

*The Archaeological Representation  
of the Orient in  
John Fowles's "Daniel Martin"*

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THE IMAGE OF the Orient and its people is astoundingly presented, represented, and reconstructed by John Fowles in what is considered his most realistic novel, *Daniel Martin* (1977). The Orient (represented in the novel by Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria) is seen ironically as a healing, connecting, and communicating agent that helps the protagonists reestablish their love relationship by initiating dialogue between them. In this novel, Daniel achieves self-knowledge and symbolically is reunited with the woman he loves through the archaeology of Egypt and the ancient civilization of the mysterious Palmyra in the Syrian Desert. For Daniel, Jane becomes Zenobia, the strong and beautiful Oriental queen who challenged the Roman Empire. Fowles represents the Orient in this novel in positive terms and reconstructs it as an influential agent in the development of his Western characters, the Orientalists, who come to the East to dig deep in the "archaeology" of their self-knowledge and to achieve their own personal fulfilment. Indeed Fowles's project in representing the Orient without Western bias proves to be problematic; there are many occasions in the novel where Fowles (indirectly through Daniel and Jane) is ironical, even ambivalent, in his praise of the East. This ambivalence is perhaps inevitable in dealing with such political and racial discourses. Indeed, the romanticization and aestheticization of the Orient, as demonstrated throughout contemporary postcolonialist theory and literature, can be read ironically as a call for colonization instead of decolonization.<sup>1</sup> The reading of *Daniel Martin* admits the possibility that Daniel's and Jane's perspectives on the Orient are in fact ironic, and ironically intertextual in relation to E. M.

Forster's and Joseph Conrad's, in which the romanticization of a symbolic destination as divine, innocent, and free is linked to the colonial perspectives with which they supposedly contrast. In this essay, I focus on the ways in which Fowles deploys images of the Orient in *Daniel Martin* in an effort to demonstrate that he is not like most Orientalist novelists or alphabet archaeologists who come to the East in order to colonize it for their own benefit. Such a project, however, admits that these idealized perspectives are themselves the object of critique in the novel or a parody of the representation of self-discovery in exotic locations in some of the obvious intertexts.

Michel Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), analyzes the concept of "archaeology" as the science of the ensemble of rules that defines "discourses in their specificity" (139), or the "archive" of any given society in any given period of time. The archive is seen as a textualized record of history and is both artistic and historical. For Foucault, archaeology is "nothing more than a rewriting; that is, in the preserved form of exteriority, a regulated transformation of what has already been written" (140); to "do" archaeology is to examine and re-examine, to study, order, and re-order things such as discursive events in a culture as they happen in the past, and to reorientate their status as events, their duration, and their monumentality. Archaeology really tries to define "those discourses as practices obeying certain rules. It does not treat discourse as document . . . but as monument" (138-39), a monument which needs looking at, and into, through an active mind and critical eye. Ultimately for Foucault, the term "archaeology"

designates the general theme of a description that questions the already-said at the level of its existence: of the enunciative function that operates within it, of the discursive formation, and the general archive system to which it belongs. Archaeology describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive. (131)

Thus the process of archaeology and its problematic activity involves the determining of a certain culture and its existence as a nation with its human conventions and linguistic structures.

What Daniel has actually done in the second half of *Daniel Martin* is similar to the activity of an archaeologist who uses and

abuses Oriental discourses in order to reconstruct his love relationship with Jane and to re-establish ironically the attractive human picture of the Orientals. Daniel is like an archaeologist who ironically and discursively regulates, inscribes, and proscribes the Orientalist "transformation of what has already been written" about the East. Indeed, the politicization of this ironical reconstruction of the Orient by Daniel becomes evident through the ways in which he questions, rejects, and doubts what has already been said about the habits and ways of life in Egypt and Syria. This entire project of questioning things in the Orient by Daniel, and indirectly by Fowles, whether through irony or not, indeed helps Daniel in understanding the mysterious and incomprehensible Jane.

The other problematic notion in the title of this essay is "representation." This term gained much philological attention in the nineteenth century in works by Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud, who argue that representation has not only to do with linguistic consciousness, but it is also connected, as Edward Said notes, with pressures that are "transpersonal, transhuman, and transcultural" such as "class, the unconscious, gender, race, and structure" ("Representing the Colonized" 206). Representation is developed further by modern critics such as Erich Auerbach in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1953), and Foucault, who analyzes the implications and origins of this term in relation to discourse and power in many of his writings, particularly in *The History of Sexuality* (1978). In contemporary criticism, Said dedicates most of his writing, particularly in *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), to the analysis of this problematic issue of representing the Other in relation to the Self. For Said,

to represent someone or even something has now become an endeavour as complex and as problematic as an asymptote, with consequences for certainty and decidability as fraught with difficulties as can be imagined. ("Representing the Colonized" 206)

In this sense, Fowles's representation of the Orient in his novel *Daniel Martin* is problematical and not really innocent, that is, it is not without its own intended purpose of curing Daniel's split psyche in such a romantic context as the Middle East.

Following Said's argument that "there are no innocent texts," (*Beginnings* 231), one could argue that Fowles's representation of the Orient is "not really innocent" because he portrays the East with such romantic and symbolic texture that it invites the Westerners to come to it, indeed to colonize it—just as Daniel has—in order to satisfy their own self-gratification and perhaps to promote the whole concept of Western colonization of such attractive exotic places. This is possible if one goes along with postcolonial theory which sees any aestheticization of the Orient in negative terms, and it is also true if one follows Said's argument in *Orientalism* which revolves around the point of idealizing the Orient as a ploy or a metaphor for colonizing it, since it offers all kinds of psychological healing as well as political and economic wealth and power. I must state, however, at this early stage of the essay, a point that will be demonstrated later, that Fowles, despite the irony deployed in his work, must not be seen as an Orientalist who dehumanizes his subject for his own racial purposes and as part of his imperialist exploitation and cultural preconceptions.

