TWO EUROPEAN IMAGES OF NON-EUROPEAN RULE

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I

In order to understand better the relationship between social anthropology and colonialism, it is necessary to go beyond the boundaries of the discipline and of the particular epoch within which that discipline acquired its distinctive character. The descriptive writings of functional anthropology are largely devoted to Africa, are in effect virtually synonymous with African sociology during the twentieth century colonial period. But we need to see anthropology as a holistic discipline nurtured within bourgeois society, having as its object of study a variety of non-European societies which have come under its economic, political and intellectual domination—and therefore as merely one such discipline among several (orientalism, indology, sinology, etc.). All these disciplines are rooted in that complex historical encounter between the West and the Third World which commenced about the 16th century: when capitalist Europe began to emerge out of feudal Christendom; when the conquistadors who expelled the last of the Arabs from Christian Spain went on to colonise the New World and also to bring about the direct confrontation of 'civilised' Europe with 'savage' and 'barbaric' peoples;[1] when the Atlantic maritime states, by dominating the world's major seaways, inaugurated 'the Vasco Da Gama epoch

[1] "The Americas were therefore the scene of the first true empires controlled from Europe, and Western imperial theory originated in sixteenth-century Spain." P. D. Curtin, (ed.) *Imperialism,* London, 1972, p. xiv. For further information on this subject, see J. M. Parry, *The Spanish Theory of Empire in the Sixteenth Century,* Cambridge, 1940.

of Asian history';[2] when the conceptual revolution of modern science and technology helped to consolidate Europe's world hegemony.[3] The bourgeois disciplines which study non-European societies reflect the deep contradictions articulating this unequal historical encounter, for ever since the Renaissance the West has sought both to subordinate and devalue other societies, and at the same time to find in them clues to its own humanity. Although modern colonialism is merely one moment in that long encounter, the way in which the objectified understanding of these modern disciplines has been made possible by and acceptable to that moment needs to be considered far more seriously than it has.

The notes that follow constitute an attempt to examine some of the political conclusions of functional anthropology (African studies) and of orientalism (Islamic studies) in order to explore the ways in which the European historical experience of subordinate non-European peoples has shaped its objectification of the latter. I hope that such a comparison will make somewhat clearer the kind of determination exerted by the structure of imperial power on the understanding of European disciplines which focus on dominated cultures. Such an attempt is not without its dangers for someone who is trained in only one of these disciplines, but it must be made if we are to go beyond simplistic assertions or denials about the relationship between social anthropology and colonialism. I should stress that I am not concerned with all the doctrines or conclusions of functional anthropology—or for that matter of orientalism.

What I propose to do in the rest of the paper is to concentrate on two general images of the institutionalised relationship between rulers and ruled, objectified by the functional anthropologist and the Islamic orientalist. As we shall see, the images are very different, for the first typically stresses *consent* and the other *repression* in the institutionalised relationship between rulers and ruled. After sketching in these two images, I shall go on to indicate significant omissions and simplifications that characterise each of them, and follow this up with some more general theoretical observations concerning what they have in common. I shall then turn to the wider historical location of the two disciplines which, so I shall argue in my conclusion, help us to understand some of the ideological roots and consequences of these images.

[2]Cf. K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance*, London, 1959.
[3]Cf. J. D. Bernal, *Science in History*, London, 1965, especially Part 4.

II

I begin by characterising what I call the functional anthropologist's view of political domination.

In general, the structure of traditional African states is represented in terms of balance of powers, reciprocal obligations and value consensus—as in the following passage by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard:

> A relatively stable political system in Africa represents a balance between divergent interests. In [centralised political systems] it is a balance between different parts of the administrative organisation. The forces that maintain the supremacy of the paramount ruler are opposed by the forces that act as a check on his powers; [...] A general principle of great importance is contained in these arrangements, which has the effect of giving every section and every major interest of the society direct or indirect representation in the conduct of government [...]
> Looked at from another angle, the government of an African state consists in a balance between power and authority on the one side and obligation and responsibility on the other [...] The structure of an African state implies that kings and chiefs rule by consent.[4]

Echoes of the same view are also found in a comparatively recent paper by P. C. Lloyd, "The Political Structure of African Kingdoms":

> The political elite represent, to a greater or lesser degree, the interest of the mass of the people. In African kingdoms permanent opposition groups within the political elite are not found [...] A vote is never taken on any major issue, but all concerned voice their interests and the king, summing up, gives a decision which reflects the general consensus.[5]

This, then is the functional anthropological image of political domination in the so-called tribal world: an emphasis on the integrated character of the body politic, on the reciprocal rights and obligations between rulers and ruled, on the consensual basis of the ruler's political authority and administration, and on the inherent efficiency of the traditional system of government in giving every legitimate interest its due representation.

