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Mapping Orientalism: Representations and Pedagogies

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Mapping Orientalism

Representations and Pedagogies

DIANE LONG HOEVELER AND JEFFREY CASS

I. Mapping Orientalism: Three Case Histories

In order to understand Orientalism it is necessary to realize, as Vincent T. Harlow has noted, that there were “two British empires.” The first empire consisted of the colonies in America and the West Indies and was established in the seventeenth century, with the explorations in the Pacific, and the trading networks that developed with Asia and Africa. The “second British empire” dates from 1783 and resulted from the loss of America, which in turn forced Britain to formulate new ideas about and approaches to its empire. The Colonial Office was set up in 1801, and, as Harlow observed, Britain experienced a “Swing to the East,” to India and the Asian colonies (Harlow, 2:1–11). The conquests of India (1798–1804) expanded Britain’s empire to such an extent that the losses of America and the old West Indian colonies were not felt economically (Johnson, 13–14), and given the success of the British Raj after 1813 and especially 1857, it seems clear that the imperial desire was to keep the profits of the East while maintaining as strict a social and intellectual distance as possible from its cultures and peoples. Although the nature and continuously changing shape of the British Empire has been subject to a fair amount of debate and is still a controversial topic, we begin this volume with an attempt to map the rough contours of the shifting British Empire in order to historically situate this collection of essays. We also begin with a premise: literature written about or out of an awareness of this empire participated in an ongoing, complex attempt to understand what it meant for the British to come into contact with other alien (both attractive and repellent) societies, languages, cultures, and religions. Or, as the bishop of Avila so succinctly observed to Queen Isabella in 1492, “Language is the perfect instrument of empire” (quoted in Hulme, 1).

We begin this volume, therefore, by mapping three exemplars of Oriental pleasure travel as tropes for the readers of this book. By situating three particular individuals in three Orientalist costumes and then positioning those costumed bodies against the journeys that they undertook throughout what they understood as the “Oriental” world, we intend to suggest the topics that will be addressed in this volume. We also intend by selecting these three case studies to map the Oriental social body and body politic, with three different gendered states represented (female, bisexual, and male), and three different realms (the private, the spectacularly public, and the private within the public space). Finally, our three case studies represent the most acceptable types of travelers to the Orient (the elite lady, the potentate, and the religious devotee). We might also add that the travels of these three individuals cover most of the recognized areas of the “Oriental” world during the time period that we are addressing (from Spain, to the Levant, Turkey, Albania and the Ottoman Empire, and finally India).

As James Clifford has noted in *Routes*, “travels and contacts are crucial sites for an unfinished modernity,” while it is more accurate to understand the “human location as constituted by displacement rather than stasis” (1). Europe, as he observes, has been “constantly remade, and traversed, by influences beyond its borders” (3). The travels undertaken during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by a number of Europeans can be seen as manifestations of Clifford’s observation. British citizens traveling throughout the Oriental world did so not simply because they were motivated by adventure, economic exploitation, or cultural objectification, but actually for much more complex and reciprocal reasons. They were not seeking some “Oriental Other” to appropriate or control (as Edward Said has claimed in *Orientalism*). They were doing something much more interesting and complex: they were hybridizing (as Homi Bhabha has defined the concept) and modernizing. In fact, to understand where critical approaches to Orientalism are now, one needs to consider the valuable observation made by Timothy Powell:

It has become clear in recent years . . . that a binary form of analysis that collapses a myriad of distinct culture voices into the overly simplistic category of “Other” defined in relationship to a European “Self” is theoretically problematic. The time has come, therefore, to initiate a new critical epoch, a period of cultural *reconstruction* in which “identity” is reconfigured in the midst of a multiplicity of cultural influences that more closely resembles what Homi Bhabha has called the “lived perplexity” of people’s lives. (1; original emphasis)

The donning of indigenous garb by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Lord

Byron, and Sir Richard Burton suggests for us one of the ways that the “lived perplexity” of Orientalism can be approached. The stories that recount their adoption of native dress—as well as the maps of their journeys—become what we will identify as fitting sites for analyzing the emerging representational strategies that are to be found in British Orientalist literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Hence, their examples concretely illustrate the ongoing importance of and critical interest in British Orientalism as a more complex, nondualistic paradigm. As Daniel Carey has demonstrated about early modern cultural exchange, English writers consistently stressed “the potential interchangeability of self and other rather than the radical opposition between the two” (34). For Carey, English writers “worried about the impact of travel precisely because they accepted the commensurability of human beings, and therefore the capacity of the English to become like those they observed and with whom they lived” (40). It is this hybridity or what Bhabha calls the “liminal space, in-between the [binary] designations of identity” that we attempt to capture with these three representations: “this interstitial passage between fixed identifications [that] opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 4).

The first figure, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, imitates the elite Oriental female dress of the private realm and, as such, she represents the world of the harem, the social elite, and the domestic realm. In 1716, Alexander Pope hinted that Montagu’s decision to travel with her husband, the newly appointed ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, was effectively a decision to travel “to another world” (Grundy, 114). As Isobel Grundy affirms, Pope “appl[ies] the metaphor of death” to discourage Montagu from leaving (114), but Pope also underscores the enormous cultural differences a woman writer will have to confront in addressing the Oriental subject. After traveling in Europe for six months, she and her husband arrive in Adrianopolis (present-day Edirne) in February of 1717. By April, Montagu has already assimilated herself into Turkish culture and entertained her sister, Lady Mar, with a letter describing her resolve to dress in native attire, to publicly display herself as an appropriately dressed Muslim woman. She writes of her “Turkish habit”:

