

Gender as the UnSaid: Exploring the Interstices in Edward Said's *Orientalism*

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Abstract

This article explores the textual and geographical interstices in Edward Said's foundational text, *Orientalism* (1978; "Afterword" 1995) as well as some aspects of the post-Orientalist legacy. By focusing on the representation of women, sexual dissidents and gender outlaws as part of the "UnSaid," I aim to demonstrate that these interstitial spaces dissolve the Saidian East/West binaries.

Keywords: Edward Said, gender, orientalism, sexuality

In his 1995 “Afterword” to *Orientalism*, written some fifteen years after the book was first published, Said remarks that “it is now very strikingly no longer the case that the lesser peoples—formerly colonized, enslaved, suppressed—are silent or unaccounted for except by senior European or American males. There has been a revolution in the consciousness of women, minorities and marginals so powerful as to affect mainstream thinking world-wide” (Said, [1978] 2003, 350). Here Said takes stock of developments in the 1990s, in the specialized fields of identity politics and postcolonial theory, of which he was an “opponent” (Young, 23-43), and of third-wave feminisms. But he could not have anticipated two developments: first, that the women and the queer and transgender “marginals” were already finding their way in the interstices of the Orientalist writings under his textual scrutiny, and second, that the “post-Orientalist” approach, which lies “beyond East and West,”¹ was always already embedded in the nineteenth century, which is the essential time frame of *Orientalism*. I aim to explore these two intertwined proleptic interstices that help dissolve the East/West binary, dear to Said. Tellingly, Daniel Varisco’s chapter on “The Said and the Unsaid in Said’s *Magnus Opus Orientale*” (93-234) does not mention gender. And yet, gender and its avatars are part of the “UnSaid.”

WOMANLY INTERSTICES

As a cautionary tale, one has to admit that “queerness” and “women” are mentioned in the original 1978 publication of *Orientalism* as if they were interrelated categories. If we consider Said’s interpretation of Flaubert’s conception of Egypt in his *Correspondance*, one sees that the categories “woman” and “women” are crucial to unfolding the “grotesque” or “queer” spectacle of the Orient:

To amuse the crowd, Mohamed Ali’s jester took a woman in a Cairo bazaar one day, set her on the counter of a shop, and coupled with her publicly while the shopkeeper calmly smoked his pipe.

And later, about a well-known marabout:

All the Moslem women came to see him and masturbated him—in the end he died of exhaustion—from morning to night it was a perpetual jacking-off.

1 See, for instance, the subtitle to the volume edited by Sharmani Patricia Gabriel and Bernard Wilson (2021).

And again, later:

... sterile women who wanted children would run up, put themselves under the parabola of a *santon* [or ascetic priest's] urine and rub themselves with it.

(ed. Steegmuller, 1973, 44-45; qtd Said [1978] 2003, 103; Flaubert, *Correspondance*, 1973, 1, 542; my addition).

Said uses these three vignettes, involving the category “woman” as the alleged victim of a rape; the sexual slave to a religious authority; and the desperate infertile woman in order to foreground the voyeuristic detachment of the French observer—Flaubert—while the Orient is flaunting its perversity, as “a living tableau of *queerness*” (Said [1978] 2003, 103, my italics). Here Said equates “queer” with a “grotesque” and “bizarre jouissance” without, naturally, using the inclusive meaning that “queer” would acquire in the 1990s as a suspension of sexual identity (Halperin 1990, *passim*). More largely, Said is targeting Flaubert as an exoticizing witness of a depraved Orient, intimating that this Orient never existed or could only exist as an inherently inaccurate representation, a lie. However, how do we know it is a lie? As Robert J. C. Young astutely observes, “if Said denies that there is any actual Orient which could provide a true account of the Orient represented by Orientalism, how could he claim in any sense that the representation is false?” (Young, 130).

In the representational thrust of *Orientalism*, there is admittedly little room for women, let alone the larger issue of gender, if only through the lens of these seminal male Orientalists whom Said discusses, e.g. Balfour, Cromer, Renan, Gidden, de Gobineau, Humboldt, Burnouf, Remusat, Palmer, Weil, Dozy, Muir (Said, 99), or of the “textual children” of, for instance, Napoleon’s occupation of Egypt: all help demarcate East from West: “Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant” (Said [1978] 2003, 57). Said continues: “the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined” (Said [1978] 2003, 63) and, one might add, all the actors are men on the theatrical stage of the Orient, whether the “Islamic Orient” or later, “the Asiatic East.” Said concludes that “the scope of Orientalism exactly matched the scope of empire” (Said 1978, 104). I would add that its scope also matched the scope of patriarchy so that a somewhat perverse conflation of orientalism, empire, and patriarchy is being crystallized.