The orientalist's image of political domination in the historic

[4]M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, (eds.), *African Political Systems*, London, 1940, pp. 11-12.
[5]M. Banton, (ed.), *Political Systems and the Distribution of Power*, London, 1965, p. 76 and pp. 79-80.

Islamic world is very different. Here there is a tendency to see the characteristic relationship between rulers and their subjects in terms of force and repression on the one side, and of submission, indifference, even cynicism on the other. The following brief quotation from Gibb's essay "Religion and Politics in Christianity and Islam" illustrates the kind of view I am thinking of:

> ... [the governor's] administrative regulations and exactions on land, industry and persons, and the processes resorted to by [their] officers were regarded as arbitrary and without authority in themselves, and directed only to the furthering of their private interests. In the eyes of the governed, official 'justice' was no justice. The only authoritative law is that of Islam; everything else is merely temporary (and more or less forced) accommodating to the whims of a changing constellation of political overlords.[6]

A similar kind of image underlies the following remarks by von Grunebaum:

> As an executive officer, the [Islamic] ruler is unrestricted. The absoluteness of his power was never challenged. The Muslim liked his rulers terror-inspiring, and it seems to have been bon ton to profess oneself awestruck when ushered into his presence [...] [The medieval Muslim] is frequently impatient with his rulers and thinks little of rioting, but on the whole he is content to let his princes play their game.[7]

The same author, tracing the political theories of Muslim canonical jurists writes:

> So the requirements of legitimate power had to be redefined with ever greater leniency, until the low had been reached and the theoretical dream [of a *civitas dei*] abandoned. The believer was thought under obligation to obey whosoever held sway, be his power *de jure* or merely *de facto*. No matter how evil a tyrant the actual ruler, no matter how offensive his conduct, the subject was bound to loyal obedience.[8]

He then proceeds, with the aid of further quotations to characterise what he calls "that disillusionment bordering on cynicism with which the Oriental is still inclined to view the political life".

The essential features of this image are to be found in the pion-

[6]J. H. Proctor, (ed.), *Islam and International Relations*, London, 1965, p. 12.
[7]G. E. Von Grunebaum, *Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*, London, 1955, pp. 25-6.
[8]G. E. Von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam*, Chicago, 1946, p. 168.

eering works of orientalism at the turn of the last century—as in this passage by Snouck Hurgronje:

> The rulers paid no more attention to the edicts of the *fuqaha*, the specialists in law, than suited them; these last in their turn, were less and less obliged to take the requirements of practice into account. So long as they refrained from preaching revolt directly or indirectly against the political rulers, they were allowed to criticise the institutions of state and society as bitterly as they liked. In fact, the works on [religious law] are full of disparaging judgements on conditions of 'the present day'. What is justice in the eyes of princes and judges is but injustice and tyranny...Most taxes which are collected by the government are illegal extortions...; the legally prescribed revenue...is collected in an illegal manner and spent wrongly... Muslim rulers, in the eyes of the *fuqaha*, are not the vice regents of the Prophet as the first four Caliphs had been, but wielders of a material power which should only be submitted to out of fear of still worse to follow, and because even a wrongful order is at least better than complete disorder...[In fact in Islamic history] the people obeyed their rulers as the wielders of power, but they revered the ulama [learned men of religion] as the teachers of truth and in troubled times took their lead from them...In this way, the [religious] law, which in practice had to make ever greater concessions to the use and custom of the people and the arbitrariness of their rulers, nevertheless retained a considerable influence on the intellectual life of the Muslims.[9]

So the orientalist's image may be characterised briefly as follows: an emphasis on the absolute power of the ruler, and the whimsical, generally illegitimate nature of his demands; on the indifference or involuntary submission on the part of the ruled; on a somewhat irrational form of conflict in which sudden, irresponsible urges to riot are met with violent repression; and, finally, an emphasis on the overall inefficiency and corruption of political life.