The first piece of my dresse is a pair of drawers, very full, that reach to my shoes and conceal the legs more modestly than your Petticoats. They are of a thin rose colour damask brocaded with silver flowers, my shoes of white kid Leather embroider’d with Gold. Over this hangs my Smock of a fine white silk Gause edg’d with Embroidiery. This smock has wide sleeves hanging halfe way down the Arm and is clos’d at the Neck with a diamond button,



Figure 1. Portrait of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu by Jonathan Richardson, ca. 1726. Reproduced with the kind permission of The Earl of Harrowby.

but the shape and colour of the bosom very well to be distinguish'd through it. . . . My caftan of the same stuff with my Drawers is a robe exactly fitted to my shape and reaching to my feet with very long strait falling sleeves. . . . (*Letters* 1:326)

Montagu's description of herself in this Orientalist dress confirms several artistic representations of her in Turkish "habit," including those by Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, Charles Jervas, Godfrey Kneller, and Jonathan Richardson (fig. 1). Her travels (fig. 2) reveal one version of the "Grand Tour" as it would have been made by an elite lady, an inhabitant of a definitively private sphere who undertook this chaperoned journey to "another world" in the company of an aristocratic and powerful male.

The passage quoted above is similar to another in which Montagu describes to Lady Mar the dress of her acquaintance Fatima: "She was dress'd



Figure 2. Map of travels by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 1716–1718, from *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, by Isobel Grundy. Reprinted with permission of Oxford University Press.

in a Caftan of Gold brocade flowered with Silver, very well fitted to her Shape and shewing to advantage the beauty of her Bosom, only shaded by the thin Gause of her shift” (*Letters* 1:350). These passages demonstrate what Laura Brown has observed about the use of female clothing to mystify colonial ideology, particularly important for Montagu because she maps for her readers the attendant ambiguities of female dress in the Oriental world, at once confining and liberating, “fitting to shape” yet surprisingly roomy and free. Properly attired, Montagu’s female traveler uses “privilege and power” to enter zones forbidden to men, such as harems, and interrogate the ways in which women occupy, manage, and control contested spaces. Her letters to her sister form what is now understood to be “domestic ethnography as a female genre, initially aristocratic then from the early nineteenth century distinctly middle class” (Melman 2002, 111). The female traveler in the Oriental world focused her “imperial eye” (Pratt) almost exclusively on detailed accounts of domestic and feminine spaces (harems and houses of the Turkish-Circassian elite in Istanbul) in an attempt to understand the differences (both positive and negative) in women’s lives under a system of polygamy.

The second example of what we might call the attendant ambiguities of costuming occurs in the case of Lord Byron. In 1809, Byron and his friend John Cam Hobhouse visited Albania. Invited to Tepelene by Ali Pasha in October of that year, Byron and Hobhouse rode several days and observed the military uniforms of the Albanian soldiers. Byron described “the Albanians in their dresses” in a letter to his mother: “[They] consist of a long

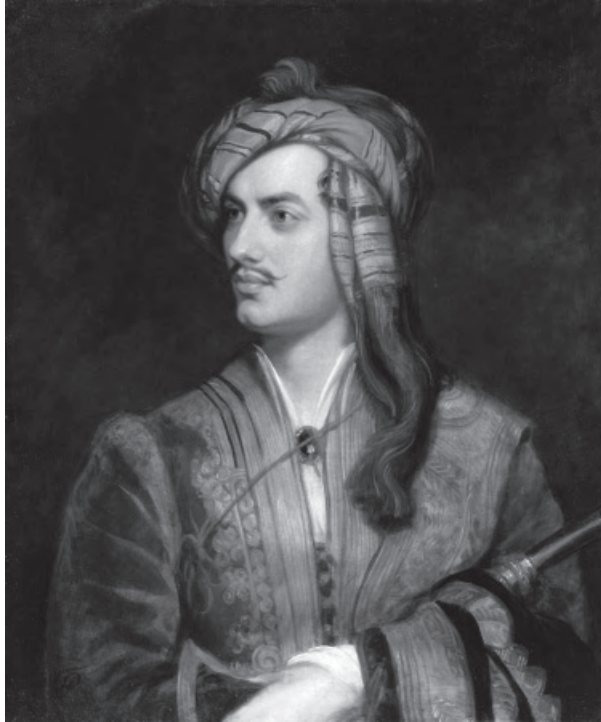


Figure 3. Portrait of Lord Byron in Oriental costume by Thomas Phillips, ca. 1835. Reproduced with permission of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

white kilt, gold worked cloak, crimson velvet gold laced jacket & waistcoat, silver mounted pistols & daggers” (Byron’s italics, *BLJ*, 227). Enthralled by the spectacle of their clothes, Byron purchased several expensive “Albanian suits” which he wore to meetings with Ali Pasha. Several years later, soon after the publication of *The Corsair* in February 1814, Byron commissioned Thomas Phillips to paint the now-famous portrait of an Orientalized Byron (fig. 3), “for which Byron wore one of the ‘magnifique’ Albanian dresses he had purchased on his travels” (MacCarthy, 216). Benita Eisler speculates that “Byron took special delight in this costume” because while he was wearing it he fancied that he had become “an Oriental potentate, powerful and free, to whom nothing was forbidden” (223).