Earlier in *Orientalism*, Said evokes Flaubert’s Egyptian courtesan, Kuchuk Hanem, whose name he conceives of as Egyptian but is actually Turkish—Kuçük Hanim meaning “Little Lady” (Somay 2014, 2) and who served as a model for the Oriental woman. Said writes: “she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence or history. He spoke for and represented her” (Said, 6). If

Said mentions the woman's lack of (self-)representation, which is also true of "the woman in a Cairo bazaar" in the above excerpt, he fails to mention her awkward positioning between imperialism outside and patriarchy inside. Even Europe, after all, was raped by Zeus. The Cairo woman's role as an agent is erased by both Said and Flaubert, and she looks like the desireless recipient of the "cruel joke" of Mohamed Ali's jester, the indifferent shopkeeper, and the invisible, detached European observer. But she could also be a secret sharer in the employ of patriarchy inside so that, in the Egyptian vignette, she could be part of the spectacle set up for her own mercantile benefit. The Cairene woman's apparent passivity, her alleged discursive silencing in Flaubert's account can be extended to a lot of male colonial (and sometimes even postcolonial) narratives, in which women seem to suffer from acute laryngectomy. But it is difficult to gauge the depth of her silencing because Flaubert has apparently seen and represented her but also because Said and, possibly, Flaubert missed out on her potential leverage within the interstices of Levantine patriarchy.

The closest Said comes to examining such womanly interstices is in his *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) when he discusses "the *geographical* notation, the theoretical mapping and charting of territory that underlies Western fiction" (Said, 1994, 69). Taking his cue from Raymond Williams, he provides the example of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) to illustrate the dependency of the metropolitan center—"home"—upon "an overseas system of territorial control, economic exploitation, and a socio-cultural vision" (Said 1994, 69). Indeed, in "a contrapuntal reading," Said shows that Fanny Price, "the poor niece, the orphaned child from the outlying city of Portsmouth, the neglected, demure, and upright wallflower, becomes crucial to the Bertrams' economy, including Antigua" (Said 1994, 102). Fanny's domestic, small-scale movements between Portsmouth and Mansfield Park reflect the interdependency between Thomas Bertram's slave plantation in Antigua and the calisthenics of Mansfield Park, well before the official onset of "the age of empire" with the Berlin Conference (1884-1885).

Bismarck's Berlin Convention that launched the so-called Scramble for Africa lay but fifteen or so years after the opening of the Suez Canal in November 1869. The 168-kilometer-long Canal through the desert between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, linking East and West, is considered the brainchild of French diplomat and later engineer Vicomte Ferdinand de Lesseps (whose father Mathieu de Lesseps had come to Egypt with Napoleon for four years after the French evacuated it in 1801). In accounting for the Suez Canal as a "geopolitical project," Said emphasizes the tell-tale name of Lesseps's company: "la Compagnie universelle" (Said 1994, 90), which fulfilled a universalist mission echoed in an epic poem written by Henri de Bornier of *L'académie française*. Bornier evokes the

benefits that “the perfidious Chinese and the semi-naked Indian” might reap from contact with Christianity.²

On the English side, Rudyard Kipling, for whom “East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” (Kipling, 1889), did more overtly participate in the Orientalist discourse, especially on Eastern spirituality but arguably that discourse was in turn “reappropriated by the Indian religious movements” that fueled Indian nationalism (Van der Weer 2001, 69). According to Said, Thomas Cook uses a more forward colonialist style. In *The Excursionist and Tourist Advertiser* of July 1, 1869, he was enthused about what he called “the formation of a line of water communication between Europe and the East ... the project of bringing more closely together the countries of the West and the East, and thus uniting the civilizations of different epochs” (Qtd Putney 1969, 141-142; qtd Said [1978] 2003, 88-89). “Therefore, the notion of ‘Oriental,’” Said concludes, “is an administrative or executive one, and it is subordinate to demographic, economic, and sociological factors. ... De Lesseps had melted away the Orient’s geographical identity by (almost literally) dragging the Orient into the West and finally dispelling the threat of Islam” (Said [1978] 2003, 92). In his allegation of “dragging the Orient into the West,” Said bypasses the African Continent when in fact the Suez Canal opened the portal to both India and Africa; and Egypt is part of the African Mashreq. Boehmer intuits that the “dark underside to the Canal’s magnificent modernity—one that arose from the instability of Egypt, ... found expression in a new genre of paranoid popular fiction” (Boehmer, 43).