III

The historical realities, of course, are more complicated than these views. But the remarkable thing in both cases is the direction in which the simplification occurs.

[9]*Selected Works of C. Snouck Hurgronje*, edited by G. H. Bousquet and J. Schacht, Leiden, 1957, pp. 265 and 267.

In Africa, a basic political reality since the end of the nineteenth century was the pervasive presence of a massive colonial power—the military conquest of the continent by European capitalist countries, and the subsequent creation, definition and maintenance of the authority of innumerable African chiefs to facilitate the administration of empire.[10] Everywhere Africans were subordinated, in varying degree, to the authority of European administrators. And although according to functionalist doctrine "Every anthropologist writes of the people he works among as he finds them",[11] the typical description of local African structures totally ignored the political fact of European coercive power and the African chief's ultimate dependence on it.

For example Fortes's *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* describes Tale political structure with only a few brief ambiguous references to British rule in the introduction and then again in the final section of the final chapter. Yet in a paper published seven years earlier ("Culture Contact as a Dynamic Process") he had noted that the local District Commissioner among the Tallensi was:

> 6 miles from a police station, and some 30 miles from a permanent administrative headquarters. The political and legal behaviour of the Tallensi, both commoner and chief, is as strongly conditioned by the ever-felt presence of the District Commissioner as by their own traditions[...] The District Commissioner is in direct communication with the chiefs. To them he gives his orders and states his opinions. They are the organs by which he acts upon the rest of the community, and conversely, by which the community reacts to him.[12]

In spite of all this, Fortes had seen the District Commissioner essentially as a "Contact Agent" between European and native cultures, and not as the local representative of an imperial system. It was this non-political perception of a profoundly political fact which led him to assert that the District Commissioner was *not* regarded "as an imposition upon the traditional constitution from without. With all that he stands for, he is a corporate part of native life in this area".

One might suggest that, in spite of methodological statements to

[10]For a summary of these developments with special reference to East Africa (including the southern Sudan) see chapter 11 of L. Mair's *Primitive Government*, London, 1962.
[11]L. Mair, *op. cit.,* p. 31.
[12]*Methods of Study of Culture Contact in Africa*, International African Institute Memorandum XV, London, 1938, pp. 63-4.

the contrary, functional anthropologists were really not analysing existing political systems but writing the ideologically loaded constitutional history of African states prior to the European conquest. This would certainly help to explain the following remarks by the editors of *African Political Systems:* "Several contributors have described the changes in the political systems they investigated which have taken place as a result of European conquest and rule. If we do not emphasise this side of the subject it is because all contributors are more interested in anthropological than in administrative problems".[13] One reason why developments in indigenous political structures due to European conquest and rule were seen as "administrative problems" by European anthropologists was that real political forces in all their complexity formed the primary objects of administrative thinking and manipulation on the part of European colonial officials. Yet the result of identifying the constitutional ideology of 'centralised' African polities with the structural reality meant not analysing the intrinsic contradictions of power and material interest—a form of analysis which could be carried out only by starting from the basic reality of present colonial domination.

Even when later anthropologists began to refer to the colonial presence as part of the local structure they generally did so in such a way as to obscure the systematic character of colonial domination and to mask the fundamental contradictions of interest inherent in the system of Indirect Rule.[14] The role of new political-economic forces brought about by European colonialism (labelled "Social Change") were usually not thought to be directly relevant to an understanding of the dynamic of African political structures operating within the colonial system of Indirect Rule (labelled "Political Anthropology").

