Orientalism and the Photographs of Eugène Delacroix:
An Exploration of Vision, Identity, and Difference in Nineteenth Century France

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Elizabeth J. DeVito
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This thesis titled

Orientalism and the Photographs of Eugène Delacroix:
An Exploration of Vision, Identity, and Difference in Nineteenth Century France

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ABSTRACT

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Orientalism and the Photographs of Eugène Delacroix: An Exploration of Vision, Identity, and Difference in Nineteenth Century France

Director of Thesis: Jaleh Mansoor

This thesis investigates some of the experimental Orientalist photographs of Eugène Delacroix from 1854. I explore these works through a post-colonial, feminist, and Lacanian psychoanalytical perspective, in order to understand how these unusual photographs operate in nineteenth century, bourgeois France. The first chapter discusses the images of Delacroix, who is canonized as a painter, as they both create and are produced by a newly emergent Spectacle culture supported by the rapidly proliferating, fairly young, medium of photography. The second chapter recognizes the bodies of the nude female figures as sites of imperialist and misogynistic ideologies to develop, which in turn justifies colonial enterprises in the Near East. The final chapter seeks to explore the materiality of the photograph, or more specifically, the nude female image, seen as both Romantically traditional and erotic via the gaze. This thesis is therefore a theoretical study of Delacroix’s photographic objects as producers of Orientalist and imperialistic ideologies, formulated out of the Western imagination.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Jaleh Mansoor

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INTRODUCTION

In 1854, the painter, Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), and amateur photographer, Jean-Louis-Marie-Eugène Durieu (1800-1874), experimented with the new medium of photography, and produced a series of thirty-two photographs in Durieu’s Paris studio.\(^1\) Delacroix is noted to have directed the scene, while Durieu handled the camera.\(^2\) Using minimal studio props (occasionally a leopard skin, along with some plain drapery and wooden platforms) and unrefined photographic lighting and styling, Delacroix and Durieu created images undistracted by dramatic scenery — focusing the viewer’s gaze upon the figures. I am arguing that this group of photographs, which I will refer to as the male-female series (twenty-six calotypes) and pair of odalisques (two calotypes), are not only emblematic of, but also create Orientalist ideology. I am arguing that the female nude in the male-female series is physiognomically non-western (see chapter two for additional reading on the body of this female nude), and I believe that Delacroix utilized her appearance to conceptualize an “Oriental type.”\(^3\) The odalisque model, on the other hand, is most likely European, yet placed in an environment associated with the Orient (a

\(^1\) Sylvie Aubenas, “Les albums de nus d’Eugène Delacroix,” Christophe Leribault, ed., *Delacroix et la Photographie* (Paris: Le Passage, 2008), 24. The original prints are currently located in the Department of Prints and Photography in the National Library of France. The entire album of Delacroix and Durieu’s photographs is referred to as *Album Durieu*.


\(^3\) Eugène Delacroix, Walter Pach, trans., *The Journal of Eugène Delacroix* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1980), 391. (Entry, 25 June 1854.) In his journals, Delacroix referred to the male model in the male-female series as “le Bohemien,” or the “Bohemian.” Thus, while the male model is most likely French and therefore the Self (because he represents the dominating West), he also belongs to the working class, and a “bohemian” in the sense that he is part of accepted underground culture — where the working class and the bourgeoisie cohabitate in bars, burlesques, and brothels. The man is extremely muscular, in the interest of classical sculpture from antiquity — figures that Delacroix admired. Aubenas, 33. The female nude in the male-female series is unknown, yet her facial features and body denote her as an imaginary attribute of the Orient. The 2009 exhibition, “Delacroix et la photographie,” at the Musée National Eugène Delacroix *presumes* that she is Italian, but because she is an unknown model, there is no evidence to prove or dispute that assumption.
site making up the Near East and North Africa that exists in the Western imagination),
making her a typical nude in traditional notions of high art, yet unusual when juxtaposed
against the female nude in the male-female series (see chapters one and two for additional
reading). As will be shown, although different, both nude females question and support
Orientalist beliefs by their both archetypal and unusual placement within the artistic
canon.