Desecrated Egypt indeed returns with a vengeance in such popular fiction as Richard Marsh’s *The Beetle*. This orientalist sensation novel was published in the same year—1897—as Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, another fantasy about the East (but here of Eastern Europe), which it outsold. In *The Beetle*, a polymorphous Egyptian creature, bent on seeking revenge for the desecration of an Egyptian shrine, stalks a British politician, Paul Lessingham, through late-Victorian London. The creature, which hosts “a ghastly reminiscence of womanhood” (Marsh 2018, 29), literally mesmerizes its victims and makes them commit deeds of felony ranging from burglary to murder. Occasionally, the “vulpine” creature with a “rasping voice, with its *queer* foreign twang” (my emphasis) often causes “the strands of ... manhood to slip” (Marsh, 60, 35). It turns out that this fantastical creature metamorphoses into a “queer” “Mr. Arab,” a “doubtful ... he” by the end of the narrative. It culminates with the explosion of a Dongola site in the desert, presumably Dunqulah in Northern Sudan, as a result of which

2 “Oui, c’est pour l’univers ! Pour l’Asie et l’Europe, / pour ces climats lointains que la nuit enveloppe, / Pour le Chinois perfide et l’indien demi-nu ... Pour ceux à qui le Christ est encore inconnu.” In Beatty, 1956, 220, qtd Said 1994, 90.

the “bodies of neither men nor women but of creatures of monstrous growth” (Marsh, 360) were dismembered.

This tall tale may at first reinforce Edward Said’s intuition that “latent Orientalism ... was an exclusively male province. ... women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy” (Said 1978, 207); this may be so but with a queer twist. The male/female binary collapses upon closer inspection of the creature’s anatomy, for “the face is a man’s ... but the body ... is a woman’s” (Marsh, 182) and *his* capacity to escape dimorphism augurs transgenderism and the non-binary genderqueer parlance of the early twenty-first century. Also, Paul Lessingham’s fiancée Ms. Lindon, an opiated young woman who dares her father, is, once in contact with the beast, dressed by the creature into a young man’s garments and survives her ordeal after a prolonged period of aphasia whereas Lessingham, the eloquent politician, becomes “a hysterical woman” (Marsh, 324).

In Orientalist fashion, the long-nailed creature with magnetic eyes functions as the return of the repressed and boasts a past of nameless orgies and human sacrifices, especially those of “white Christian women” (Marsh, 331) while claiming to be “of the children of Isis” (Marsh, 85). The transgendered creature’s claim initiates in the text a tense scholarly debate between two gentlemen, the Dr. Jekyll-like scientist, Sydney Atherton, and Confidential Agent Augustus Champnell, about the Egyptian transmigration into *Scarabaeus Sacer*. The “transmigrations of Isis” (Marsh, 142) are part of Victorian and early twentieth-century England’s preoccupation with alternate belief-systems such as Buddhism, Rosicrucianism, and Zoroastrianism, to name but a few.³ A mystical feminist, Helena Blavatsky, who had an interest in the Kabbalah, reincarnation, and paranormal phenomena, took a stab at Christianity, the Catholic Church, and the Inquisition in her two-volume *Isis Unveiled* (1877). The return of the trans-beetle and the transmigration of the ancient Egyptian goddess Isis therefore hint at the discomfort of occupied Egypt with the opening of the Suez Canal at its Northern end but also at the unprecedented bilateral flow of travelers, colonials, goods, and ideas. Instead of “melting away the Orient’s geographical identity,” as Said claimed, the Canal, collapsed the East/West divide by creating British colonial yet syncretic transnational identities for whom the East was also “home.”⁴

3 See Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold*, 1998.

4 For Anglo-Indian families, “the Suez Canal did not simply signify the East; sometimes in fact it signified ‘home’”(Boehmer, 46).