With regard to the orientalist's view of typical Islamic political rule there are several negative features I want to point to. The first is that no serious attempt was made until relatively recently[15] to

[13]M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *op. cit.,* p. 1.
[14]For example L. A. Fallers in his well-known study of the Basoga of Uganda, *Bantu Bureaucracy*, (Cambridge, 1956) focuses on the way in which "co-existence in a society of corporate lineages with political institutions of the state type [introduced by the colonial government] makes for strain and instability" (p. 17)—an essentially Parsonian problem. He is not concerned with the colonial system as such, but with role conflicts inherent in the positions of African headman and civil-servant chief, and European District officers.
[15]An example is I. Lapidus's excellent monograph *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Mass., 1967.

explore in detail the process of mutual accommodation between Islamic rulers and their subjects—as noted, surprisingly enough, by Gibb, who has been so ready elsewhere to project the orientalist's image of Islamic rule:

> We know, in fact, exceedingly little of the inner relations between the government and the people... It can scarcely be doubted that government, in its administrative aspect, was not merely a set of forms imposed upon the people by the will of the conqueror, but an organism intimately associated with the structure of society and the character and ideas of the governed, and that there was a constant interplay between governors and governed. It is necessary to clear the ground of the misconceptions engendered by the abuse of European terms such as despotism and autocracy, and to submit all the traditional organs and usages of government to re-examination, in order to bring out the underlying ideas and relations, and the principles which guided their working.[16]

But something that we do know a little about is the populist tradition in Muslim societies as expressed in the repeated popular revolts[17] deriving their legitimation from Islamic ideology, as well as in the popular distrust of aristocratic institutions[18] (which is by no means the same thing as "oriental cynicism in relation to political life"). Most orientalists have tended to see these revolts as evidence of disorder and decay rather than as the re-affirmation of a populist tradition in Islamic politics.[19] Why, instead of emphasising disorder and repression and explaining this by reference to an intrinsic flaw in Islamic political theory (usually invidiously contrasted with Greek and Christian political theory) did orientalists not attempt to account for the continuing vitality of a populist tradition within changing socio-economic circumstances? More important, why,

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[16]H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part I, London, 1950, p. 9.
[17]Arab historiography from Tabari to Jabarti is full of information on these revolts. Useful summaries of revolts in the early period of Islam are available in W. Montgomery Watt, *Islam and the Integration of Society*, London, 1961. For a work on working-class organisation and rebellion in medieval urban Islamic society, see C. Cahen, *Mouvement Populaires et Autonomisme Urbain dans l'Asie Musulmane du Moyen Age*, Leiden, 1961. But in both works there is little discussion of the dialectical relationship between political-economic experience and ideological response—although Montgomery Watt makes some attempt in that direction.
[18]This point is interestingly made by M. G. S. Hodgson, "Islam and Image", in *History of Religions*, Vol. II, Winter, 1964.
[19]See E. Abrahamian, "The Crowd in Iranian Politics 1905-1953" (*Past and Present*, no. 41, 1968) for an attempt at describing the active rationality of

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when generalising about the essence of Islamic political rule, did orientalists not recognise that their textual sources represented the particular moral stance of a mobile class of religious literati-cum-merchants with a need for political orderliness in particular periods of great social upheaval? Finally, why did orientalists make no attempt to analyse the way in which developing class relations within late medieval Islam were affected by its changing commercial position vis-a-vis Europe and Asia (especially under the impact of European mercantilism) and the significance of such developments for relations between Islamic rulers and their subjects?[20]

IV

Despite the great differences in the images I have been talking about, one pre-disposition that both disciplines appear to have shared is the reluctance to talk explicitly and systematically about the implications of European development for the political systems of non-European societies. There are other parallels also, in the orientation of the two disciplines, to which I now turn.

The functional anthropologist stressed consent and legitimacy as important elements in the political systems of relatively small homogeneous ethnic groups in Africa whose history was assumed in most cases to be inaccessible, and which were seen and represented as integrated systems. In general he equated empirical work with fieldwork, and therefore tended to define the theoretical boundaries of the system under investigation in terms of practical fieldwork. His interest in a-historical, 'traditional' systems (set within an imperial framework which was taken for granted) led him to emphasise the unifying function of common religious values and symbols, and of 'age-old' custom and obligations in the relationship between tribal rulers and ruled. Where the anthropologist was faced with available