Clearly the costume represents Byron’s allegiance to an elite political and military corps while the map of his journeys suggests an interest in the historical and military contours of the Ottoman Empire (fig. 4). To Western eyes, however, the outfit was sexually ambiguous, marking Byron as embodying an intermediary gender, although still very firmly placed in the

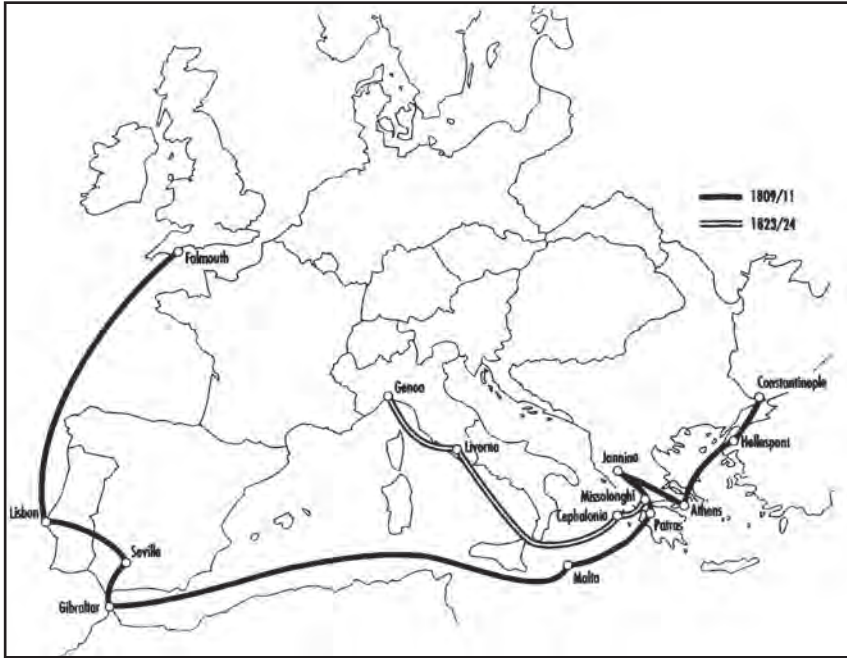


Figure 4. “Byron’s Eastern Journeys,” from *Byron: The Flawed Angel*, by Phyllis Grosskurth. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

public realm. We might also note that Byron’s Orientalist pose appears to be part of a sales strategy that Byron had enunciated a few years before to his friend Thomas Moore. In 1813, Byron had advised Moore to read Antoine Laurent Castellan’s *Moeurs, usages, costumes des Othomans* (1812) for poetic materials:

Stick to the East; the oracle, Staël, told me it was the only poetic policy. The North, South, and West, have all been exhausted; but from the East, we have nothing but Southey’s unsaleables. . . . The little I have done in that way is merely a “voice in the wilderness” for you; and, if it has had any success, that also will prove that the public are orientalizing, and pave the path for you. (*Letters and Journals* 3:101)

Moore took Byron’s advice and published his successful Oriental romance *Lalla Rookh* in 1817, a poem that described an India that the traveler Victor Jacquemont did not recognize: “Thomas Moore is not only a perfumer, but a liar to boot. I am now pursuing the same route that Lalla Rookh formerly did; and I have scarcely seen a tree since I left Delhi” (*BLJ* 1:360). The poetic Orient constructed for public consumption within Europe was clearly not

the geographical reality that an experienced traveler into India would recognize.

Our third representation, Sir Richard Burton, initially went to India as a member of the British army and almost immediately decided to appropriate Oriental costuming as a means of interacting more fully with his new surroundings: “The first difficulty was to pass for an Oriental, and this was as necessary as it was difficult. The European official in India seldom, if ever, sees anything in its real light, so dense is the veil which the fearfulness, the duplicity, the prejudice, and the superstitions of the natives hang before his eyes” (Burton, *Selected Papers*, 22). Burton went so far as to stain his skin with walnut juice in an attempt to move as a native in an alien culture that he wanted to master by understanding and experiencing it from within, so to speak. Such an experience recalls the situation of James Kirkpatrick, another British imperialist who between 1797 and 1805 adopted Hyderbadi (Indian) clothing and ways of life, so much so that he married an Indian woman according to Muslim law (Dalrymple, xxxviii). As Dalrymple notes, such a case reveals a much more hybrid colonial world than the one that Edward Said has charted: “with far less clearly defined ethnic, national and religious borders. . . . It was as if this early promiscuous mingling of races and ideas, modes of dress and ways of living, was something that was on no one’s agenda and suited nobody’s version of events. All sides seemed, for different reasons, to be slightly embarrassed by this moment of crossover, which they preferred to pretend had never happened. It is, after all, easier to see things in black and white” (xlv).

Years later, in 1853, Burton made a “pilgrimage to Mecca,” the *Hajj*, a feat accomplished by other Europeans, but not in indigenous dress, and not with the intent of convincing his fellow travelers that he was a practicing Muslim. Non-Muslims are, of course, prohibited from entering the Holy City of Mecca upon pain of death, and so the decision on Burton’s part was daring to say the least. Burton decided to resurrect a character he had once developed for British Intelligence in the 1840s, namely, Mirza Abdullah the Bushiri, “a half-Iranian, half-Arab traveler in fine linens and jewellery” (quoted in Lovell, 53). As the painting made of Burton as “Mirza Abdullah the Bushiri” illustrates, his “dress” was disarmingly familiar to Middle Eastern inhabitants. As Burton indicates in his letters, he would wear:

A muslin pirhan, or shirt with hanging arms, and skirts like a blouse buttoned around your neck . . . a pair of blue silk shalwars or drawers . . . tight around the ankles and gathered in with plaits around the waist. . . . [The] coat is a long, white cotton garment . . . then a pair of yellow leather papooshes [slippers], worked with silk flowers, a shawl by way of a girdle



Figure 5. Photograph of Sir Richard Burton as pilgrim. Reproduced with permission of Corbis Corporation.

and in it a small Persian knife, with ivory handle and a watered blade. . . .
(quoted in Lovell, 51)

Feeling that this character might be too conspicuous for his deceptive purposes, Burton transformed Abdullah into a “wandering dervish with a knowledge of magic and horoscopes” (Lovell, 122). He wore a plainer robe and did not display quite the linguistic mastery of Arabic that his first Abdullah manifested. Burton’s meticulous attention to the details of his Muslim impersonation did not merely reflect a desire to comprehend the life and experiences of the Oriental Other; rather, he transcended his ethnological interests in “passing as an Oriental” (Rice, 181) by engaging in unethical sociological practice (for which he was criticized in some quarters), as well as for indulging in the sheer pleasure of his wanderlust, what his biographer Lovell calls “the pure romance of the *Hajj*” (132), as the famous photograph of his *Hajj* persona suggests (fig. 5).

