, i.e., Israel=military, occupation=Palestinian resistance.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the works of Edward Said with a post-structural critical lens by making a comparison of his prime and well-celebrated works such as *Orientalism* (1978), *The Question of Palestine* (1979), *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (1986), *Culture & Imperialism* (1993) *Out of Place* (1999), *Reflection of Exile and Other Essays* (2000), as well as his interviews and most importantly *The Al-Ahram's* articles. For comparison to locate his positionality conflicts, the selection was made of his journalistic essays published in a globally read and well-acknowledged Egyptian weekly magazine *Al-Ahram* from 1998 to 2003. There is a group of scholars and literary critics who have been charging Edward Said for his fabricating, misleading, and non-representative works, due to his biased opinion, over-generalizations, and misinterpretations. Keeping aside all such challenging debates, I have compared Edward Said's own textual and critical works by applying the method of close reading through the lens of post-structuralism by locating the rooted textual anxiety and positional conflicts. In principle, I have simply reviewed the things through deconstructive method. I aimed at deciphering the positional journey of this politically eloquent critic of the 20th century who had been mounting the credit of inspiring generations with his political and literary stance for decades, especially his keen interest in Middle Eastern politics – which undoubtedly translated his kind of realities. With a closer look at his realities, I observed a series of fictional and politically absurd strategic turns that mislead the people in general and Palestinians in specific. His perplexed critical gaze on his natural identity seemed compromised because of his journey from an old historical native place to different cosmopolitan centers of the post-World War II world. His quest to obtain his real self from his hybrid self was natural but through his writings, he as an acknowledged social critic had been debating about the purity of identity politics for decades, which could be reckoned as his rhetorical fallacy. His linear approach to seeing the cultural negotiations and acceptability of differences in outlook retained his analysis within him and he remained unsuccessful in translating his farsightedness with the right perspective. His focus on Palestinians was a two-way pass, he victimized Yasser Arafat with his biased blotting paper and made him suspicious not only of his (Yasser Arafat's) people but also of the entire world, irrespective of the fact that he remained engaged with Yasser Arafat in productive dialogues for many years. However, for Edward Said's followers, contesting Edward Said's established and globally accepted crafted truths and realities with a myopic vision, was a difficult challenge. This is how literary and political crafts are assigned meta meanings which is against the very norms of literature and philosophy but in the postmodern scenario, such historical old objective and authoritative narratives have no room. Thus, the works of such writers remain restricted to some limited themes. The contrasts and complexities remain hidden so we can say the multi-meaningfulness of the texts remains unquestioned, and such negation is based on facts as philosophy inspires none, and prominent features of such texts remain undiscovered. My article deconstructs the underpinnings of Said's pertinent concerns about socio-political life and explores the political campaign for the central forces that serve them material good. I designed my exploration of such meanings based on methodology, not on mere assumptions or biases. Edward Said's timeline indicates such positional conflicts that stand unconventional and acknowledge material faith in his journalistic writings in the later part of his life. I presume that this apparent reversal of

position by Said was his insight and intellectual growth. Simultaneously these can stand as a methodical and political maneuver. Not only the play within the text has surfaced the contesting and challenging meanings regarding the components of his expression but also the material gains of power centers furthermore Said's absurd binarism shows that his bag of service was tagged by the politics of power, and he perhaps naively served the capitalism.

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