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political crowds in the modern Islamic world. (I am indebted to Peter Worsley for this reference.) "While European journalists have invariably portrayed oriental crowds as 'xenophobic mobs' hurling insults and bricks at Western embassies," observes Abrahamian, "local conservatives have frequently denounced them as 'social scum' in the pay of the foreign hand, and radicals have often stereotyped them as 'the people' in action. For all, the crowd has been an abstraction, whether worthy of abuse, fear, praise, or even of humour, but not a subject of study." (p. 184). It seems that sometimes there is little to distinguish the attitudes of European journalists from that of orientalists.
[20]Social and economic history of the Islamic world is in its infancy (see M. A. Cook (ed.), *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*, London, 1970)—an indication of the extent to which idealist explanations in terms of "the religious essence of Islam" have been in vogue among orientalists. This is not unrelated to the fact that orientalists have typically worked on composed literary texts and not in archives. See also R. Owen's

historical evidence relating to conquest—as among the Zulu and Ngoni of southern Africa, or among the Fulani-Hausa of Northern Nigeria—he was of course aware of the importance of force and repression in African political history. But the functionalist perspective made it difficult for him to absorb the full significance of such events into his analysis and so they were generally seen as preludes to the establishment of integrated on-going African political systems which constituted his principal object of enquiry. It is common knowledge that this mode of analysis in social anthropology derives from Durkheimian sociology, which never really developed an adequate framework for understanding historical political processes. The interesting thing is that for a long time the social anthropologist writing about African political systems felt no need to overcome these theoretical limitations. The role of force in the maintenance of African systems of political domination (or of the colonial system of which they were a part) received virtually no systematic attention. The primary focus was usually on the juridical definition of rights and duties between the chief and his subjects.[21]

At this point it should be noted that the orientalist's image of political rule in Islamic society covers a historical span of several hundred years, from the middle ages (the so-called formative period of Islam) until the eighteenth century—a period of economic development and decline, of conquests and dynastic wars, and rule by successive military elites, notably Mamluke and Ottoman. The orientalist, concerned to present a relatively coherent picture of typical rule for such an epoch, could scarcely leave the element of force unmentioned. But the interesting point is that the element of force is not only mentioned, it is made the defining feature of the total political picture, which is then sometimes contrasted with the

critical review of *The Cambridge History of Islam* in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (in press).
[21]This is also true of Gluckman, who is usually cited as being one of the first anthropologists to have dealt directly with problems of force and conflict in traditional African societies. Gluckman's view of conflict has typically been a juristic, legalistic one, whence his particular interest in "discrepant and conflicting rules of succession" which he sees as the primary focus of traditional African rebellions" (See his Introduction to *Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa*, London, 1963). For this reason he fails to make an analytic distinction between *popular* armed uprisings and dynastic rivalries. The question as to whether a particular internal military challenge against the state's authority is rooted in (actual or potential) class consciousness is more basic than the task of labelling it 'rebellion' or 'revolution'. His failure to appreciate this helps to explain why Gluckman paid no attention to the question of African popular rebellions against European colonial rule.

allegedly different character of political rule in Medieval Christendom. (The suggestion being that since Islamic society lacked a true conception of *political authority*, i.e., of political domination based on general consent, it was inevitable that force should play such a central role in the Islamic political order).[22]

The orientalist concerned to generalise was here faced with a theoretical problem with which the functional anthropologist has not been much troubled. For the anthropologist reared on a-historical Durkheimian sociology, society and polity were usually coterminous. The horizontal links of 'tribal society' were conveniently definable in terms of the vertical links (whether hierarchical or segmentary) of 'tribal political organisation'. But for the orientalist concerned with Islam there was hardly ever such a convergence after the de facto break up of the Abbasid Empire. So in his desire to characterise a distinctive 'Islamic society', on the basis of a considerable body of textual material relating to many eventful centuries, he is led to adopt a partly functionalist perspective: for the emphasis on the integrative role of Islam as a religion is reminiscent of the social anthropologist's treatment of the integrative function of 'tribal' religious values in many African political systems. Islamic history thus collapses into an essentialist synchrony, for much the same reasons as African history does in the hands of the functional anthropologist.