SYNCRETISM, INTRA-ORIENTALISM, AND SELF-ORIENTALISM

In his book *The Lion and the Lotus* (2008), J. Jeffrey Franklin, suggests that Blavatsky may have titled her book, *Isis Unveiled*, thus because “late Victorians felt that Egyptian metempsychosis was more compatible with their own Christian history and beliefs than was either the Hindu or the Buddhist doctrine” (Franklin, 97). There was moreover a trend “to de-Orientalize reincarnation and karma by forcing them into alignment with the Western soul-theory” (Franklin, 104). In tracking East-West-East syncretic movements in Victorian England, Franklin concludes that the West experienced “a counter-invasion” of the East (Franklin, 208), possibly embodied by “the beetle,” although he does not say so. Victorian England’s interest in syncretism and in non-monotheistic belief-systems like Buddhism that would otherwise have sunk into oblivion dismantles the East/West Saidian binaries.

As a further caution to the Orientalist tale promoted by Said based on the East/West binary is that Easterners orientalized Africa, often glorifying British India as more civilized than the African Continent,⁵ in what I would venture to call “intra-Orientalism.” This can be compared to the process whereby the colorful textiles that were exported from France to Tahiti, where they became a native dress, were depicted by French artists like Gauguin and others as exemplars of tropical exoticism. There is thus a type of connectivity between East and West that is absent from Said’s Orientalist project, as evidenced by the city of London at the heart of a nineteenth-century cross-continental network. As in a cameo, the Theosophical Society, to which W.B. Yeats and the afore-mentioned Helena Blavatsky belonged, was such a hub.

This counter-invasion of the East is more acutely felt when compounded by gender. In 1896, a young Indian student in London, Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949) published in *The Savoy*, one of the flagship magazines of the “naughty nineties,” a poem entitled “Indian Dancers.” The poem makes use of typical Orientalist ingredients such as opiates, tinkling feet, “jewel-girt arms,” “smiles ... like magical serpents,” “gem-tangled hair,” and “houri-like faces,” “houri” after the beautiful maiden awaiting the devout Muslim in paradise. The frontispiece to Naidu’s 1905 *The Golden Threshold* was introduced by Arthur Symons. Both Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse, one of the contributors to *The Yellow Book*, the infamous book which Harry Wotton recommended to Dorian Gray in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), encouraged the production of an Orient which was palatable to English

5 A case in point is the Indian N.L. Doss, who noted “the ‘funny’ aspect of veiled Egyptian women in Port Said, while at the same time conceding that Muslim women in Calcutta were as swathed” (Boehmer, 55).

poetic tastes. In “nativizing” the Orient and in exercising Indian agency in constructing the East, Naidu reverses the Saidian premise, whereby the East is passive and lasciviously submissive.

Closer to us, this self-Orientalism is commensurate with Australian novelist Christos Tsiolkas’s *Dead Europe* (2008), whose queer ethnic male protagonist morphs into a vampire with the suggestion, as Sneja Gunew (2017) put it, “that he is a figure of retribution preying on European imperial and colonial guilt” (Gunew, 29). This type of Draculesque counter-contamination, like Richard Marsh’s return of the trans-beetle, thereby deals a cruel blow to the idea of a benevolent cosmopolitanism whereas Dubrovskaja Ugresic’s *Nobody’s Home* (2007) exhibits an impulse toward “self-balkanizing” (Gunew, 38) in ways similar to Sarojini Naidu’s self-orientalization. Later in life Naidu was the first Indian woman to serve as President of the Indian National Congress (1925) and the first woman governor of any state in independent India, e.g. Uttar Pradesh in Northern India. In 1913, when she committed herself to the cause of an independent India, Rabindranath Tagore, who was lesser known than her, was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. This may have prompted the discomfited woman poet to further embrace politics, at the expense of her poetic career. She is, in some of these pictures of her in the service of India in 1913, masculinized and even queered.

QUEERING AND TRANSGENDERING ORIENTALISM

In Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, there is no reference to what Leela Ghandi termed a “homoerotic dispensation” in her tracing the story of Late Victorian homosexual exceptionalism (Gandhi, 34) such as that which prevailed between the Indian poet Manmohan Gose and Oscar Wilde and his coterie. Said elides homosexuality, male or female homoeroticism, and how same-sex desire is entwined with Orientalism, the way in which Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* inevitably was. Edward Said has been notably taken to task for, in the words of Joseph Boone (1985), his “conspicuously heterosexual interpretive framework” (Boone, 89). In his *Homosexuality and Colonialism* (2003), Robert Aldrich amply makes up for that void by singling out authors like Thomas Mann in “The Transposed Heads” (1940) and William Beckford, who was bisexual and whose works were originally written in French: *The Episodes of Vathek* (1787) and *Histoire du Prince Ahmed* (1782). In Aldrich’s words, for these authors, “the fantastic East provided the scene for thinly disguised romances” (Aldrich 2003, 110). Aldrich also evokes Jacques d’Adelswärd-Fersen, denizen of Capri, (where he lived with his Ceylonese companion). Fersen wrote a poetry collection *Hei Hsiang* (1921), which consists of “odes to opium-smoking and ... [is] mixed with evocations of Oriental