The irony in the romantic reconstruction of the Orient is illustrated through the following passage which encapsulates the journey into the East. When Daniel and Jane begin their six-day cruise on the Nile, the narrator/Daniel explains their situation:

The Nile and its landscapes they grew quickly to love—to love again, in Dan's case. Its waters seemed to reach not merely back into the heart of Africa, but into that of time itself. This was partly the effect of the ancient sites, and of the ancient ways of life of the fellahen villages and fields they saw as they passed . . . but its origin lay in something deeper, to do with transience and agelessness, which in turn reflected their own heightened sense of personal present and past . . . a thing they both agreed they felt. . . . The river, like the Bible, was a great poem, and rich in still relevant metaphors. . . . The Nile did seem to possess a metaphysical charm beside its more obvious physical ones. *It cleansed and simplified*, it set all life in perspective.  
(524; emphasis added)

As this passage indicates, the Nile and its Oriental background are ironically inscribed in the novel as a means of establishing confidence and love between Daniel and Jane, between the Self and the Other, and as a means of connection between the West (Daniel and other Orientalists) and the East (Zenobia/

Jane and her sacred domain). I say ironically because such a discourse exemplifies the hegemonic model of power and interest-relations (to follow Foucault's terminology)<sup>2</sup> which is symptomatic of colonialist texts that institutionalize the native Orientals as the means of exploitation and the glorification of the Self, and yet it simultaneously contains the elements of its own self-negation: that is, the rejection of imperial hegemony. Foucault analyzes this complex process of discourse when he irrefutably connects discourse with power, showing at the same time that discourse undermines power:

discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.

(*The History of Sexuality* 101)

This explains Fowles's position, as I shall demonstrate throughout this essay: Fowles deploys a symbolically "colonialistic" discourse in the second half of his novel in order to undermine it from within. The critical awareness of the colonialist dominant narratives makes the reader doubtful about such divine inscription of the natives and about the sincerity of the narrator's claim. That is why we must question how in *Daniel Martin* the Orient, like the Nile, nourishes, irrigates, and purifies arable hearts, dried and disconnected souls such as those of Jane and Daniel; we must question how the Orient is ideologically inscribed to conform to the prevailing racial and cultural preconceptions. The Orient is thus a vast place, a hugely rich poem that teaches all sorts of principles and values through its metaphors. It is the Bible that must teach the most complete non-believers in love and passion: "the Bible that must touch even the most convinced atheist" (542). The Orient cleanses, arranges, organizes, and reconstructs already disorganized and split selves, selves like those of Daniel and Jane. Fowles portrays it positively as a spiritual healer of inner diseases and psychological problems, a position which seems not to conform to the "author function," according to Foucault, which "is linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses" ("What Is An Author?" 113).

Indeed, Fowles himself has confirmed this positive attitude towards the use of the Orient in one of his real narratives:

What the experience of Egypt, the Lebanon and Syria meant to me personally was above all a totally new vocabulary and concept of life, one that at least I knew was partly beyond my understanding but astoundingly fresh. In a way, like *a charge of electricity or vitamins*. I remember feeling how sad and drab Homs was when we passed it; then *the thunderbolt of Palmyra*. (*Letter* 1994; emphasis added)

Thus Fowles has employed the notion of the Orient in his novel romantically and in positive terms in order to revive and humanize Westerners; it has been centralized as a valued "Other" in a manner which goes against the grain of much postcolonial theory which would see such a romanticization of the Orient in negative terms. The Orient provides him with a new language and vocabulary, a new outlook towards probing his characters, and on the other hand allows his characters to see each other through a new scope and fresh atmosphere. Going to the Middle East for Fowles and his protagonists in *Daniel Martin* is like charging oneself with more energy and power, with more vitamins, to be able to see through things and to achieve whole sight.

The Orient functions as something of a muse figure for both Fowles and Daniel, and in fact, as the energizing, vitaminizing agent for the growth and development of people in the West. The Orient seems to exist only as a function of the needs of the colonizer. The Orient is seen in this novel as the thunderbolt that strongly shocks, awakens, energizes, and cleanses weak and indecisive people such as Daniel and Jane. Indeed, in order to underscore the positive connotations of the Orient in his novel, Fowles also emphasized in the same letter to me that "I am not an Orientalist in his [Edward Said's] sense." Fowles is not really an Orientalist in the sense that Said analyzes in *Orientalism*. On the contrary, Fowles is parodying and criticizing Western ways of life as a whole; when he criticizes Arab ways of life, he does so in order to promote change for the better rather than to portray things racially and negatively, as any Orientalist colonizer might do.

Said quotes the ironic but apt definition of an "Orientalist" provided by Gustave Flaubert in his *Dictionary of Received Ideas*: "a

man who has travelled widely" (*Orientalism* 185). Indeed, Daniel has travelled widely—from Oxford to London, to California, to Egypt, the Lebanon, Syria, and Italy. Daniel's history is indicative of his wide experience of travelling from modern Hollywood and elsewhere in the United States to Oxford in the 1950s, and from Dorset before and during the Second World War to the Nile—modern Egypt and its ancient history—as well as to Palmyra, the third-century city in the Syrian Desert. Through his travelling, Daniel, as both protagonist and narrator of the novel, attempts to reconstruct and rewrite his own history, which, as I have argued elsewhere,

... ultimately emerges as the autobiographical novel he intended to write ever since he became a playwright. Indeed Daniel attempts to rearrange, reorganize, and reassemble the fragmentation of his own self. (159)

and he does so in relation to the Other.