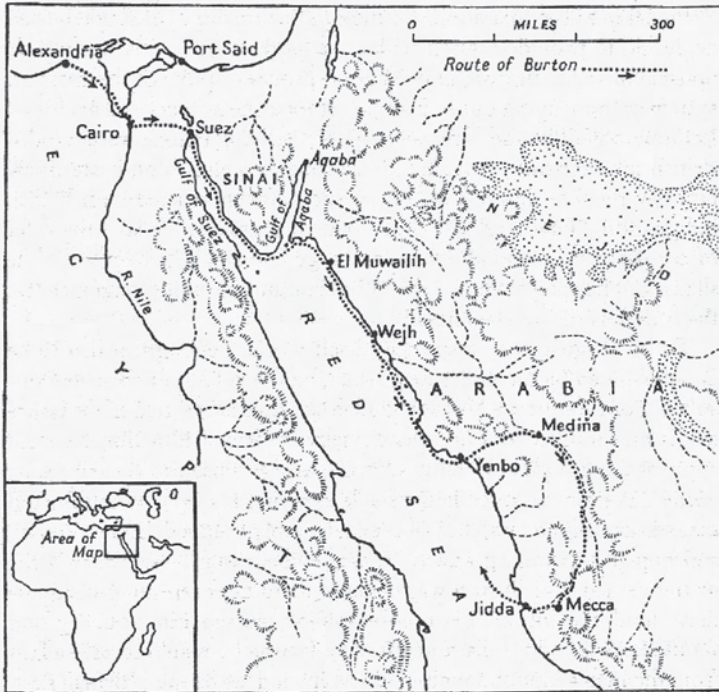


Figure 6. Map: “Pilgrimage to Mecca,” from *Burton: A Biography of Sir Richard Francis Burton*, by Byron Farwell. Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

Burton’s impersonation is an exhibition of his intellectual superiority and physical stamina, overcoming massive logistical problems simply to pursue his subject, the composition of his *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* in 1856, while it also acknowledges his complicity with British imperialism. Burton’s persistent appropriation of Oriental costume, this time the private dress of a pilgrim, suggests the ability of a male to enter a public space with a private intent. Further, in assuming a garb that is alien to his class he becomes in a sense a member of an ambiguous caste. And his compulsive documentation of the sexual practices of Chinese, Indian, African, and “other” peoples places him firmly in the ultramasculine realm. We can also note by examining the map of Burton’s travels (fig. 6) that his career trajectory coincided with the imperializing mission of the British Empire.

These three historical cases of famous writer/travelers confirm certain basic theoretical assumptions about Orientalism, notably their connections to British imperialism and what we now understand to be cultural hybrid-

ity. Though ensconced in widely different literary periods, stretching from the early eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, the portraits of Montagu and Byron and the photograph of Burton construct and reinforce Orientalized and continuously commodified versions of the British traveler in the East. This “traveler” consistently inhabits the popular imagination (at all class levels) because Mary Wortley Montagu’s Turkish lady, Byron’s Albanian potentate, and Burton’s devout Muslim pilgrim mirror the process of colonization through stylized representation. These strangers in strange lands do not merely exoticize the Oriental Other, entertaining readers with the oddities of cultural difference. Indeed, Montagu, Byron, and Burton impersonate in order to instruct their readers as well as to titillate their senses. But they were always interacting with cultures that had their own long and rich history, and that is what is often overlooked in Western attempts to decode Orientalism. Nicholas Thomas has recently discussed some of the challenges of wrestling with colonial history, and he has observed that it is crucial to “avoid reproducing one of the central assumptions of Orientalism: that prospectively or already colonized places are a *tabula rasa* for the projection of European power and European representations” (36).

II: The Essays in the Collection

Not coincidentally, then, the essays in this collection frequently confront the problematics of Orientalist definition and representation. Moving chronologically, the first section of the volume explores a variety of the theoretical approaches to British Orientalism. In an essay titled “Interrogating Orientalism: Theories and Practices,” Jeffrey Cass defines the many Orientalisms that have populated the theoretical field. Cass interrogates the concept and surveys the ways that Orientalism has been approached in literary and cultural studies. Also, he historically outlines various iterations of Orientalism although it is Edward Said’s famous exploration of the term in *Orientalism* that has dominated theoretical discussions for over twenty-five years. Cass indicates how and why postcolonial critics challenge Saidian Orientalism. Writers such as Homi Bhabha, Ali Behdad, Ania Loomba, Dennis Porter, James Clifford, and Sara Mills construct a critique that attempts to render the field of Orientalism and its representations more dynamic, more capable of producing a critical model that explains the complex interchanges between Orient and Occident. While Said’s critics to some extent acknowledge the explanatory power of his interpretive model and its lingering presence in the field of literary and cultural studies, they nonetheless ascertain that Said’s

