

Friedrich Rückert, Eastern Literature, and Said's Orientalism Critical Analysis

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Literary Translation, Artistic Talent, and the Study of the East

It should be processed by a person with talent, creating an artwork in the same manner that a mine causes to create in the form of a diamond. We shall embark upon, in the following text, a German man's life whose success in terms of language will surprise the reader. Friedrich Rückert was a German philologist, poet, philosopher and thinker. Named after Johann Michael Friedrich Rückert, Friedrich Rückert's life span remained between the last quarter of the 18th century and the 1st quarter of the 19th century. The son of a revered lawyer was born in central Germany in 1788, finished high school and primary school in his hometown and for legal studies, he went to Würzburg. At that time, Rückert wrote his first poem, thereby beginning his career in the world of language whose first academic step towards success, ultimately defying Said's notion of orientalism.

Rückert's works came out as the Hebrew language learning which included a letter written to Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall where Rückert demonstrated that he, at just the age of 18 years, was beginning to learn Persian and Arabic. In no time, he became familiar with Italy during 1817, and it was when Rückert began to realize the Eastern winds (Berman). Despite his desire to return to his homeland, Germany, he found himself an orientalist in Vienna alongside Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall. The map of the global languages, after he saw Hammer-Purgstall, widened for him. He began comprehensive language studies after leaving Vienna in order to return to the family.

For the poet, positive results were yielded due to his earnest efforts to learn Eastern languages. He then moved, for the publication of his most famous poems, "Eastern Roses," to Coburg to utilize the library of a well-known palace in 1822, where he also visited Salzburg, Tyrol and Munich. An artwork of six volumes, namely "The Wisdoms of Brahmins," was published by him in 1839 and was rewarded for his great efforts and success by King Ludwig I. Rückert passed away on Jan. 31, 1866, in Neuses after executing very important works in art, literature and language (Berman).

Said's Orientalism and the Imperial Context of Western Scholarship

Said's analysis of Orientalism is seen in the imperialist era in the 19th century. He considers orientalism in the imperialist era of the 19th century and also relates that to the beginning of

orientalism that stemmed from the church council of Vienne in 1312. As per Said, this eventually resulted in the formation of language 'chairs' for Greek, Arabic, Syriac, and Hebrew (Berman). At the beginning of the book, Said states orientalism is a corporate institution that deals with an orientation that refers to making statements and views about ruling, teaching, and settling it. Eventually, orientalism, as a concept, is seen to become a Western-style that dominates, restructures and has authority over the Orient.

When one speaks about orientalism, that is to explain the continuous concern that is seen in non-academic and academic readers with the transformative effect of Said's orientalism. In many ways, Said's text is seen as something of a challenge by historians in society and in English literature. For many of the scholars who were known to Said's orientalism views, it offered an entirely new field of inquiry into the relationship between colonial and European history as far as capitalism and cultural production were concerned.

This was also seen between the domination and enlightenment politics. One can also see that orientalism is a particular mode of interpretive methodology that eventually recycled the meaning of orientalism; this term was once used for interest and cultural appreciation and to see the relationship of control, abuse, and mistrust. The following essay also looks at Said's arguments that relate to European and colonial ties that were highly absorbed as ethical, intellectual, and political elements. Today, there is no serious relationship that is imaginable that is unaware of the formative element of European culture and history (Gaeffke). When one views Said's work as a model of interpretative methodology, Said's work is seen to be subjected to compelling pieces of criticism, particularly by literary criticism in the 18th century.

To note, Said largely omitted parts before the Bonaparte expedition in Egypt in 1798 and provided an entirely hegemonic and monolithic version of orientalism as transportable to any given place and time. In a sense, there was an orientalist challenge where the 18th-century scholars were given a broader scope of working in the history of the empire and in literary criticism. Such events allowed these scholars to have an 18th-century literary view of Orientalism and also another chance to adapt and refine the concept of Orientalism to the place and time of the empire. One can go so far as to say that when one reads European textual materials again but with an orientalist viewpoint, it allows one to have a collusive relationship with colonialism as a whole.

Colonial History, Anthropology, and Relations Between Literature and Empire

Essentially, the development of colonial history has allowed there to be a historical anthropologist viewpoint about insights into relationships between the English empire and literature. In many ways, orientalism gives an analytical viewpoint to view issues that relate to the transformation of Eastern texts, as traveling between continents and countries was involved in promoting or demolishing these genres (Berman). Ruckert was a talented poet and translator who could converse in 44 languages.