Indeed, the connection between what Said calls an "Orientalist" and what Daniel sees as one is strikingly fragile since for Said an "Orientalist," is someone who

makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. He is never concerned with the Orient except as the first cause of what he says. What he says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact. (*Orientalism* 20-21)

Also, an Orientalist is someone who predetermines and arranges Oriental discourses in his own distorting fashion, which is a misrepresentation and far from being "'natural' depictions of the Orient" (*Orientalism* 21). An "Orientalist" is really a man who calls for colonization and occupation of the Orient:

This Arab land is the land of prodigies; everything sprouts there, and every credulous or fanatical man can become a prophet in his turn. (Lamartine, *Voyage en Orient* 1: 363; quoted in *Orientalism* 178)

We can see here how Lamartine (unlike Fowles) calls for colonizing the Arab land because by residing in it the Westerners will become like prophets. Fowles's Daniel, on the other hand, is by far a different sort of Orientalist who cares about the "correctness of the representation" of the Orient, who calls for liberating the

Egyptian land from the British colonizers, and who really negates the traditional and racial stereotyping of the East in general and the Arabs in particular.

The general plot of the novel involves Daniel's attempts to change his entire life for the better by trying to achieve fuller knowledge of things and of himself and his past. Daniel goes back in history to his childhood in Devon revealing how he was controlled by his domineering father. Then he retells the story of his days in Oxford—how he met Jane and her sister Nell, how he married Nell instead of Jane, and how he spent his entire life regretting his mistake. Then he goes to Hollywood where he meets many people, particularly Jenny, who is a surrogate Jane for him, and where he works as a script-writer although all his life he wanted to become a novelist. He finally does what he originally wanted to do: he finishes his novel and reconciles his differences with Jane, whose husband, Anthony, committed suicide. He comes back to Oxford, convinces Jane to travel with him to Egypt, Lebanon, and then Syria, where the miracle occurs—Jane agrees to marry him and then they go back to England united with love and mutual understanding.

Daniel's journey is thus a humble and philanthropic crusade undertaken to seek redemption for his past mistakes. He fantasizes about a romantic exit out of his alienated sexuality through his Orientalistic passage towards connecting with Jane. In writing his novel, Daniel's imagination is stimulated in various ways by his experience in the Orient, in Egypt and Syria, and by his trips with Jenny to New Mexico and its ancient civilization. Indeed Daniel's clear preoccupation with the ruins and archaeology of the East is linked with his belief in the horizontality of time and existence. Daniel believes that man exists in a constant now and that he must learn from these ruins how to achieve whole sight and how to unite with the other. Daniel, then, comes to the Orient, as Said would have put it, "as a constructed figure, not as a true self," a factor which emphasizes the positive role of the Orient and its "monuments of knowledge" in "self-completion" (*Orientalism* 171). Daniel's real interest in the Orient is to re-make himself and to achieve full self-knowledge.

Daniel feels, moreover, that the Orient as well as the Pueblo civilization in New Mexico described earlier in the novel, has a



"classical perfection and nobility" about it, and he tells us "it has always haunted my dreams [and] I fell in love with" it since it seemed a "secret place, a liberal retreat [that] defeated time, all deaths" and history itself (347). In fact, the Orient makes Daniel feel "like a man in prison" (354) and that he needs to be open, pure, and free from all the restrictions imposed upon him by society. The Tsankawi episode about native Americans can be linked to my original contention of Daniel's Orientalistic explorations of, and the discursive strategies in exploiting, such old romantic and "virgin" lands. Through this episode the reader realizes how Jenny fails Daniel's "test" as she gathers the shards—a microcosmic re-enactment of classical colonialism in Said's terms—exploiting native peoples for economic gain:

If you had four or five like this, in a pendant, they'd be heavenly. . . . Dan, I've got a marvellous idea. That little jeweller's studio on Fairfax. They could mount them on silver wire. All my people at home I can't think what to buy for. (351)

Indeed, the Pueblo native American Indians are used here by both Fowles and Daniel as some lost and idealistic civilized people that one longs to be with; they are desired, romanticized, recreated again, and revisited for personal fulfilment and fuller self-realization.

The dominant pattern of power relations in such a problematic text is exemplified in the call for colonization instead of decolonization even if the author does not admit it and even if he is highly critical of colonialist strategies. This is connected to the politics of representation and to the "political unconscious" of any text: the author is politicized and ideologized whether he likes it or not.<sup>3</sup> Even if a writer is reluctant to acknowledge such politicization, as JanMohamed argues, and if he is "highly critical of imperialist exploitation," he is still "drawn into its vortex" (JanMohamed 63). This is strongly and aptly related to Foucault's notion of power and truth in discourses. He argues that

truth isn't outside power. . . . Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true. (*Power/Knowledge* 131)

Thus, power makes truth and any writer is forced by various ideological factors to conform to the institutional and societal systems of domination even at the very moment s/he is rejecting them. Fowles is discursively and problematically parodying such attempts of overthrowing these colonialistic and deterministic systems of hegemony, and in doing so he is indeed caught up in what he originally sets out to undermine.

The ancient sites of Egypt and Syria are ironically and symbolically inscribed in the novel as the source of freedom and knowledge for Daniel. For him, the Orient seems “the Garden of Eden” (569), where he can purify his soul and mind from the wrongs he had inflicted upon others: Nell, Jane, and Jenny. For both Daniel and Jane, the Orient (the Nile and Palmyra) is “wise: both in itself and to what it bore” (525). The Nile is idealistically human, and cultural history and its visitors are merely “caricatures of the human race, or at least the Western part of it;” they are students of its vast source of humanity and wisdom. The Orient is a “polyglot microcosm on which they [the Western visitors] were temporarily marooned” in order to gain some knowledge of their own selves (525). Indeed, the Orient provides them with peace: “there was a great softness, stillness, peace” in the air of the cruise as well as in their love relationship (516). Jane is “impressed” and “overwhelmed” by the Orient as symbolized by the Nile (517). In the same way, the other Orientalists in the novel, the American couple (Mitchell and his wife, Marcia) also come to Egypt to cure themselves and perhaps to save their marriage. They are ultimately united through this pilgrimage to the Orient. Thus, Daniel’s and Jane’s (also Mitchell’s and Marcia’s) “companionship had become more real” through the Orient and its authentic culture and natural atmosphere (531). They (mainly Daniel) found themselves “falling under the great spell” (532) of the Nile and its Oriental feel and texture, which enlarged and radically re-defined their lives.