Although this thesis analyzes these photographs within an Orientalist and
psychoanalytical framework, I do not presume that Delacroix’s pieces are fixed producers
of Western ideology. What makes his photographs so unusual is the mystery behind this
somewhat unknown body of work. I recognize Delacroix’s female nude in the male-
female series, along with the pair of odalisques, to be emblematic of nineteenth century
Orientalism. I have also chosen to investigate the many complex layers of these images
through a feminist lens because both Orientalism and feminism (or gendering) play out in
Delacroix’s work, due to his history as an Orientalist painter, whose nude female
portrayals can be alternately traditional and violent, along with his placement within the
nineteenth century Parisian bourgeoisie. My argument is not to homogenize Delacroix
and his peers as middle class, imperialist and misogynistic, but rather my perspective is
one of many possible ways to view these photographs as they function as products of
their time. The methodologies suggested in this thesis are therefore not absolutist, but are
methodologies on how to view these works through ideologies that were both popularized
and problematic in nineteenth century France.
Although Delacroix and Durieu collaborated on this project, it would appear that Delacroix’s painting impacted the photographic print (as will be discussed in the following chapters). Delacroix’s choice of the calotype, a less popular form of photography than the much clearer daguerreotype, is striking. Durieu’s other photographs are typically different from those that he worked on with Delacroix and are not usually calotypes. Durieu’s salted paper print, titled, *Nude* (1855, Fig. 1), uses many props (here is the reappearance of the leopard blanket), and resembles that of typical nude studio scenes. Additionally, Durieu’s 1855 print, *Female Portrait with Bird* (Fig. 2), takes on the form of the traditional studio portrait of an amateur photographer. Therefore, Durieu’s influence on the compositional (and ideological) style of Delacroix’s photographs come into question, leaving Delacroix as the main perspective of this thesis.

The existing literature on Delacroix and Durieu’s photographs discuss them as a means for Delacroix to compose his drawings and paintings. The current discourse seeks to go no further than biography and technical interest or styling.4 Looking beyond the photographs as mere vehicles for the artist’s “real work” precludes any critical examination of each for how they actually *functioned* in nineteenth century bourgeois society. In previous scholarship, the conceptual elements of Delacroix’s photographs have thus far been secondary to their mechanical and descriptive qualities, though I believe that the context within and outside of the images produce nineteenth century

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4 Hannoosh, 85, 87. An entry from May 21, 1853 discusses a meeting Delacroix had with several of his friends in which several of Durieu’s photographs were compared to paintings and engraving of Marcantonio, where Delacroix and his peers were disgusted by the exactness of the photographic detail compared to the paintings: “this art by means of a machine has only done us a detestable service: it spoils masterpieces for us, without satisfying us completely.” Nonetheless, this did not stop Delacroix from creating photographs of his own with Durieu a year later, and attempting to find the “truth” in photography.
ideologies about the non-west (specifically the Orient), and gender (the Other). These images have never been analyzed within a theoretical, post-colonial context. Thus, my interpretation adheres to Delacroix’s own intentions as a Romanticist and Orientalist artist, as well as to normative notions of race and gender in France during the nineteenth century. A question that emerges is how a newly wrought medium contributes to this nexus of identity and difference.

Delacroix was known for portraying Orientalist subjects, and his fascination with the Near East can be seen in many of his artworks, including *The Death of Sardanapalus* (1827), *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment* (1834), and in the journals he wrote after traveling to North Africa in 1832. According to his journals, Delacroix was well aware of the violence of French colonial conquests, stating, “Barbarians are not found only among the savages: how many savages there are in France, in England, in this Europe which is so proud of its enlightenment,” yet he did not acknowledge his own part in embracing the barbarity of modernity that he criticizes.

The photographs of Delacroix do not claim to be finite reflections of modernity, but they are symptomatic of French identity in the 1850s. The “exotic” and “Romantic” characteristics of these photographs have yet to be discussed; therefore the nudes will be viewed not as vehicles for drawing, but as producers of bourgeois culture in relation to the Other, and in this case, the “Oriental” Other.

The bourgeoisie cannot be classified into a homogenous group of *observers*, but rather the imperialists and Orientalists of the bourgeoisie represent some of the dominant

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5 Ibid, 137. (Entry: 21 November 1857.)
ideas held by an “Enlightened” middle class. These images were created by men of patriarchy, whose privilege is contingent on the oppression of the Other. Therefore, the perspective of the male bourgeois is crucial as the leaders, inventors, and more importantly, the lookers of culture in nineteenth century France. The medium of photography is one that confounds the nineteenth century viewer because of its appearance of truth, which in reality is just as much a part of the Orientalist imagination.

Due to the purely descriptive titles of these photographs, such as Reclining female nude, nude man looks (1854), or Female Nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm (1854), one can conclude that these photographs were not made for exhibition or distribution. However, what the calotypes lack in title they make up for in content. Every detail, from the drapery in the background to the facial expressions of the models bears the mark of its maker — his unconscious ideals, desires, and conquests.

By photographing a nude Western male and a nude non-western female together, Delacroix has comparatively conjured up the authoritative/submissive and imperialist/native binary within the same image. His photographs are solid manifestations of nineteenth century French bourgeois identity in relation to Otherness. The Other as female and non-western, and the Self as male and European.