boys" (Aldrich, 110). One poem relates to Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas, thereby establishing a male homoerotic continuum between France, England, and the "Orient," here signified by Chinese ideograms and a lurking dragon in the cover image of Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen's *Hei Hsiang/Le parfum noir* (1921).

Le Livre des Beaux, published anonymously in Paris in 1909, was attributed to Pierre Loti, Pierre Louÿs, and André Gide—"all authors known for an interest in Levantine Love" (Aldrich, 111)—but appeared under the Arabic-sounding name of Fazil Bey. These forty-three sketches present young men hailing from an ever-expanding "Orient," from Morocco to China, along with what Aldrich called "a catalogue of sodomitical specialties" (Aldrich, 111). By the outset of the twentieth century, Oriental exoticism and anal intercourse were inexorably skewed together in the European ethnographic imaginary.⁶

Conversely, in the Arab Muslim world, some thinkers like the Palestinian, Jordanian-born Joseph Massad in *Desiring Arabs* (2007) lament the discursive transformation of practitioners of what he calls "same-sex contact" in the Arab-Muslim world into subjects who identify as homosexual or gay, following the hegemonic pull of the Gay International, "where all same-sex desire must lead to the romantic ethos of coupling" (Massad, 345). He has further politicized Islamicate "same-sex contact" as a form of resistance to Westoxification, a term (from *gharbzadegi* in Persian) coined by Iranian secular intellectual Jalal al-e Ahmad, or what we could also call Occidentosis. Massad's non-identitarian idea of "same-sex contact" in the Arab Muslim world has been denounced by various critics.⁷ Interestingly, Massad dedicates *Desiring Arabs* to his mentor and friend Edward Said about whom he wrote in his Acknowledgments that "it was not entirely clear to [him] what [Said] thought of the project" (Massad 2007, xiii).

Closer to us and to return to the idea of self-orientalism, the American, Australia-based scholar of Indian ancestry, Rahul Gairola, explains in a vignette:

a part of me enjoyed being exoticized in the gay club scene of D.C., for it was that index of desire that made me attractive to the predominantly white males. Being fetishized by white gays as 'Aladdin,' 'almond-shaped-eyed,' and 'cabana boy' in some sense empowered me by inducting me into a racist community that nonetheless offered shelter from the constrictions of straight life. Conversely, I enjoyed passing for straight in the South Asian American communities that my parents frequented when the racism of D.C.'s gay community made it clear that people of color had no place in the racially narcissistic and bourgeois echelons of Dupont Circle [a popular residential

6 See Bleys, *Geography of Perversion*, 1995 and Zabus, *Out in Africa*, 2013.

7 For more detail, see Zabus, Introduction to *The Future of Postcolonial Studies* (2015), 1-16.

neighborhood of Washington, D.C.] In both cases, I toggled between identity categories and communities to negotiate the yet shaky relations between Asian American and minority studies with queer identities. (Gairola, 30; my addition)

This vignette, appropriately titled “Queering Orientalism,” is part of a guest issue on *Orientalism and the Legacy of Edward Said* (2005). Yet Said and his legatees failed to account for these homoerotic affective communities and their interstitial practices or for the contemporary self-orientalization of some of its queer subjects.

English journalist Jan Morris, previously known as James Morris, a foreign correspondent for the *London Times*, wrote her autobiography, *Conundrum* in 1974 (new ed. 2004). It has been read as an “Orientalist” travelogue (e.g. Halberstam, 1998, 169) in that Morris undertakes an allegedly colonial journey from England to Morocco and undergoes surgery in Dr. Burou’s famed Clinique du Parc 13 Rue du Capitaine de La Pébie (now renamed Rue Mélouia) in Casablanca. By conjuring up what Marjorie Garber cunningly termed “the Chic of Araby” (Garber 1991, 223), the Maghreb and part of the Mashreq were confirmed as partaking of a (dis-)orienting Orient for the former transsexual traveler who goes “out there,” loses his or her sex-at-birth and returns “home” in order to be trans-morphed into the “hominess” of the targeted gender.