central impulse—to tease out imperialist presumptions from Orientalist tropes—should itself be subject to a kind of ideological scrutiny. This scrutiny focuses not only on Saidian Orientalism but on Said’s relationship with humanism and its promises of liberation through individual self-consciousness. Though *Orientalism* protests the ideological collusion between humanism and colonialism, Said still flirts with the humanist’s hope of the transcendence of self through an aesthetic appreciation of literature and the arts, an unexamined pleasure of the text. For Bhabha and others, this hope actually constitutes a kind of subjection, a subsumption of the other into the valorized confines of humanism’s big tent and a betrayal of the postcolonial desire to interrogate social, cultural, and political difference. Cass provides several perspectives on this important issue within Said’s work, including critiques by Emily Apter, Mustapha Marrouchi, Kojin Karatani, Aamir Mufti, and Harry Harootunian. Cass concludes by describing the ways in which Orientalism has migrated into literary studies, iterated into new formats and texts, periods and genres. In particular, the period between 1750 and 1850 becomes a convenient snapshot for an analysis of Orientalist discourse(s) before, during, and following the historical date that Said supplies as the genesis of the professional study of Orientalism—the 1797 invasion of Egypt by Napoleon.

Diane Long Hoeveler’s essay, “The Female Captivity Narrative: Blood, Water, and Orientalism,” suggests that another trope besides self and other may be “even more germane to an understanding of British and French cultural productions: blood and water.” Using the trope of blood and water, Hoeveler examines the female captivity narrative, which generally castigates Islam for its treatment of women, permitting, for example, the practice of polygamy. For Hoeveler, “blood and water” become essential figures in texts such as Elizabeth Marsh’s *The Female Captive* and Robert Bage’s *The Fair Syrian* because of the fear long associated with the captivity of Christian women within Muslim harems that stems from “the threatened circulation of female blood and control of bloodlines.” Female captivity narratives thus impel imperialist logics because they reify the threat to British middle-class domesticity, the life’s blood of the “home” and, by extension, the empire. Hoeveler thus makes use of the trope of blood and water in order to stress the internal contradiction between the British fascination with the Orient and its concomitant moral condemnations of “Oriental” behavior from within a framework of “muscular” Christianity. Furthermore, while Said ignores the works of British women writers in *Orientalism*, Hoeveler demonstrates their complicity in constructing “a female imperialist gaze toward the Oriental sphere.” For Hoeveler, while British middle-class women writers like Aubin, Wollstonecraft, and Marsh are “critical of Islam’s perceived

denigration of women,” they also represent women’s bodies that appeal “to an aggressive Islamic male gaze.”

In “‘Better than the Reality’: The Egyptian Market in Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing,” Emily Haddad develops the “implications” of another master trope within Orientalist texts—the market. From Haddad’s perspective, this trope epitomizes the relationship between the British traveler and the Egyptian market, but it does so in a way that collapses the conventional hierarchies between colonizer and colonized. By entering the Egyptian bazaar and becoming a consumer, the traveler is thrown off balance, occupying “a subject position not fully congruent with colonial hegemonic practice.” The standard Egyptian practice of asking for a gratuity—*baksheesh*—even when no services have been performed gives the Egyptian “a measure of control over the British customer,” for the British traveler can only be successful in acquiring goods and services with the active cooperation of the locals. The gratuity thus becomes the bribe; the gratified traveler is transformed into the fleeced consumer. In the end, *baksheesh* destabilizes the conventionally static and comfortable representations of Egypt—its ancient monuments, its desert landscapes, and its “picturesque bazaars”—and instead represents the compromised and vulnerable status of the British traveler.

In “Colonial Counterflow: From Orientalism to Buddhism,” Mark Lussier considers the possibility that the “Orient” may have had an important effect on its own representation within Western thought. Using the term “colonial counterflow,” Lussier contends that Buddhism emerges into European consciousness within the nineteenth century as a philosophical and spiritual counterweight to Enlightenment rationalism and that, somewhat ironically, European imperial interests make possible this “engagement with and representation of indigenous materials.” Consequently, while Lussier views *Orientalism* as a text that reifies the West’s power over the Orient, he also believes that Buddhism becomes a “counter-influence” over and against the colonialist project that interestingly coincides with the appearance of Romanticism. In particular, Tibetan Buddhism “cast[s] long shadows across the West” and even “take[s] up residence within it.” Beginning with Alexander the Great, Lussier outlines the historical interactions between Buddhism and the West, stressing the British influence on the Himalayan region at the end of the eighteenth century, which begins a new phase of spiritual colonialism, and which the Jesuits had attempted to initiate in Japan and China. For Lussier, the most important test case for counterflow is that of Alexander Csoma, the Hungarian father of Tibetan studies, whose sojourn to Tibet produces the first systematic investigations of Tibetan grammar and the origins of the Tibetan language. Although under the aegis of Sir William Jones’s Asiatick Society of Bengal and the patronage of British colonial agents like

William Moorcroft, Csoma nonetheless makes available for the first time to readers in English the entire Buddhist canon, as well as the *Tibetan-English Dictionary* and *Tibetan Grammar in English*. Csoma's work vigorously circulates Buddhist thought in the West, the reception of which undermines the "European commitment to its own epistemic form of enlightenment" since the Buddhist "dharma" deconstructs its positivistic worldview. The incorporation of Buddhism within Western philosophy culminates in the work of Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche, who embody the effects of the counterflow that Lussier outlines throughout his essay.