Since the orientalist is concerned by definition with 'a society' of much complexity, he must stress what may be called a form of horizontal integration: the fact that Muslims seemed bound together, despite their subjection to different secular rulers, by their common loyalty to Islam as a religious system—an Islam which was interpreted by, and indeed embodied in, an 'international' community of learned men—the ulama, the sufi shaikhs and so forth. This horizontal religious consensus is then opposed by the orientalist to a vertical political dissensus, in which "everything else is merely temporary and more or less forced accommodation to the whims of a changing constellation of political overlords". This contrast between an integrated Islamic society and a fragmented Islamic polity has encouraged orientalists to oppose the supposedly universal authority of the *sharia* (Islamic law) to the changing constellation of political regimes and practices, often accompanied by

[22]See Gibb in Proctor (ed.), *op. cit.*

violence—an opposition with which the medieval Muslim writers were themselves much preoccupied. In fact it may be argued that insofar as the modern orientalists can be said to have an explicit interpretive theory, this is largely quarried from the historically conditioned writings of the great medieval Muslim theorists—ibn Khaldun, Mawardi, ibn Taymiyya. The result is a remarkable blurring between historical object and interpreting subject.

My suggestion here is that ultimately the functional anthropologist and the orientalist were concerned with the same theoretical question: what holds society together? How is order achieved or destroyed? The former, viewing 'tribal' society as *defined* by (normative) polity, focussed on the consensual relations between African rulers and ruled. The latter, viewing sharia-defined society as *fragmented* by (secular) polity, focused on the repressive relations between Islamic rulers and ruled.

V

I have been trying to argue that both functional anthropology and orientalism, by selecting certain phenomena, by not asking certain questions, by approaching history in a certain way, by taking the problem of social order as their basic theoretical concern, tended to project characteristic images of the political structure of the non-European societies they studied. I am now going to suggest that the historical formation of these European disciplines helps us understand better why the selection and omission occured as they did.

What I want to emphasise here is this: that in contrast to the modern discipline of Islamic orientalism, functional anthropology was born *after* the advent of European colonialism in the societies studied—after, that is, the First World War when the *Pax Britannica* had made intensive and long-term fieldwork a practicable proposition.

Tribal rulers could be viewed as representative partly because the anthropologist in the field coming from a crisis-ridden Europe, experienced them as conforming to 'traditional' political norms (as these had come to be underwritten by a paternalist colonial administration). Colonial ideology generally stressed the essential continuity, and therefore the integrity, of African political cultures under colonial rule. The anthropologist, it may be argued, was prepared to accept the total colonial system (while quarrelling with particular colonial policies in relation to 'his tribe') because he was impressed by its obvious success in maintaining itself and in securing an apparently benign form of local order within the ethnic

group he observed so intimately. He was concerned, as the European administrators for their own reasons were equally concerned, with protecting subordinate African cultures, and was therefore prepared to accept the colonial definition of African polities, and to restate that definition in terms of consent. (Consider to what extent this image has begun to break down with decolonisation in the '60s.)

The point is that unlike nineteenth century anthropology, the objectification of functional anthropologists occured within the context of *routine colonialism*, of an imperial structure of power already established rather than one in process of vigorous expansion in which political force and contradiction are only too obvious.

Orientalism belongs to a different historical moment, and its methods, assumptions and pre-occupations are rooted in the European experience of Islam prior to the advent of Western colonialism in the Middle East. Among the cultural forebears of the modern orientalists were the medieval Christian polemicists who sought to defend the values of Christendom against the threat of Islam.[23] Although modern orientalists rarely engage in overt propaganda, and have adopted a more secular and detached tone, they have still been concerned to contrast Islamic society and civilisation with their own, and to show in what the former has been lacking. In particular, they have been concerned to emphasise the absence of 'liberty', 'progress' and 'humanism' in classic Islamic societies, and in general to relate the reasons for this alleged absence to the religious essence of Islam.[24] Thus in contrast to the social anthropologist whose intention has often been to show that the rationality of African cultures is comprehensible to (and therefore capable of being accommodated by) the West, the orientalist has been far more occupied with emphasising the basic irrationality of Islamic history.

Norman Daniel, in his valuable study *Islam, Europe and Empire*,

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[23]See N. Daniel, *Islam and the West, The Making of an Image*, Edinburgh, 1960; and R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Mass., 1962.

