

Answer three questions, one from A, one from B and one from C. Do not write more than 2½ sides per question. 15 marks each of the final grade.

A.1 Analyze Edward Said's argument in the following passage. How does it fit into his overall critique of Orientalism? Do you agree with it?

"Our initial description of Orientalism as a learned field now acquires a new concreteness. A field is often an enclosed space. The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe. An Orientalist is but the particular specialist in knowledge for which Europe at large is responsible, in the way that an audience is historically and culturally responsible for (and responsive to) dramas technically put together by the dramatist. (...)

The didactic [instructional] quality of the Orientalist representation cannot be detached from the rest of the performance. In a learned work like the *Bibliothèque orientale* [of d'Herbelot, published 1697], which was the result of systematic study and research, the author imposes a disciplinary order upon the material he has worked on; in addition, he wants it made clear to the reader that what the printed page delivers is an ordered, disciplined judgment of the material. What is thus conveyed by the *Bibliothèque* is an idea of Orientalism's power and effectiveness, which everywhere remind the reader that henceforth in order to get at the Orient he must pass through the learned grids and codes provided by the Orientalist. Not only is the Orient accommodated to the moral exigencies [needs] of Western Christianity; it is also circumscribed by a series of attitudes and judgments that send the Western mind, not first to Oriental sources for correction and verification, but rather to other Orientalist works. The Orientalist stage, as I have been calling it, becomes a system of moral and epistemological rigor. As a discipline representing institutionalized Western knowledge of the Orient, Orientalism thus comes to exert a three-way force, on the Orient, on the Orientalist, and on the Western 'consumer' of Orientalism. It would be wrong, I think, to underestimate the strength of the three-way relationship thus established. For the Orient ('out there' towards the East) is corrected, even penalized, for lying outside the boundaries of European society, 'our' world; the Orient is thus *Orientalized*, a process that not only marks the Orient as the province of the Orientalist but also forces the uninitiated Western reader to accept Orientalist codifications (like d'Herbelot's alphabetized *Bibliothèque*) as the *true* Orient. Truth, in short, becomes a function of learned judgment, not of the material itself, which in time seems to owe even its existence to the Orientalist."

B.2 Critically analyze the following passage.

"As I crossed the patch of sand that separates the house of Wad Rayess from that of my grandfather, I remembered the picture that Mustafe Sa'eed had depicted, remembered it with the same feeling of embarrassment as came to me when I overheard the love play of Wad Rayyes with his wife: two thighs, opened wide and white. I reached the door of my grandfather's house and heard him reading his collects in preparation for the morning prayers. Doesn't he ever sleep? My grandfather's voice praying was the last sound I heard before I went to sleep and the first I heard on waking. He had been like this for I don't know how many years, as though he were something immutable in a dynamic world. Suddenly I felt my spirits being reinvigorated as sometimes happens after a long period of depression: my brain cleared and the black thoughts stirred up by the story of Mustafa Sa'eed were dispersed. Now the village was not suspended between sky and earth but was stable: the houses were houses, the trees trees, and the sky was clear and faraway. Was it likely that what had happened to Mustafa Sa'eed could have happened to me? He had said that he was a lie, so was I also a lie? I am from here — is not this reality enough? I too had lived with them. But I had lived with them superficially, neither loving nor hating them. I used to treasure within me the image of this little village, seeing it wherever I went with the eye of my imagination.

Sometimes during the summer months in London, after a downpour of rain, I would breathe in the smell of it, and at odd fleeting moments before sunset I would see it. At the latter end of the night

the foreign voices would reach my ears as though they were those of my people out here. I must be one of those birds that exist only in one region of the world. (...) I would imagine the faces over there as being brown or black so that they would look like the faces of people I knew. Over there is like here, neither better nor worse. But I am from here, just as the date palm standing in the courtyard of our house has grown in *our* house and not in anyone else's. The fact that they came to our land, I know not why, does that mean that we should poison our present and our future? Sooner or later they will leave our country, just as many people throughout history left many countries. The railways, ships, hospitals, factories and schools will be ours and we'll speak their language without either a sense of guilt or a sense of gratitude. Once again we shall be as we were — ordinary people — and if we are lies we shall be lies of our own making.

Such thoughts accompanied me to my bed and thereafter to Khartoum, where I took up my work in the Department of Education. Mustafa Sa'eed died two years ago, but I still continued to meet up with him from time to time. I lived for twenty-five years without having heard of him or seen him; then, all of a sudden, I find him in a place where the likes of him are not usually encountered. Thus Mustafa Sa'eed has, against my will, become a part of my world, a thought in my brain, a phantom that does not want to take itself off. And thus too I experience a remote feeling of fear, fear that it is just conceivable that simplicity is not everything. Mustafa Sa'eed said that my grandfather knows the secret. 'A tree grows simply and your grandfather has lived and will die simply.' Just like that. But suppose he was making fun of my simplicity?"

**B.3** "In the same bitter tone his father [Kirsha] now asked, 'And that covetous woman, your mother, never satisfied unless her eyes are feasting on filth, has she ever taken a penny from you [his son, Hussain]?"

Analyze the different ways Mahfouz uses the gaze — gazing at something or someone — in *Midaq Alley* to convey an underlying significance to a sequence of actions. (If it is relevant to your argument you may compare Malraux's use of the gaze in *Man's Fate*.)

**C.** Write an essay on one of the following topics. Try to construct an argument. Simply saying that *X* wrote this and *Y* wrote that is not an argument.

4. "This downfall represents a moral fault if the subject consents to it; if it is inflicted upon him, it spells frustration and oppression. In both cases it is an absolute evil."

How may the idea of an absolute or lack of absolute in de Beauvoir be compared with other CS-204 authors (e.g. Nietzsche, Popper, Edward Said)?

5. "Thus while Marxism became nonscientific by its adoption of an immunizing strategy, psychoanalysis was immune to start with, and remained so." (Popper)

"Starting from speculations on the beginning of life and from biological parallels, I drew the conclusion that, besides the instinct to preserve living substance and to join it into ever larger units, there must exist another, contrary instinct seeking to dissolve those units and to bring them back to their primaeval, inorganic state. That is to say, as well as Eros there was an instinct of death." (Freud)

How convincing do you find the representation of the death instinct in Malraux and Tayeb Salih?

6. "[W]e shall at least be free from the vain search for the undiscovered and undiscoverable essence of the term species." (Darwin)

Compare the different alternatives to essentialist thinking attempted by CS-204 authors (e.g. Darwin, Popper, de Beauvoir, Edward Said).