The fifth essay in the collection is Jeffrey Cass's "Homoerotics and Orientalism in William Beckford's *Vathek*: Liberalism and the Problem of Pederasty." Cass explores the whole conflicted representation of the Orient as a site of dangerous sexual hygiene, in which "liberal" thinking seeks to erase queer difference, uncomfortable with Beckford's horrifying conflation of homosexuality and pederasty, in fact, utterly discomfited by any real examination of queer desire or practice. Citing remarks Homi Bhabha makes about the intersections of postcolonial theory and sexuality, Cass argues for a recontextualization of Beckford's work within the framework of queer theory. In particular, Cass makes use of the work of Cindy Paton and Benigno Sánchez-Eppler to question whether or not the ending of *Vathek*, in which Beckford condemns his principal characters (Vathek, Carathis, and Nouronihar) to the Orientalized hell of Eblis, represents Beckford's own guilt at having an affair with thirteen-year-old William Courtenay. Cass examines this critical commonplace within the work of several of Beckford's critics who assume that Vathek's fate is a psychosexual projection of Beckford's and which, Cass finds, is a more comfortable critical solution than the one that also offers itself at the end of the novel—that Beckford feels no guilt whatsoever and that he fully expects to live a full life with his shameless appetites intact. Cass argues that the more conventional moralistic solution signals a kind of panic on the part of Beckford's critics (both heterosexual and homosexual) who refuse to confront the "problem of pederasty" in *Vathek*. Horrified that Beckford does not feel real guilt over his pederasty, perhaps even enjoying it, and concerned that he uses Orientalist representations to mask his perverse sexual desire and sexual politics, many of Beckford's critics attempt to separate the pederastic from the homosexual by erasing the former and reconstructing the latter. Ironically, the last word in the novel is given to the "good old genius" who presides over Gulchenrouz and the heaven of boys, which Cass interprets as the Orientalized paradise that Beckford not only covets but refuses to acknowledge as being perverse or licentious. Beckford's sexual politics threaten far more than a simple interpretation of the novel's conclusion by occasionally prudish but mainstream critics. Indeed, his Ori-

entalist homoerotics not only challenge “the legitimacy of such readers to pass these judgments,” they constitute a field of queer, pederastic play that “liberal” critics would prefer to remain buried with Beckford’s presumed psychosexual guilt that the text only apparently affirms.

In the next essay, “Orientalism in Disraeli’s *Alroy*,” Sheila Spector explores the representation of the Orientalized Jew in Disraeli’s *Alroy*, rightly viewing Disraeli’s work through the prism of his politics. Spector argues that the central conflict of the novel between Jew and Muslim has implications for our understanding of Disraeli’s decision to become a Tory, as well as his foreign policy during his years as prime minister. Just as Disraeli works out his politics of the 1840s in his “Young England” trilogy (*Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred*), so in the 1830s, he acts out his emerging social and political views. In *Alroy*, Spector argues, Disraeli “uses the Middle East as a kind of negative laboratory,” for he urges a government that balances its state obligations with its religious affiliations; he desires a golden mean that avoids the dangers of religious extremism. Drawing on an obscure episode from twelfth-century Jewish history, Disraeli advocates a constitutional relationship between church and state that is productive as it is receptive to the needs of the nation. The novel thus becomes a political and religious allegory, complicated by its numerous allusions and appropriations of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* and by the fact that *Alroy*, unlike the Red Cross Knight, makes choices he cannot undo or for which he cannot atone. Most interestingly, *Alroy* may be as Orientalized as his evil Turkish foe, for despite his good intentions, he is “othered” by his lack of Christian virtue. Hence, although the novel “conflates several versions of a common trope of Middle Eastern culture, the slaying of an unjust overseer,” *Alroy*’s heroism against that Orientalized evil is pointless precisely because his religion cannot adequately address the danger, thus dooming his empire to infidel invaders. As an Orientalist allegory, *Alroy* anticipates British imperial policies in the Middle East, for drawing on cultural stereotypes of Jews as helpless pawns in the face of infidel aggression, the British view themselves as virtuous protectors whose stability depends on balancing religious and secular interests throughout their empire. In the end, Spector darkly implies, Disraeli denies the efficacy of his Jewish heritage because it cannot win (or help him win).

This volume, however, does more than present textual analyses of Orientalist representations, which, to be sure, are interesting and important pieces of scholarship in their own right. The volume also intends to promote the teaching of Orientalism in the classroom by focusing on student engagement with the pragmatics of Orientalist representation. “Interrogating Orientalism” means, therefore, introducing students—at all levels—to the ways in which Orientalism exists in their everyday lives, and not only in the complex

and nuanced close readings of distant and strange texts. University professors, college instructors, and other professional practitioners will be able to read not only about the interpretive practices that underwrite scholarship in Orientalism, but about the pedagogical strategies that shape the processes of individual student learning, as well as assist the transformation of groups of students into genuine learning communities. In a very real and practical sense, the study of Orientalism means more than investigating the ways in which the cultural landscapes of the “Other” penetrate and formulate the political minds of students. It means creating a space of self-reflexive interrogation in which students cannot and should not remain separate or insulated from one another, powerlessly inhabiting the social and cultural peripheries, or at least believing they do. Instead, deciphering the Oriental “Other” becomes an expansive enterprise. Without some regard for the ideological contexts of Orientalism, discussions about the nature of representation appear moot, for they fail to stimulate a transformative praxis that ties such discussions to the everyday lives and actions of their participants. The essays in the second section of this volume focus, therefore, on “performing” Orientalism in the classroom, and not only in demonstrating its intellectual properties.