Moreover, he had an important place as far as translating the Quran was seen. This inspired some of the teachers of his philosopher Mawlana self. Though Rückert was a German poet and translator, he had a great influence on the way that oriental languages were taught. He was highly active in the 19th century, and the genre that he targeted was German poems in the spirit of oriental masters.

Before anything else, Rückert is a philologist. In so far as I think, Rückert was one of the most learned men in this field. He pursued language learning the whole of his life and believed language is a common root for most men and that the evolution of language into poetry and philosophy takes place. In the “Ideal Language”, he seems to compete philosophy and poetry. According to him, all languages on the globe have one source language, and the East has to be the origin of such a language. Greek, according to his opinion, is not a language that has been missed or sought.

The origin of humankind, as he believes, is the Eastern world and the main source or universal language belonged to the East. Before Rückert took to translation, there was, in Germany, only one translation of the Quran. Rückert’s translation and the one made by Theodor Arnold in 1796 had important differences (Gaeffke). Arnold’s method was more of a direct translation, whereas Rückert attempted to create a philosophical and more literal artwork. Also, he spent a lot of time engaging with Maulana Jalaludin Rumi, who had influenced him very much.

Rückert’s Languages and the Scope of His Eastern Scholarship

The number of languages learned, studied and translated by Rückert is 44. At first, you might be astonished to hear this number, but you can have an idea after you read a few stories on this topic. One of his students, Paul de Lagarde, narrates that: “A person approached Rückert and asked him to teach Tamil as he was heading to East India for an assignment upon whose inquisition Rückert apologized for not having an understanding of the language, but promised him to teach soon. Rückert had no idea of Tamil in June, but he could speak Tamil fluently in October and educated that man the language for which he had promised.”

Let’s consider the texts which were translated by him from other languages, particularly those of Eastern languages. The most surprising effort put into translation can be seen in the German version of Quranic text which was made possible by him at about 20 years, according to sources. However, this fact is somewhat of a disputed issue. He wrote to a friend a letter in 1923 saying, “An entire winter was spent by me in translating Quran”. Despite knowing that the completion of the translation could not have been pulled off, it took him about 40 years to finish this work. Indeed, Rückert had no intention of translating the whole Quranic text into the German language. Nevertheless, 90% of the Islamic holy book, as per sources, was translated by him, and the work was published 20 years before his death (Gaeffke).

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Rumi, Persian Poetry, and Rückert's Work as a Translator

He was influenced by Maulana Rumi and had engaged with him for a long time which appears from the translations from Mathnavi and Divan-i-Kebir. It is necessary to mention that the person who first applied the form of eulogy to German poetry was Rückert. He also maintained the aruz wezni (prosody). The people familiar with Aruz Wezni know the fact that it is very hard to write poems in German prosody. Apart from his deep interest in Eastern literature, he also established "Language and Life Philosophy" in the mirror of Eastern literature.

Once, a well-known poet made the remark. "Solemnity prevails ethics." We can easily figure that the presence of people like Rückert is too rare to be realized when we look at present circumstances and the atmosphere prevailing in our social sciences and literature. What is important is to note that he became known right roughly 150 years after he passed away. As a memory, he left a solid "solemnity" for us so we could realize our responsibility to preserve his solemnity and efforts. I hope that in our memory of Rückert, we commit the following verse of him as a sign of effort and solemnity: "The thing that I did not experience did not return to me as a song.

To study the Eastern values regarding women, European Artists such as Rückert had no source. Muslim women in the 19th century lived privately, and men could not access them, except the very close relations, such as husbands, without the persons risking injury to themselves. Other renowned artists of the century, such as Theodore Chasse Riau, Delacroix, Jean-Auguste Ingres, and Jean-Leon George, had based their well-known drawings of oriental women on heresy and French models, in some cases. Jean-Auguste Ingres's popular series of paintings depicting Odalisque, the eastern concubine of a Turkish Sultan, was actually the painting of a French model named Madame Felix. Photographic images of the orients were tampered with. The advent of photography in the early 1800s and the corresponding advances made by scientists in capturing real-life images had little or no effect on the modes of capturing oriental culture.