Interestingly, the “self-voyagers” on this cruise are all archaeologists of some sort and collectors of images and different languages or alphabets, like most typical Orientalists (but not in Flaubert’s nor in Said’s negative sense of an Orientalist) who come to the East and go back home to boast that they have explored new territories:

all this photography, this comparing of cameras and impressions and backgrounds, gave an air of international comradeship. . . . Everyone showed off about their knowledge of foreign languages. (526)

The best example of an archaeologist that Fowles offers in the novel is the German Professor of Egyptology who advises Daniel to look beyond these ancient sites in order to see that they have archaeological value in the understanding of humanity as a whole. He is really constructed as a "magus" figure who knows everything about the Orient, and through his various teachings to Daniel and Jane, he is able to help them to realize the positive effects of the Orient on Westerners. This Herr Professor, however, "was not primarily an excavation archaeologist," but simply someone who, like all Orientalist archaeologists, is just studying, analyzing, and excavating the Oriental discursive, cultural, and economical practices of Ancient Egypt (515). He reformulates, rewrites, and reconstructs these ancient discourses, in a manner which fits Said's definition of an Orientalist who comes to the Orient not for its sake but for the benefit of the West, indeed to enrich Western culture and nation by studying these ancient civilizations and by importing whatever possible into the West. Daniel makes a similar point about this Herr Professor when he observes that

this urbane and friendly old man was in fact a world authority on the pharaonic tribute and taxation systems, and a papyrologist of "unsurpassed breadth and knowledge." (515)

This also explains his remark to Daniel that Orientalist archaeology is a very serious project in which the Westerners are deeply involved: "Egyptology is not a pastime for innocents" (514). What this really means is that all Orientalists come to the East for really serious, ideological, political, and most probably imperialistic reasons: to excavate, to be involved in political and social projects, or symbolically and ironically to revive "dead" human relationships.

Daniel's archaeological project in the East, however, is not as political as that of such dedicated Orientalists as the German Professor whom he meets in Egypt. Indeed, Daniel is on a film assignment about Kitchener, and both Jane and himself are in love with the East; they would "love to meet some real Eyp-

tians" (490), and they learn Arabic in order to mix with the locals (482). Daniel is not an Orientalist who condones the Western occupation of the East. This is evident through his criticism of the British imperialist colonization of Egypt and the Sudan in the Kitchener script he is writing. He realizes now his disillusionment with what "British" really means: self-indulgence, self-obsession, and a puritanized sense of "national duty and the sanctity of the done thing" (527). For Daniel, the Kitchener imperialist occupation of this part of the East is just another farce of colonialist ideology embodied in its various racial, hegemonic, coercive, cultural, material, and discursive practices which characterize the native Africans as being "naturally savage" and inferior while the Europeans are characterized as "naturally human and superior." The myth of "civilizing the natives" is yet another "human comedy under Kitchener's fierce blue stare" (527). Daniel (and certainly Fowles) believes that "Britain and Kitchener had won the political issue," but certainly lost everything else: "Dan began to see ways of making it clear that the imperialist cause was even then lost" (527). Thus following Said's argument that going to the East is a kind of "self-completion" (*Orientalism* 171), one could reemphasize that both Daniel and Jane gain from their journey to the East an "acute new awareness of the self" and a deeper knowledge of "Western psyche" which is dominated by the "largely evil consequences of capitalist free enterprise" (527-28). This might explain why Daniel regrets his earlier observation that he is proud of his Englishness and its materiality (518). Kitchener and his fellow imperialists have ruined all prospects of real human communication. Both Daniel and Jane, unlike most Orientalists, share a special "contempt for imperialism" (528). The narrator/Daniel says it succinctly:

The British Empire had dissipated a potentially good moral energy, and because it had fundamentally been based on power instead of justice, it had ruined our reputation for good. We had lost all hope of becoming an arbiter among nations. (528)

Indeed, both Daniel and Jane represent the anti-colonialist but ambivalent attitude advanced by Fowles throughout *Daniel Martin*. Both strongly criticize the patronizing way in which the West looks at the rest of the world (including the Orient): "the

Socratic method, seeing all the rest of the world as students . . . it was awful" (529). On the other hand, their ambivalence, which is somehow governed by the politics of representation and the power relations within the colonialist ideology of difference, is embodied in the ways in which they both seem colonialists in idealizing and aestheticizing the Orient by wanting to stay in it as their own lost and enchanted land.

Thus, the Orient for Daniel is something divine, romantic, free, innocent, and full of light and glory. That is why Daniel needs to change his "dark" life by going to the East, the birthplace of the sun and enlightenment. He tells Jane, "I'm only proposing a small step into the sunlight" in order to discover what we really are (437). He also explains to Jenny why he needs to go to Egypt with Jane: "I desperately need some new ideas" (453), which he can achieve only through his journey to the East. For him, the East is something brighter and healthier than the West: "The Empire was the great disease. . . . The whole nineteenth century was a disease, a delusion called Britain" (450). Kitchener represents the British colonialist expansion in Egypt and East Africa, and for Daniel colonialism is the great disease which he hopes to cure himself of by revisiting the colonized land and finding out what it truly is rather than accepting it as the colonialists have portrayed it—as a primitive colony. Thus, for Westerners, coming to the Orient is psychologically therapeutic for the accumulated Western guilt caused by past colonialist deeds.