For example, in the first essay of this section, “Teaching the Quintessential Turkish Tale: Montagu’s *Turkish Embassy Letters*,” Jeanne Dubino examines teaching the Turkish tale by using Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s highly accessible *Turkish Embassy Letters*, the first secular text by a woman about the Middle East. Dubino finds the book an effective way of introducing Orientalism to students and, taking her theoretical cues from Meyda Yegenoglu, Lisa Lowe, Mary Louise Pratt, and Anna Secor, complicating the concept so that students learn that Orientalism is not a “unified” concept. Following Secor, Dubino suggests that the “Turkish tale” is a play on the term “traveler’s tale”—a space of negotiated intercultural contact in which students investigate the effects of a new and feminized genre on Western readership. More importantly, Dubino exposes students to the multiplicity of discourses affected by the feminization of the Turkish (or traveler’s) tale. Indeed, disciplines such as literature, history, sociology, anthropology/ethnography, politics, and cultural studies comprise what Barbara Korte refers to as an “*omnium-gatherum*,” that is to say, the “multifarious” travel book that gathers into itself multiple methodologies, discourses, disciplinary data, and perspectives with the intent of analyzing representations of travel. Despite Montagu’s ethnographic intention of accurately depicting Turkish lives, however, her efforts principally succeed in “capturing the ‘otherness of the other.’” Or, perhaps more succinctly, Montagu “cannot altogether avoid the tropes of Orientalism.” To a large extent, then, Montagu inscribes these

tropes within *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, presenting students with the opportunity of exploring Montagu's text as unconventional epistolary novel, travel tale, social and cultural history, feminist manifesto, and site of Oriental Othering. At the end of the essay, Dubino suggests a course format that includes possible required and reserve readings, as well as course objectives and assignments.

In the second essay in this section, "Representing India in Drawing Room and Classroom; or, Miss Owenson and 'Those Gay Gentlemen, Brahma, Vishnu, and Co.,'" Michael Franklin is concerned with a wide range of theoretical issues, including the social and political alignments in Romantic era literature and history, the conception of female genius and the function of the female artist within constricting gender ideologies, the pressing need for a discrimination among Orientalisms, and the contemporary relevance of pluralism and similitude (rather than difference and otherness). In his essay Franklin uses Sidney Owenson's *The Missionary* as a text that mediates these issues for the classroom. Like G. Todd Davis (below), Franklin is also concerned with reception theory, or the ways in which "earlier generations of critics and readers have shaped our conception" of texts and authors. Franklin wishes to teach students how to read "against the grain of [*The Missionary's*] particular agenda" in order to engage in "dialogue between past and present postcolonialisms" and have the students confront and respond to the textual dialectic between the anxieties of their own readerly expectations and personal experiences and the anxieties of empire, both of which control and contain those expectations and experiences. In the case of *The Missionary*, Franklin views Owenson's domestic trope of the drawing room as a supreme figure for the politics of empire, inasmuch as "the novel was composed in the library to provide luxurious listening" for a readership "for whom Orientalism might prove congenial amusement" but who are also in agreement with British imperial ambitions. Franklin thus connects the "performative expectations of [Owenson's] audience" with classroom performance, finally disrupting students from the comfort of their own Orientalist perches. Bringing "those gay gentlemen, Brahma, Vishnu, and Co" (a reference to a reviewer from the *Critical Review*) into the classroom at first confirms and then subtly subverts the students' Orientalist expectations because Owenson's "sentimental" text deliberately manipulates Orientalist stereotypes to "dispel prejudice." She uses the overheated language of sentimental fiction, which, following Ina Ferris, Franklin believes is a discourse of romantic theatricality that functions as a cover story for her political and ideological interventions. At the heart of this story are the Hindu priestess Luxima and the Catholic priest Hilarion, whose excessive (and appropriately forbidden) ardor for one another serves to highlight the "common ground" between

“Vedantic and Christian concepts of mystic love.” In short, Owenson masterfully employs Orientalism to assert a cultural pluralism that undermines the inherent cultural differences (typified by religion) between East and West, finally harmonizing and reconciling the two. For students, the interpretive challenge lies in deconstructing the binaries that Owenson deliberately sets up—climate, culture, gender, and religion—and by recognizing that they are still configured in the students’ expectations of these categories.

In “‘Unlettered Tartars’ and ‘Torpid Barbarians’: Teaching the Figure of the Turk in Shelley and De Quincey,” Filiz Turhan speaks of the figural nature of the Turk in both writers who rely “on a presentation of the Turks as a trope for racial difference.” Though contextualizing the historical relations between the British and the Turks, Turhan rightly points out that complex events like the Greek uprising of 1821 do not necessarily alter the Orientalist representations of the Turk and, in the cases of Shelley and De Quincey, “are given to descriptions that shock and titillate through the narrative of explicit horror and violence.” In Shelley’s poem *Hellas*, the Turks are wild animals, wholly incapable (unlike the Greeks) of establishing modern political or social institutions. In De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, opium eating not only serves to reinforce Orientalist stereotypes, it actually confirms the superiority of the British. The Turks remain torpid after opium use; the British persevere in their habits of mind even after opium consumption. In other words, the British are better opium eaters than the Turks; they can control themselves, which makes them worthy of their imperial ambitions, while the Ottoman Turks cannot succeed in maintaining theirs.