Ironically, some images of the orients were taken, but in most cases, photographers preferred to stage scenes rather than capture the reality of the East (Berman). According to photography scholar Nissan Perez, photographers chose to stage scenes so as to reinforce the West's myopic view of the orients. Orientalist art was hugely popular in the 19th century. All over Europe – France, Britain, Italy etc., the fascination with the East led to the formation of art groups that placed their focus on explaining oriental culture through art. In 19th century France, 1893 to be precise, the Society of Orientalist Painters was founded, and its honorary leader was Jean-Leon Gerome, who visited Morocco just once but painted images of Turkey and Western Asia and claimed they were factual. On Jean-

Leon Gerome's only visit to Morocco, he wrote about his disillusionment with the fact that the subject matters of his paintings were not the reality on the ground. The orients spurred a new wave of romanticism in art.

Twentieth-Century Criticism of Orientalist Art and Representation

In the 20th century, criticism of Oriental art took the trend. Over the years, writers have denounced the false nature of oriental life demonstrated in 19th-century drawings. What challenged the West's perspective regarding Oriental women and culture was Said's work "Orientalism," which was later on portrayed in famous artworks of the 19th century. Other famous critical works involve Howe's Orientalism in the French 19th Century, Passages of Western Art and Literature and Ruth Bernard Yeazel's Harems of the Mind. Much academic discourse, since the publication of "Orientalism" by Said in 1978, has started to make use of the "Orientalism" term to imply generally patronizing Western behaviors toward Middle East, North African and Asian societies.

The West, in Said's analysis, essentializes these societies as undeveloped and static – thereby wrongly interpreting Orientalist culture, which can be reproduced, depicted and studied. Said writer, implicit in this fabrication is the belief that Western society is superior, flexible, rational, and developed. To portray a pervasive Western convention – artistic and academic – of biased outsider manifestation of the Eastern culture, Edward Said redevise the term Orientalism to affect this Western outlook that got roots in the 18th and 19th centuries (Berman). Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony is developed by the thesis of Orientalism. It also influenced Michel Foucault's theorization of discourse, where he observes the relation between knowledge and power to criticize the academic convention of Oriental research. Contemporary scholars were criticized by Said, showing their disposition to perpetuate the convention of outsider interpretation of Arab-Islamic traditions, particularly Fouad Ajami and Bernard Lewis.

The question of whether and how it is practical to discuss the oriental without an orientalist cliché was inherited by the Experts in Islamic Studies from Edward Said. A great number of German-speaking people have come to know the answer. Instead of studying different "Islams," their feedback is to consistently prevent sweeping essentialist assertions along the statements "Islam is..." to let Islam speak for itself as far as possible and to reflect on their own research. Of Academic history, Edward Said would just be a slice, and we should not be, for now, bothered to discuss his work.

Nevertheless, many single-focused studies were brought and overviewed by him since stressing his viewpoint more convincingly and precisely. When we reread, we experience Orientalism as an essay that is overflowing its banks, a little shoddy in its form, at times confused, a little premature in its judgments – which are rarely incorrect but which one wishes more cautiously derived. Where there is no need to be vulnerable, there Said opens up to attack. His lack of distance supplied a generation of Muslim fundamentalists with the forms for their no less efficient 'Orientalist' clichés.

Western Knowledge, Cultural Judgment, and the Limits of Said's Critique

It appears from Said's book that any and all assertions by Westerners as to the Middle East can be rejected as racist and worthless. Any feedback coming from a European as regards a range of topics from the Giza pyramids to the Sinbad the Sailor stories to the nature of Islamic art can be supposed from the scratch by the readers of *Orientalism* to be orientalist – or Islamophobic, latterly. Indeed, the very scholars and writers described by Said tell a different tale. The *Vast Description of Egypt* is one of the first works on Orientalism discussed by him, researched by a team of French analysts, ordered by Napoleon and whose work was published in 1828 in a series of monumental volumes.

Said quotes no more than a passage of its preface from this staggering work. He finds evidence in this one passage that the scholars of Napoleon viewed Egypt as a theatre of colonial authority. Indeed, the passage is fairly anodyne and looks irrelevant. The description is examined outright with its diligent drawing of snail shells and stingrays and cautious records of Engineering Machinery put into dragging water from the Nile River, costumes, and plowing techniques (Berman).

Overall, when one talks about the relevance that Friedrich Rückert has on Eastern Literature and the way that it defies Said's notion of Orientalism, there are many factors that are considered, as discussed above. There was surely a sense of discrimination towards the knowledge of the Middle East in German societies and the way that the role of adaptations and translation were seen. Early on, translations from Persian, Arabic, and Turkish origins were highly popular among German authors, including Rückert. The implication of Friedrich Rückert's adaptation towards learning foreign languages is seen in a different view as it defies the entire notion of orientalism that was common at the time. Rückert was the first German to have introduced Arabic poetry in a Germany form.

Works Cited

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