Daniel has demonstrated through his Kitchener script his anti-colonial sentiment. He criticizes the whole concept of Englishness and the Orientalist mentality of Kitchener which ultimately lead to the Orientalist guilt towards the injustices inflicted upon the Orientals:

This Englishness was even, in retrospect, immanent in archetypal red-white-and-blue Britons like Kitchener. His face may have personified British patriotism and the Empire, but his inner soul was devious, convoluted, far more tyrannized by his own personal myth than the public one he appeared to be building. (451)

For Daniel, the Orient is more and more realistic than the West: "Cairo was simply denser, older, more human. The medi-

eval injustices and inequalities still existed, and everywhere; in the West they had simply been pushed out of sight. Here they remained open" (486). The way in which Cairo is described by the narrator, Daniel, is typical of the perspective of an honest humanist who prescribes solutions to the existing problems. Cairo is a city which has a

unique mixture of the medieval and the modern: shabby boulevards, khaki and tired white façades, dust everywhere, the blend of European clothes and the flowing galabiyas, barefooted urchins, stalls, barrows, donkeys with vivid green bundles of fodder, the only fresh colour to be seen, tied to their sides. (488)

Despite all this, Cairo (and the Orient as a whole) is envied by Orientalists (probably not so much by Daniel and Jane who see Cairo's industrialization and urbanization in negative terms as they would see any Western industrial city) as the idyllic and romantic domain with its "moods and lights and vistas [that] were ravishingly beautiful," and with its "endless desert that haunted the skylines behind the cultivated valley" (542) and the sacred place which witnessed the birth and prospect of ancient civilizations.

The most telling of these romanticizations of the Orient occurs when the narrator describes the sunset over the Nile:

They watched the sunset, a magnificent sky of pinks and yellows and oranges. It changed and died, with a tropical rapidity, but there was a superb afterglow, reflected even more delicately in the shot silk of the water. A pair of feluccas passed downstream, exquisite black silhouettes, their huge lateen sails hanging from the curved cross-masts; and the disturbed light was especially beautiful in their gently spreading wakes. Palm-groves on the far bank similarly stood a deep soft black against the luminous sky, and beyond them the cliffs of Thebes turned through pink to violet and then a deep grey. Bats began to weave past, the occasional one wheeling so close to the window that they could see the details of its body. There was a great softness, stillness, peace. . . . They fell almost silent while this peerless death of light took place. (516)

It is thematically interesting to notice the colour images in this passage and the various modes of light: from pink to yellow, to orange, to violet, to deep grey, and then to soft black against a luminous sky. These images are connected with the peace and

quietness that Daniel finds in the Orient, and provide a viable means of reformulating his entire life and his relationship to Jane.

Fowles and by his protagonists Daniel and Jane admire, aestheticize, and problematically reconceptualize the Orient for its simplicity and spontaneity. That is why Daniel criticizes the Mitchells and their supposed "civilized" American life. He correctly argues that advanced technology and advanced means of material production do not necessarily produce humanly-rich people:

If anything stands accused, I suspect it's the ridiculous notion that advanced technology produces richer human beings. When it's become only too clear that the contrary is true. (518)

In this connection, Daniel also mocks Jane's confession that she is "a highly principled lady Marxist" who "won't tolerate the glorification of the individual in any day or age" (519); indeed he is questioning her own social ideology and contesting her humanistic alignment with the poor people of Egypt. From the very first moment she is in Egypt, Jane realizes that this place, together with its people, has made a great impression on her:

She thought time—layers of time, so many stages of history still co-existing here. The airport had shocked her; and the more crowded, working-class streets they had passed through. One forgot what real borderline poverty meant. (490)

That is also why she feels so attached to the ways in which the *fellaheen* of Egypt live and struggle for survival. She defends their right to equality and property:

How for five thousand years they've been given nothing, ignored, exploited. Never helped at all. Apparently not even been studied anthropologically until very recently. (520)

Jane defends herself against Daniel's mockery of her socialistic alignment with the Egyptians by explaining that she wants to study and re-examine the poor classes in the Orient and to give them their due; she wants to reconstruct, reinscribe, reframe, and reconceptualize them in a different discourse, in a just and less imperialistic discourse that shows them as they really are: very human rather than barbaric—the image given to them by

the reactionary aristocracy both at home and abroad. Jane condemns the Orientalist discourses about the *fellaheen* that most British and Western educational institutions have disseminated, continuing to misrepresent them in a racist manner: "I've heard that argument so often at Oxford. The supposed barbarian hordes as justification for every kind of selfish myopia" (521). Jane and certainly her creator, Fowles, believe that Orientalists portray these people as "barbarians" and dismiss them as "inferior savages." What is even more important is that these Orientalists care only about their own Western interests without any regard to those of the natives. That is why Jane (and indirectly Fowles) and in a more radical and "politicized" form of historicism, feels that the "barbarians" are not really the Egyptian peasants, but rather the Western misinterpreters—the Orientalists—who cannot see anything else but their own vested interests and their selfish materialism.

Thus the title of the chapter in which this episode occurs, "Barbarians," is a strong symbolic reference to Westerners—not Orientals—as barbarians. Jane's comment to Daniel echoes Said's argument in *Orientalism* that the real problem lies in the great importance and centrality given to the "Us" instead of some attention given to "them,"—the people who are neglected, marginalized, and left on the periphery. That is why Jane feels that these people are more important than, if not "as interesting as, the ancient and historical sites" of Egypt that every Westerner who comes here feels that s/he must pay homage to despite the "deadness" of these places, and who often forgets the living part, the real people (527, 541).

