

Answer (A) (max 3 sides, 20% of final grade) and either (B), (C), (D) or (E) (max 5 sides, 30%).

**A. Explain the significance of the following passage, adding your own critical comments.**

"The darkness was thick, deep and basic — not a condition in which light was merely absent; the darkness was now constant, as though light had never existed and the stars in the sky were nothing but rents in an old and tattered garment. The perfume was a jumble of dreams, an unheard sound like that of ants' feet in a mound of sand. From the belly of the darkness there issued forth a voice that was not hers, a voice that was neither angry, nor sad, nor frightened, nothing more than a voice saying: 'The lawyers were fighting over my body. It was not I who was important but the case. Professor Maxwell Foster-Keen — .. a member of the Supreme Committee for the Protestant Missionary Societies in Africa — did not conceal his dislike of me. In the days when I was a student of his at Oxford he would say to me with undisguised irritation: "You, Mr. Sa'eed, are the best example of the fact that our civilizing mission in Africa is of no avail. After all the efforts we've made to educate you, it's as if you'd come out of the jungle for the first time." And here he was, notwithstanding, employing all his skill to save me from the gallows. Then there was Sir Arthur Higgins, twice married and twice divorced, whose love affairs were notorious and who was famous for his connections with the left and Bohemian circles. I had spent the Christmas of 1925 at his house in Saffron Walden. He used to say to me, "You're a scoundrel, but I don't dislike scoundrels because I'm one myself." Yet in court he employed all his skill to place the hangman's noose around my neck. The jurors, too, were a varied bunch of people... Yet each one of them in that court would rise above himself for the first time in his life, while I had a sort of feeling of superiority towards them, for the ritual was being held primarily because of me; and I, over and above everything else, am a colonizer, I am the intruder whose fate must be decided. When Mahmoud Wad Ahmed was brought in shackles to Kitchener after his defeat at the Battle of Atbara, Kitchener said to him, "Why have you come to my country to lay waste and plunder?" It was the intruder who said this to the person whose land it was, and the owner of the land bowed his head and said nothing. So let it be with me. In the court I hear the rattle of swords in Carthage and the clatter of the hooves of Allenby's horses desecrating the ground of Jerusalem. The ships at first sailed down the Nile carrying guns not bread, and the railways were originally set up to transport troops; the schools were started so as to teach us how to say "Yes" in their language. They imported to us the germ of the Greatest European violence, as seen on the Somme and at Verdun [battlefields of the First World War], the like of which the world has never previously known, the germ of a deadly disease that struck them more than a thousand years ago. Yes, my dear sirs, I came as an invader into your very homes: a drop of the poison which you have injected into the veins of history. I am no Othello. Othello was a lie.'

Thinking over Mustafa Sa'eed's words as he sat in that very place on just such a night as this, I listened to her sobbing as though it came to me from afar... I did nothing. I sat on where I was without moving and left her to weep alone to the night till she stopped." (Tayeb Salih, pp.93-5)

**B. Compare the following two passages, analyzing how they differ (the extent to which their premises are the same and whether the argument of one applies to the other) and adding your own critical comment.**

"The central point in all this is, however, as Vico taught us, that human history is made by human beings. Since the struggle for control over territory is part of that history, so too is the struggle over historical and social meaning. The task for the critical scholar is not to separate one struggle from another, but to connect them, despite the contrast between the overpowering materiality of the former and the apparent other-worldly refinements of the latter. My way of doing this has been to show that the development and maintenance of every culture require the existence of another different and competing *alter ego*. The construction of identity — for identity, whether of Orient or Occident, France or Britain, while obviously a repository of distinct collective experiences, is finally a construction — involves establishing opposites and 'others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from 'us'. Each age and society re-creates its 'Others'. Far from a static thing then, identity of self or of 'other' is a much worked-over historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies. Debates today about 'Frenchness' and 'Englishness' in France and Britain respectively, or about Islam in countries such as Egypt and Pakistan, are part of that same interpretive process which involves the identities of different 'others', whether they be outsiders and refugees, or apostates and infidels. It should be obvious in all cases that these processes are not mental exercises but urgent social contests involving such concrete political issues

as immigration laws, the legislation of personal conduct, the constitution of orthodoxy, the legitimization of violence and/or insurrection, the character and content of education, and the direction of foreign policy, which very often has to do with the designation of official enemies. In short, the construction of identity is bound up with the disposition of power and powerlessness in each society, and is therefore anything but mere academic wool-gathering.