[24]Thus the influential orientalist von Grunebaum: "It is essential to realise that Muslim civilisation is a cultural entity that does not share our primary aspirations. It is not vitally interested in analytical self-understanding, and it is even less interested in the structural study of other cultures, either as an end in itself or as a means toward clearer understanding of its own character and history. If this observation were to be valid merely for contemporary Islam, one might be inclined to connect it with the profoundly disturbed state of Islam, which does not permit it to look beyond itself unless forced to do so. But as it is valid for the past as well, one may perhaps seek to connect it with the basic antihumanism of this civilisation, that is, the determined refusal to accept man to any extent whatever as the arbiter or the measure of things, and the tendency to be satisfied with

(Edinburgh, 1966) has traced the European experience of Islam—and especially of the aggressive Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—which helped to fashion its image of the tyrannical Islamic polity in the nineteenth century. He suggests that the three most important elements in this experience were fear of Turkish power, the absence of a Muslim gentry and the subordinate position of Muslim women. "To the mind of aristocratic Europe", Daniel writes, "tyranny was common to all three—to the external threat, to a polity internally servile and to an enslavement of women. As time passed, there was increasing communication with eastern countries and gradually, as the centres of power in the world shifted, fear gave way to patronage". (p. 11). But the image of a tyrannical Ottoman structure, as Daniel goes on to show, remained unquestioned throughout the nineteenth century, and became reinforced through the special notion of Islamic misrule—in the double sense of inefficient government and fiscal oppression (both, he might have added, grave sins in the eyes of a self-consciously progressive capitalist Europe).

It was towards the end of the nineteenth century on the eve of massive imperial expansion, that the foundations of modern orientalism were laid.[25] The literary, philological method of his study (based on chronicles and treatises acquired from Islamic countries and deposited in European libraries) meant that the orientalist had little need for direct contact with the people whose historical culture he objectified, and no necessary interest in its continuity. In so far as he addressed himself to the contemporary condition of Islamic peoples, he saw in it a reflection of his idealist vision of Islamic history—repression, corruption and political decay.

Most members of the European middle classes before the First World War viewed the imperialist ambitions of their governments as natural and desirable.[26] In keeping with these attitudes the opinions that prevailed among them regarding prospective or recent victims of colonial conquest were usually highly unflattering. This

truth as the description of mental structures, or, in other words, with psychological truth." *Modern Islam*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962, p. 40. For an extremely interesting response by a Muslim intellectual see Mohammed Arkoun, "L'Islam moderne vu par le professeur G. E. von Grunebaum" in *Arabica*, vol. xl, 1964.
[25]Cf. C. J. Adams, "Islamic Religion" (Part I), in *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, vol. 4, no. 3, October 15, 1970, p. 3.
[26]Cf. H. Gollwitzer, *Europe in the Age of Imperialism: 1880-1914*, London, 1969. For a study of British public opinion in relation to events preceding the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, see H. S. Deighton's excellent article, "The Impact on Egypt on Britain", in P. M. Holt, (ed.), *Political*

was as true of Asia as it was of Africa in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[27] In this period, influential writers such as Ranke and Burkehardt, Count Gobineau and Renan, although in disagreement on important matters, were significantly united in their contemptuous views of Islam.[28] In this respect, their perspective was not profoundly different from that of the founders of modern orientalism—e.g. Wellhausen and Nöldeke,[29] Becker and Snouck Hurgronje.[30] It would have been surprising had it been otherwise. Leone Caetani, an Italian aristocrat, was exceptional among orientalists in condemning European colonial expansion into Islamic countries.[31] In his commitment to empire and the White Man's Burden, Snouck Hurgronje was far more typical.[32]

The orientalist's image of repressive relations between Islamic rulers and their subjects is thus rooted not only in the historic Christian experience of aggressive Islam (an experience the West had never had in relation to Africa),[33] but more importantly in the bourgeois European evaluation of 'unprogressive' and 'fanatical' Islam that required to be directly controlled for reasons of empire.