Through this type of argument, Jane seems to have convinced Daniel of the applicability of her Marxist ideas to the poor people of Egypt, a situation which reflects a needed change within imperialistic Western ideology that Fowles suggests in *Daniel Martin*. Jane argues that if Marxism makes us see the poor people and try to solve their problems, then it is a preferable humanistic system that is needed in the West, one which is different from the totalitarian regimes of the Eastern Block that Daniel rightly rejects. Jane asks him "to see a parallel between the conflict of Marxism as a noble humanist theory and Marxism in totalitarian



practice" (522). It is important and equally relevant to mention here that Jane reflects Fowles's real political ideas advanced in his personal narrative, *The Aristos* (110-14), in which he rejects the "autocratic doctrinaire socialism of the Communist kind" (113). As a Marxist humanist Jane is able to see the ills of both capitalist and communist systems, and she communicates this vision to Daniel in Egypt. Through Jane's "democratic socialism" and Egypt's revolutionary Nasser and his semi-socialist programmes, Daniel begins to achieve some objectivity about his own social and political beliefs. In other words, the Orient ironically enlightens Daniel about his own self, his own love-relationships, his humanism, and politically *orient* him towards the true nature of both communism and capitalism.

Using irony to undermine colonialist ideology, Fowles portrays the simple life of the Egyptians in the novel as something to be envied, aspired to, and dreamed of, rather than something to despise as inferior and uncivilized. For both Daniel and Jane the Orient is something "eternally fertile" and fruitfully warm. This view, however, puts Daniel and Jane in the same critical dilemma of defending the Orient while indirectly and symbolically calling for its colonization. That is why it is very difficult, within the poetics of postcolonial theory and practice and within the context of decolonization, to convince readers that Jane's and Daniel's idealization of the Orient is not ambivalent, double-edgedly subversive, culturally politicized, and a kind of neo-colonialism:

And then there came what was almost an envy of the simplicities of life in this green and liquid, eternally fertile and blue-skied world; just as some denizen of an icier, grimmer planet might look on, and envy, Earth. Before certain such idyllic pastoral scenes, one's own over-complex twentieth-century existence could seem like a passing cloud-shadow; a folly, a mere result of climatic bad luck. (525)

Fowles suggests here that the West is metaphorically cooler, drier, grimmer, more complicated, over-industrialized, and therefore less human; whereas the East, and with the same touch of irony and implied call for coloniality, is very human; indeed, it is "human history" itself (525). The narrator, also, dislikes the pharaohs themselves for social and political reasons that reflect Jane's ideas about what it means to be human:

the pharaohs and their gods were the first smug bourgeois of the world . . . It reeked from the calculated precision, the formal, statuesque coolness of their painting and sculptures. They had somehow banned personal sensibility, affection for life, all impulsive exuberance, all spontaneous exaggeration and abstraction. (535)

Another important human image of the Orient is connected with the ways in which the narrator portrays the birds of Egypt as some kind of "*fellaheen*" that are enjoying their own simple life in their own ways:

All landscapes acquired, in his [Daniel's] eyes, a most characteristic emblematic bird; and here he decided it was the super-winged plover, a cousin of the English lapwings he sometimes saw on the Thorncombe meadows, but a far more elegant little creature, Nefertiti to a dowl . . . All this nature delighted and reassured him. . . . In a way the birds were a primeval version of the *fellaheen*. (540)

Through this idyllic description of the Egyptian landscape the reader is reminded of Daniel's past and his childhood retreats into the English landscapes of Thorncombe and Devon. This passage also suggests that Daniel is as much in love with Orientals and their simple ways of life and their divine landscape as he is with the sacred domains of his childhood in Devon. For him, the *fellaheen* are as simple and innocent as the birds in nature, hence his anti-colonialist attitude against Orientalists and imperialists who exploit such poor natives for economic gain. Indeed, according to Daniel and to the Herr Professor (and certainly to Fowles), the *fellaheen*, in their simplicity and spontaneity are more civilized than are the Western civilizations that they have encountered in history:

They are very old, they have seen many so-called superior civilizations pass—with all their cruelties, their lies, their promises. For them all that remains is their river, and their land. That is all they care about. For them socialism is no more than another foreign culture. Perhaps good, perhaps bad. Colonel Nasser gave them some of their land back. So good. But he also build the Aswan Dam, which means their soil is no longer refreshed by alluvium every year. That is very bad. What need have they of hydro-electricity? (542)

Such anti-colonialist discourse suggests further that Daniel and Fowles are defending the Oriental peasants and their way of life, and (as one critic in a different context puts it), they are

"decoding and demystifying texts as a form of radical subversion" (Erkkila 569) of the dominant patterns of colonialist material practices. Throughout history these peasants have suffered colonization but ultimately survived and prospered like the Nile itself; all they care about is their land and its divine river. They do not want the sophisticated modern ways of life of advanced technology since it destroys their old sacred and idyllic life.

Indeed, Daniel and Jane experience the spontaneity, romanticism, and more important the colonization of Egypt in its radical sense when they visit Kitchener's island. This island is unique in its countless birds and coolness: it has "the simplicity of the finest Islamic architecture, of centuries of folk-knowledge exercised on sanctuaries against the sun. It was an Alhambra composed of vegetation, water, shadow" (569). What is even more important about it is that

it remained almost exactly as Dan had remembered it—one of the loveliest and most civilized . . . in his knowledge of the world. . . . He was careful not to prompt Jane, but she too fell for the place at once. They had strolled hardly a hundred yards before she touched his sleeve [and said] "*I want a house here, Dan. Please.*"

(569; emphasis added)

I have highlighted this last sentence because it unquestionably embodies the new-colonialist ideology which consciously and/or unconsciously overpowers both Fowles and his protagonists and reinscribes them in such hegemonic discourse as colonizers, at least ironically and symbolically, in order to undercut such discourse from within. Here Jane is asking Daniel, even demanding that he grant her the right to "have," to "own," and to colonize a house on this island, in the Orient. Indeed, it is a direct call for colonizing the Orient by the West and echoes various overt and covert policies which once justified imperial occupation and exploitation both in terms of material commodification and of "moral superiority." Colonialism involves the domestication of a world at the boundaries of "civilization," a world of savage Others, which needs to be administered by, and codified through, Western ideology (JanMohamed 64). As Said also argues in *Culture and Imperialism*, colonialism "is the implanting of settlements on distant territory" (8). Thus, Jane, as any other

colonizer, wants to settle on Kitchener island to keep it prosperous and progressive. But at the same time and more problematically, Jane could be ironical in her demand of a house in the Orient as a way of rejecting and demoralizing Western colonialism altogether. This passage suggests that Jane is now ready to accept Daniel as her old lover whom she should have married years ago rather than Anthony, whom she married only out of duty and to avoid breaking a promise. The Orient, ultimately, has symbolically taught her to be frank with herself, to concretize her embattled feelings, to demystify her life, and to accept the inappropriateness of her marriage to Anthony.