Jean-Pierre Pruvot, a *pied noir* born in colonial Algeria, changed her identity papers—Marie-Pierre Pruvot, born female—after undergoing sex reassignment surgery (SRS or what is now called *gender confirmation surgery*) in Casablanca, Morocco, two years after Coccinelle (Jacqueline Charlotte born Jacques Charles Dufresnoy) or ‘Cox,’ in Burou’s terminology.⁸ These (mostly MTF) surgeries in the late 1950s were to initiate a fluid trail of ‘Coxes’ crossing borders between Morocco, that is, the Westernmost region of the East, and European countries, as further evidenced by the role of Belgium in Michiel Van Erp’s film documentary. In Erp’s *I am a Woman Now* (2012), a Belgian transwoman attempts to locate Burou’s clinic where she stayed in the early 1970s.⁹ Against a politically charged canvas, which involved the exiled Sultan and future King Mohammed V’s return in 1955 and Morocco’s independence in 1956 following anti-French rioting, Morocco, almost incongruously, acted as an Orientalist

8 Even though the term has been amply documented, this was confirmed by Dr. Mohamed Lebbar, who closely worked with Georges Burou, during an interview carried out by Chantal Zabus, assisted by Chérif Sadaoui, on 27 April 2016 in his office, 71 rue Hassan II in Casablanca, Morocco.

9 Note that it is today a building occupied by a Xerox company. Conversely, Belgium, especially Ghent’s Universitair Ziekenhuis (UZ), now reads more like a haven for French transgender individuals.

haven of TS (transsexual) transitioning. French MTF Alexandra Cerdan, whose mother was Tunisian and who was reassigned in Ghent, Belgium, termed Morocco in *Transsexuelle et convertie à l'Islam* (2010) “a transsexual hub” (Fr: “plaque tournante de la transsexualité”) (Cerdan, 112). Cerdan’s explosive admixture of transsexualism and Islam further queers the East/West binary.

The elision of gender and exacerbations of conventional masculinities may further be blamed for the contemporary resurgence of theocratic Islamism. In *Occidentalism* (2004), Buruma & Margalit locate “wars against the West” in very broad terms: “Wars against the West have been declared in the name of the Russian soul, the German race, State Shinto (which extolled the Japanese as a divine race), communism and Islam” (102). They thus see Islamic fundamentalism as a late avatar of “Occidentalism,” whereby the West is both “the source of the Enlightenment and its secular, liberal offshoots but also, of its frequently poisonous antidotes” (Buruma and Margalit, 6). Such a fundamentalist resurgence, which Said could not have witnessed, may result not only from regional instability, colonialism, strict secularisms, or the failed experiments in state socialism in e.g. Egypt, Syria and Algeria but also, as Amanullah de Soudy (2015) has ventured, from Islamic communities’ tendency to “idealize an entrenched masculinity” (De Soudy, 1) and an ideal family structure. De Soudy’s fresh approach to Islam and gender through a historically situated reflection on the construction of masculinities provides a sound antidote to some Saidian critics’ denunciation of orientalism in contemporary gender politics.¹⁰

As I have shown, women, marginals, sexual dissidents and gender outlaws are not so much the objects of an Orientalizing gaze, as Edward Said’s *Orientalism* and its post-Orientalist legacy demonstrate, as the agents always already living in both textual and geographical interstices. These interstitial spaces helped further crack the Saidian divide between an allegedly passive East and a supposedly active West.

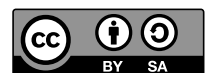
10 One such critic is Edward Said’s younger colleague at Columbia University, anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod, who, one year before Said’s death, wrote an essay (2002) on “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?”, which gave the title to her Harvard book in 2013.

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‘Neizrečeni/nesaidovski’ spol: raziskava vrzeli v knjigi *Orientalizem* Edwarda Saida

Članek raziskuje tekstovne in geografske vrzeli v osnovnem tekstu Edwarda Saida *Orientalizem* (1978), kakor tudi nekatere vidike post-orientalistične dediščine.

Ključne besede: Edward Said, spol, orientalizem, seksualnost