What makes all these fluid and extraordinarily rich actualities difficult to accept is that most people resist the underlying notion: that human identity is not only not natural and stable, but constructed, and occasionally even invented outright." (Edward Said, "Afterword to the 1995 printing", *Orientalism*, pp.331-2)

"The category of the *Other* is as primordial as consciousness itself... Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself... [W]e find in consciousness itself a fundamental hostility toward every other consciousness; the subject can be posed only in being opposed — he sets himself up as the essential, as opposed to the other, the inessential, the object. But the other consciousness, the other ego, sets up a reciprocal claim... How is it, then, that this reciprocity has not been recognized between the sexes, that one of the contrasting terms is set up as the sole essential, denying any relativity in regard to its correlative and defining the latter as pure otherness? Why is it that women do not dispute male sovereignty?" (Simone de Beauvoir, *Second Sex*, p.3)

C. Explain Edward Said's argument in the following passage. Then say how much it owes to Nietzsche. Finally say to what extent you think the argument applies to method and discovery in the harder sciences — what would Popper say?

"[T]he real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they *are* representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer. If the latter alternative is the correct one (as I believe it is), then we must be prepared to accept the fact that a representation is *eo ipso* [by its very nature] implicated, intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the 'truth', which is itself a representation. What this must lead us to methodologically is to view representations (or misrepresentations — the distinction is at best a matter of degree) as inhabiting a common field of play defined for them, not by some inherent common subject matter alone, but by some common history, tradition, universe of discourse. Within this field, which no single scholar can create but which each scholar receives and in which he then finds a place for himself, the individual researcher makes his contribution. Such contributions, even for the exceptional genius, are strategies of redispensing material within the field; even the scholar who unearths a once-lost manuscript produces the 'found' text in a context already prepared for it, for that is the real meaning of *finding* a new text. Thus each individual contribution first causes changes within the field and then promotes a new stability, in the way that on a surface covered with twenty compasses the introduction of a twenty-first will cause all the others to quiver, then to settle into a new accommodating configuration.

The representations of Orientalism in European culture amount to what we can call a discursive consistency, .. a system of opportunities for making statements about the Orient. My whole point about this system is not that it is a misrepresentation of some Oriental essence — in which I do not for a moment believe — but that it operates as representations usually do, for a purpose, according to a tendency, in a specific historical, intellectual, and even economic setting." (Edward Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 272-3)

D. "[T]his was one of the implied messages of *Orientalism*, that any attempt to force cultures and peoples into separate and distinct breeds or essences exposes not only the misrepresentations and falsifications that ensue, but also the way in which understanding is complicit with the power to produce such things as the 'Orient' or the 'West'." (Edward Said, "Afterword to the 1995 printing", *Orientalism*, pp.349)

Comment critically on this statement, comparing Edward Said's use of the terms 'essence' and 'complicit' with that of de Beauvoir, his use of the term 'falsification' with those of Nietzsche and of Popper, and explaining how he thinks the 'Orient' or the 'West' was "produced".

E. "Most people resist the underlying notion: that human identity is not only **not** natural and stable, but [culturally and historically] constructed, and occasionally even invented outright."

Comment critically on the quotation from Edward Said in (B), then say what Freud and, if you like, Darwin would have said about Edward Said's notion of the construction of human identity. Illustrate your remarks, if you like, from your own cultural experience.