Colonialism, moreover, is embodied through Daniel's writing of a postcard to Jenny in California where he confesses to her the impact of this metamorphysical trip to the Orient:

*I've fallen in love all over again with it. Water, silence, leaves, peace, out of time—too good for filming really. Though mercifully its real self can't be filmed. If this beautiful and noble river had one central place. It's all helped the script, more than I expected.* (579)

Again, Daniel is constructed in such a colonialist, or better, "symbolically and ironically colonialist," narrative as a colonizer who wants to "settle" in such an enchanted Oriental land. The Orient has helped him to write his film script on Kitchener, to finish his novel (*Daniel Martin*) he has wanted to write all his life, to see his faults and rid himself of them, and of course to reconceptualize his own history with the woman he loves. The Orient becomes in such a symbolically colonialist discourse a vast mirror, to echo Said's terminology, through which Daniel sees all his psychological problems: his relation to his father, his lost mother, women in general, and the Other as a whole. He realizes this mirror image while he is reading Lukacs's book: "Mirrors: he knew why he had marked those passages and who was really being defined, and it was neither Scott nor Kitchener: but his own sense of defeat" (586). Through this mirror-Orient, Daniel realizes that this Other, upon which he used to throw all his faults, has its own independence, equal superiority, and entity which he must respect. Then, Daniel criticizes the modern colonialist stereotyping, circumscription, determinism, and ritualized interpellation of the Other as being everywhere around us,

in the same way that the Orient is being discursively and racially reconstructed by Orientalists as an attractive Other which invites colonialism itself. He attacks "the traditional twentieth-century nausea: the otherness of the other. Everything was other: one's fault, one's situations, one's blindnesses, sullennesses, boredoms" (585). Ultimately, all this valorization and stigmatization of the Orient, which is colonialistic in itself, is ironically reconceptualized in order to undermine and undercut from below colonialism as a racist, unjust, and ethnocentrically assumed superior entity.

The notion of the stigmatized abysmal Other, the Orient, is finally developed in Daniel's discursive "colonialistic" argument with Jane when they arrive in Syria on their journey to Palmyra. Ironically, he tells Jane to stop looking at things in terms of the Other, the thing he has been doing all his life; she should not think of marriage as a kind of imprisoning the self by the other, or vice versa (602-03). Indeed, both of them agree that this is the time and place (interestingly in Palmyra) to bury their differences and to realize the meaning of this entire journey to the East. Despite the fact that both have felt that Palmyra is yet another Oriental "extraordinary place," they inscribe it in a colonialist racial discourse as an "abyss," "end of the world" (622), "the loneliest landscapes in the world" (624), a "wasteland," and empty, "lifeless" and "dead city," "so chilling, so hopeless, so static, so vast," and so "desolate" (640); "the whole site," for them, is "cold and dead" (643). This is a colonialistic or symbolically colonialistic racial discourse because it indirectly invites Westerners to "settle in" and "fill in" this "empty" place, and to vitalize it with the dynamics and warmth of the West. At the same time and in a contradictory uplifting discourse, which is again ironically and symbolically colonialistic, Palmyra is described by Daniel as a typically promising, inviting, and mysteriously frightening Oriental place: "Dan slid a glance at Jane. 'You may have your adventure yet.'" She answers him: "I already am. I feel as if I'm on another planet. Nothing seems real any more" (620). But Daniel argues the "reality" of this isolated place by saying that it is tremendously real because it embodies the isolation of modern Man as a whole: "We've just been through

what must be one of the loneliest landscapes in the world. You called it unreal. For me it had tremendous reality" (624). Palmyra is very real for Daniel because it embodies the emptiness, the meaninglessness, the nothingness of our existence, as he observes by referring to Beckett: "I shouldn't talk like Beckett," but really "I feel I've become a man driving through nothingness" (624). Thus, travelling to Palmyra and to the Orient as a whole, like any other travelling, widens Jane's and Daniel's horizon, enlightens them about their own existence and the mistakes they have made in the past. Daniel says to her:

Anthony should have been a priest. You should have been my wife. I should have tried to be a serious playwright. . . . I'm not sure you're not the most guilty of us all. You did half glimpse it at Oxford. That we were living in a dream-world. (625)

Despite the "realistic" deadness and barrenness of the city, as exemplified in their racial discourse, Daniel and Jane contradictorily and colonialistically reconceptualize Palmyra in its glory as the means of fulfilling the Oriental promise of romantic love and fertile sexuality; so great is "the promise of the name: Palmyra, with all its connotations of shaded pools, gleaming marble, sunlit gardens, the place where sybaritic Rome married the languorous Orient" (633). This connection between the Orient and the fulfilment of Western sexuality, which strongly fits Said's notion of Orientalism and his critique of colonialist discursive practices, is ironically developed here by Fowles as a way of criticizing it since the Orient in much European writing is metaphorically sexualized and celebrated for its supposed easily available sexuality. The Orient, Said argues, conceals "a deep, rich fund of female sexuality" (*Orientalism* 182). Indeed, in the Hotel Zenobia, the name that symbolizes the female grandeur, Oriental beauty, determination and strength, they finally achieve sexual as well as spiritual unification despite the fact that the place itself is ironically reconstructed as the symbol of coldness, "lostness, goneness, [and] true death" (633). In fact, whether the place is warm and fertile or barren and dead, it is ironically enjoyed, vitalized, and revived by the presence of Westerners, a process that is colonialistically ideologized and discursively politicized, and the whole thing is internally criticized by Fowles through irony and symbolism.