In “‘Boundless Thoughts and Free Souls’: Teaching Byron’s *Sardanapalus*, *Lara*, and *The Corsair*,” G. Todd Davis notes that his students often find Byron “irresistible,” particularly *Don Juan*, but that they are more guarded and suspicious of his Oriental tales, “finding the language and context too difficult and foreign to fathom.” Students are also resistant to critical theory, and Davis reveals how he uses reception theory to break down the barriers of the Oriental text. Teasing out students’ expectations about the Oriental tale becomes paramount for Davis. By employing Jaus’s “horizons-of-experience” for the Orientalist contexts Said defines, Davis feels that students will employ their own familiarity with and experience of the Oriental Other in unpacking the strange and unfamiliar textual representations of works such as *Sardanapalus*, *Lara*, and *The Corsair*. Contemporary constructions of the Orient in film—*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; *The Matrix Trilogy*; and *Kill Bill, Volume I* and *Kill Bill, Volume II*—rivet the students’ attention to Orientalism in popular culture. Their experience of these “texts” mediates their reading of other Orientalist texts, providing a language and a vocabulary with which to interpret them

and decipher their strangeness. Furthermore, Davis guides his students to the notion that reception itself is an Orientalist trope in Byron's work, for Byron worries about how his readers will receive him and his work. In the case of *The Giaour*, for example, Byron makes use of the vampire (a Gothic villain frequently Orientalized in literature and film) to trope the idea of prey and predator. Just as the audience would devour him/his work, so Byron manufactures an Oriental Other who would assault and prey upon his audience. Thus, the meaning of the text lies in the reader's expectation and fear of being consumed, even as he or she performs "consumption" through the act of reading.

Byron's sexuality, too, becomes a transactional flashpoint between reader, writer, and text, and Davis promotes different horizons-of-experience for Byron before and after his Grand Tour, thus shaping a variety of interesting comparison/contrast topics. The Orientalized landscape of the East alters the nature of possible representations, and students will expect a more detectable homoeroticism, which they will uncover in Byron's relevant journals and letters, as well as in works such as *Sardanapalus*. Finally, Davis wishes students to share and examine their own and each other's expectations of the Orientalist text, and he uses electronic communications to facilitate these interactions. Requiring students to write to one another guides them to more critical, less passive interpretive roles. Asking his students "to recreate Byron in their own constructed image and to situate him within a historical and cultural milieu" is possible because Davis exploits the students' internalized stereotypes of the Oriental Other and then explodes them by examining their expectations. Davis ultimately uses their horizons-of-experience to probe their fear of the Oriental Other and thereby transform their personal interpretive landscapes.

In his essay "Byron's *The Giaour*: Teaching Orientalism in the Wake of September 11," Alan Richardson highlights the process of bringing more living contexts to Orientalist texts such as William Beckford's *Vathek*, a task that Richardson successfully addresses in his edited volume *Three Oriental Tales*. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, irrevocably alter, however, the "conditions for teaching Orientalism," and Richardson recalls that in the first days following the attacks, the media initially recirculate the "old binaries"—East and West, fanatic and secular, Islam and Christendom—that speak to the "stereotypical Oriental Other" that typically feeds media, filmic, and literary representations of Asian and African cultures. As Richardson argues, however, because anti-Muslim hate crimes did not rise as precipitously as might have been expected and because the media finally conveyed a less monolithic, more complex version of Islam, the public began to understand that Osama bin Laden did not "typify" Islam any more than Jerry

Falwell embodies Christianity. Richardson's purpose is to connect this historical outcome to a textual reading of Byron's *The Giaour*. It, too, "begins much as did the immediate public reaction to the horrors of September 11 by seeming to confirm a simplistically and remorselessly dichotomous view of East and West, Europe and its Oriental Other." Like the narrator of *The Giaour*, students will at first view the Oriental tale as a standard division of a democratic Greece and a despotic Asia, a free Europe and an imprisoned East. And yet, for Richardson, properly contextualizing *The Giaour*—both with current events and with the facts of Byron's life—ensures that students will recognize that the Orient is no more unified or hegemonic a concept than is the "West." Even so, Richardson urges the teaching of Orientalism (and its representations) with texts like Byron's not merely because of his desire for better, more sophisticated readers, but because he wishes students to break Orientalist habits of thought, in particular those that inhabit clever disinformation campaigns aimed at elevating the passions and circumventing the intellect.

In the final essay in the collection, "Teaching Nineteenth-Century Orientalist Entertainments," Edward Ziter begins with the premise that "the tropes of the Orientalist entertainment industry . . . have long informed public opinion in the West," and he goes on to examine the "Orientalist imagery" of the Great Exhibition in 1851. With an eye toward a teaching of Orientalism that focuses on broadly consumed visual forms, Ziter inveigles students into a study of the literal production of a commercial and consumable Orientalism that extends to contemporary practices, visual and performance forms, and state policy. The circulation of Orientalism within British popular culture, and reified by the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, not only "unpacks" its history, but unearths as well the unexamined ideology that connects the Great Exhibition to the construction of academic fields such as ethnography. These fields construct "a new vocabulary of exoticism," even as they also "perpetuate older tropes of Orientalism." Ziter feels that while students will recognize the nearly inevitable continuation of Orientalist tropes, they will discover how these tropes can also be "manipulated and resisted." Ziter acknowledges the deictic nature of "entertainment" and popular diversion. As a result, he employs many nontraditional texts that contextualize specific events like the Great Exhibition. To be sure, nineteenth-century magazines and newspapers assist in this process, but "marginal iconography" in the forms of newspaper illustrations, tinsel prints, caricatures, and even academic painting are the most successful "texts" that enable students to interrogate the proliferation of cultural metaphors and metonymies. These figures explain the manufacture of British identity in relation to the Oriental Other, even as the British seek to contain and control the marginalized

Other through entertainments, museums, and a profusion of ethnographic displays. Students discern that as a Victorian theme park, the Great Exhibition is as much about the exercise of imperial power and colonial politics as it is a scientific, historic testament to Victorian progress.

While the essays in this volume certainly enter the arena of raucous academic debate surrounding Orientalism and postcolonialism, they are intended for both specialists and students. Focusing on the numerous and problematic representations of the Orient in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature, they cover both hermeneutical and pedagogical practices. As such, they seek to expand our understanding of how Orientalism has functioned and, indeed, continues to function in our world.