As recent rulers of vast Muslim populations, the imperialist rulers could attempt to legitimise their own governing position with arguments supplied by the orientalists: that Islamic rule has historically been oppressive rule (colonial rule is by contrast humane), that Islamic political theory recognises the legitimacy of the effective *de facto* ruler (colonial rule is manifestly better than the corruption, inefficiency and disorder of pre-colonial rule), that political domination in Muslim lands is typically external to the essential articulation of Islamic social and religious life (therefore no radical damage has been done to Islam by conquering it as its central political tradition remains unbroken).[34]

It is therefore at this ideological level, I would suggest, that the

and Social Change in Modern Egypt, London, 1968.
[27]Cf. V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind*, London, 1969, and the documentary collection edited by P. D. Curtin, *op. cit.*
[28]Cf. J. W. Fück, "Islam as an Historical Problem in European Historiography Since 1800" in B. Lewis and P. M. Holt, (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East*, London, 1962.
[29]J. W. Fück, *op. cit.*
[30]Cf. J.—J. Waardenburg, *L'Islam dans le miroir de l'occident*, The Hague, 1962.
[31]J. W. Fück, *op. cit.* For further details on Prince Caetani, see A. Bausani, "Islamic Studies in Italy in the XIX-XX cc." in *East and West*, vol. VIII, 1957.
[32]With respect to Holland's colonial role in Indonesia, Snouck Hurgronje wrote: "Il ne s'agit que d'eveiller une prise de conscience...considerant que l'independence de la vie spirituelle et la libération de son developpment de

two objectifications of political rule again converge. For the orien-
talist's construct, by focusing on a particular image of the Islamic
tradition, and the anthropologist's, by focusing on a particular
image of the African tradition, both helped to justify colonial dom-
ination at particular moments in the power encounter between the
West and the Third World. No doubt, this ideological role was per-
formed by orientalism and by functional anthropology largely un-
wittingly. But the fact remains that by refusing to discuss the way
in which bourgeois Europe had imposed its power and its own
conception of the just political order on African and Islamic
peoples, both disciplines were basically reassuring to the colonial
ruling classes.

de toute pression matérielle est l'une des plus grandes bénédictions de notre
civilisation. Nous nous sentons poussés par un zèle missionaire de la
meilleure sorte afin de faire participer le monde musulman à cette satis-
faction." This was what ultimately justified colonialism: "Notre domina-
tion doit se justifier par l'accession des indigènes a une civilisation plus
élevée. Ils doivent acquérir parmi les peuples sous notre direction la place
que méritent leurs qualités naturelles." Quoted in J.—J. Waardenburg,
op. cit., pp. 101 and 102. See also W. F. Wertheim, "Counter-insurgency
research at the turn of the century—Snouck Hurgronje and the Acheh
War", in Sociologische Gids, vol. XIX, September/December 1972. (I am
grateful to Ludowik Brunt for this last reference.)
²⁸For a discussion about the various elements that went into the making of
European views about Africa at the end of the eighteenth century and the
first half of the nineteenth, see P. D. Curtin, The Image of Africa, London,
1965. According to Curtin this earlier image was on the whole far more
favourable than the one prevalent in the latter part of the nineteenth cen-
tury—i.e. on the eve of the Partition of Africa.
²⁹The orientalist's image is still very much alive and still rooted in a structure
of sentiments remarkably akin to that displayed by the founders. ("Al-
though there are exceptions," observes C. J. Adams in his survey article,
"in the cases of individuals or particular fields of study (Sufism, for ex-
ample, or Islamic Art and Architecture), to be sure, on the whole one is
struck with the negative tone—or if negative be too strong a word, with the
tone of personal disenchantment—that runs through the majority of [orien-
talist] writing about Muslim faith." Op. cit., p. 3). I attribute this persis-
tence to the fact that despite profound changes in the world since the late
nineteenth century, the power encounter between the West and the Mus-
lim countries continues to express itself typically in the form of hostile con-
frontations (for reasons too involved to discuss here) and the methods and
techniques of orientalism as a discipline, with its basic reliance on philo-
logical analysis, remain unaffected. These facts and not mere 'excellence'
account for the continuity noted by Adams: "In fact, basic nineteenth-
century Islamic scholarship was so competent and exhaustive that it has
intimidated many later scholars from attempting re-examinations of funda-
mental issues. Much of what the pioneers of Islamology wrote has scarcely
been improved upon, not to say superseded; it has merely been transmitted
and continues to be the most authoritative scholarship we possess in many
fields." (loc. cit.). Of how many other historical or social science disciplines
can such a statement be made?