The internal critique of Western construction of Oriental sexuality is further developed in the novel in the ways in which Jane is shown to have not been able to understand the implication of the sexual act which occurs between her and Daniel in the Hotel Zenobia—a metaphor for the entire Western misunderstanding, misconception and misrepresentation of so many things in the Orient, including sexuality. For Daniel, "there was no time, no lost years, marriage, motherhood, but the original girl's body," that lies beside him (635). But the next morning at breakfast, Daniel realizes that Jane is still unsure of her own muddled self and about the lessons she is supposed to be learning from the Orient. That is why he seems to be "on the very brink of a violent rage; perhaps even tears; but also that further pleading was useless" (641).

They walk once again among the ruins of Palmyra and they find them lifeless, cold, and desolate: "It was as if they had travelled one fatal day too long, and all their previous realities and pretences had crumbled like the city" (643). Indeed, Palmyra teaches them, ironically also, its real meanings of unifying rather than "remorselessly dividing them because they saw it in totally antipathetic ways" (644). The evidence of this involves the episode of the two puppies which are left by their mother among the ruins of the Temple of the Baal. Jane looks at them, begins crying, and says to Daniel, "It feels so without hope. Those puppies. . . . Why did she leave her puppies like that?" Daniel retorts,

Why do you always jump to the wrong conclusion? . . . It's not a lack of love, Jane. It's a well-known trick. What biologists call distraction behaviour. . . . She is offering a trade. To be hunted and shot, if we'll spare her young. That is why she's standing just out of gunshot. To lure us away. (647-48)

Then Jane asks to be left alone for a few minutes, and Daniel walks away; but when he looks back he finds her sitting on the sand gazing down at something in front of her. He discovers later, on their way back to Beirut, when he rubs her hand, that she has no wedding ring on her finger—she had actually buried it in the sand of Palmyra.

Palmyra has been thus metaphorically and ironically taught Jane and Daniel in such a symbolically colonialistic discourse

that deliberately prescribes colonialism in order to undermine it from within, that the past together with its colonial expansion, should be buried as "past," and should not affect the present: Anthony is dead and therefore Jane should bury her marriage. Jane now fully realizes that she should not have married Anthony out of duty, and she should have married Daniel, the man she loves. What she needs now is just some effort to initiate a real communication process with Daniel as a way of re-establishing a lasting love relationship between them. In the same way, Daniel learns how to look at her as an independent free woman, and how to think of other people as he thinks of himself. Indeed, the Orient, as represented in the novel through irony—which implies colonialism and at the same time a rejection of it—teaches both Daniel and Jane the meaning of a real love relationship. The Orient, finally, has made them realize that the valid modern lesson about love should not only embody "Forster's *Only connect*," but also "only reify" (661). This reification of human beings and their sacred relations have been made possible by Fowles's own problematically ironical, political, even ideologically colonialistic, reification of the Orient as an attractive, inspiring, and sacred domain.

Within the problematics of the poetics and politics of representation and the reconceptualization of a radical subject such as the Orient and its resultant questions of race, power, hegemony, and authoritative discourse in a postcolonial culture such as the English that has lost all its colonial superiority more than half a century ago, I would like to conclude this essay with a reference to Foucault's central question about subjectivity, identity, and authorship in his essay, "What Is an Author?" Discourses are in so many different ways "determined" by the voice that speaks, represents, and reconstructs them and by the various discursive and social practices and conditions that produce them. Thus, in applying Foucault's problematic question, "What does it matter who is speaking" (101) to *Daniel Martin*, I would answer by rejecting such an indifferent authorial position within such a political context because it matters very much who is speaking, about what, and from which particular social, historical, and political location; and it does matter to know whose voice is it that



speaks in the novel so that one can "judge," if that is possible, the sincerity of either Daniel, Jane, or even Fowles in what they claim throughout the narrative. Indeed, to know that Fowles has been speaking in this novel through his main protagonists would make it easy to assert that he is speaking from within a postcolonial Western culture and ideology that look nostalgically at the good old days of colonialism while at the same time proclaiming that he is strongly rejecting all its racial and colonial practices against the indigenous people and the ways in which they are represented, either directly and negatively through clear racially colonialist narratives, or indirectly through irony and symbolism. Thus, the representation of an ethnic and cultural entity such as the Orient within Western and privileged discourses could not be indifferent, hence my assertion throughout this essay that Fowles is ironical, ambivalent, and even colonialistic in his romanticization and defence of the Orient, a problematic ploy he deliberately uses in order to wage an internal and undermining critique on colonialism as a whole.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Men: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse"; "The Other Question—The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse"; *Nation and Narration*, especially its introduction, in which he theorizes about postcolonial theory; *The Location of Culture*, which puts postcolonial and post-modern scholarship in the forefront of literary and cultural theory today. See also Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her politico-theoretical book *The Post-colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*; also *The Spivak Reader*, in which Spivak theorizes about most of the disputes within the field of critical theory, mainly post-colonialism; Abdul R. JanMohamed, "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature"; Benita Parry, "The Politics of Representation in *A Passage to India*"; Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, which demystifies the "civil mission" of the whiteman in the East when it becomes clear that the Western imperial powers were always met with resistance; Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson, eds., *De-Scripting Empire: Post-Colonialism and Textuality*; Iain Chambers, ed., *The Post-Colonial Question*; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, which is a comprehensive selection of key texts in postcolonial theory and thought. Finally, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, which deals with discourse analysis, literary history, ethnography and political economy, and presents a non-reductive critique of Eurocentrism.
- <sup>2</sup> See Michel Foucault, "What Is An Author?"; "Truth and Power,"; *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*; and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.
- <sup>3</sup> See Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*.

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