Edward Said claims that modern Orientalism began in the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century and that it still continues today. There are many delineations of the term Orientalism, but generally it is understood to be a Western

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imaginary legitimating the domination of and authority over the East. The Orient is not a geopolitical site, but is part of the European cultural imagination. The French Orientalist looks at the people of the Orient as an Other, but also as an object of fascination. This model of Orientalism deals with knowledge, imagination, possession, containment, control, and superiority. By creating images that adhere to academic notions of the Orient using composition, objects, and modeling, Delacroix continued the tradition of Orientalism in art by transferring his Orientalist style from painting to photography. For example, in *Female nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm* (1854), Delacroix places the traditional reclining nude amongst patterned fabrics associated with Orient, which recalls his previous Orientalist paintings, such as *The Death of Sardanapalus* (1827). Additionally, he stylizes the calotype in a painterly style.10

Delacroix was enthusiastic about the new technology of photography, while remaining critical of it as well. In his journal, he is ambiguous about his feelings on the subject, but concludes that while photography is incredible, it also emphasizes the details of the picture plane to exactitude, minimizing the performance of painting and “drowning” the eye in detail.11 He critiqued photography for deemphasizing the imagination prominent in painting.12 However, Delacroix based his opinions about photography on detail, line, and color. Imagination is certainly not lacking in Delacroix’s photographs because the Orient is imagination, and no amount of detail or retouching can underplay its significance. Therefore, despite contradictory nineteenth century theories

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9 Ibid, 3.
10 See chapter three for further reading.
11 Hannoosh, 82-83.
12 Ibid, 84.
about photography, Delacroix’s photographs are necessarily fictional because they embrace and create notions of the Orient, as constructed by the imperialist and Romanticist male.

Linda Nochlin observes that like paintings, photography was not immune to Orientalist ideologies. The Orientalist speaks for the Orient, creates it, and therefore represents it, yet remains on the outside in order to master that which he delimits as “the Orient:” an imaginary category. Additionally, Said notes that Orientalism “does not simply represent…. and has much less to do with the Orient than it does with ‘our’ world.” We create it, therefore we master it. Though this is not to say that the Orient as a colonial conquest was not a reality. To French imperialists, “Orientalism…. is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice.” Said goes on to write, “the traditional Orientalist…. [invites] the West to control, contain, and otherwise govern (through superior knowledge and accommodating power) the Other.” The Other must therefore not only be created by, but conquered by the Self.

Significantly, the Other is an individual or an entire culture that is seen by the Self-culture as outsiders. The Other is in opposition to the Self, although the Self must also identify with the Other. An Other does not exist in reality (like the Orient), but is created by the Self, who judges, and condemns the Other. With concern to the Near East, the Other is the Orient, and the Self is the Occident. In psychoanalysis, the Other is

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14 Said, 20, 21.
16 “We” meaning the West.
17 Said, 6.
woman, and the Self, man, at least in accordance to Sigmund Freud (1856-1839), who
developed the founding theories of psychoanalysis, and to his twentieth century follower,
literature, the woman is portrayed as Other, an outsider.”

Said writes that Orientalism contributes the “deepest and most recurring images of the Other.”
The Orient is othered because the West seeks to control and dominate the East, and therefore make a
Spectacle of Otherness to be viewed by the Self-spectator.

Lacan plays an important role in the relationship between feminism, post-
colonialism, and psychoanalysis because unlike Freud who worked within a purely
biological sphere, Lacan uses Freudian psychoanalysis to question such notions as need,
demand, and desire that are accessible beyond the biological and into the metaphysical
and social. Although his theories are problematic (as will be demonstrated in the
following chapters), his ideas not only helped to form patriarchal ideologies, but to
question them as well. As Elizabeth Grosz analyzes, Lacan’s seminars are highly
controversial from a contemporary feminist standpoint, and like the bourgeoisie of the
nineteenth century, Lacan was a producer of patriarchal ideals that are crucial to
understanding human thought and processes, which also play into colonialism and
imperial control.

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20 Said, 1.
21 For further reading on how Lacan is both similar and different from Freud, see Grosz, chapter one,
22 Ibid, 148.
Psychoanalysis is a “profoundly European constitution” that maintains a partiality towards the Self because of the “impossible achievement of selfhood for the colonized, who remain primitive and concealed.” Psychoanalysis, with all of its problematic biases towards the masculine is nonetheless necessary to understand how Delacroix’s photographs and Orientalism function in French society, where the Self is dependent on the emergence of modern imperialism, and imagination. Grosz states that for the feminist, psychoanalysis seeks to “[understand] patriarchal domination.” This patriarchal structure is evident in imperialism, the act of inhabiting and controlling another country or state; “the control of which was assumed along with mastery over the inhabitants for the purpose of economic gain and more global political power.” Only when Europe could have jurisdiction over the colonies did psychoanalysis arise with modernity. Psychoanalysis is thus developed out of imperial and masculine notions of entitlement, clearly connecting colonialism with gender and philosophy.

The first chapter, entitled, “The Photographic Spectacle of the Orient,” looks at the Western Spectacle as a vehicle for creating racial and gendered biases. Delacroix’s photographs exemplify the Spectacle by capturing and enframing the non-westerner (the female from the male-female series) as an Other, who is controlled and manipulated by the bourgeois male-artist. The medium of photography particularly skews the boundaries between reality and fantasy (something Delacroix himself was contradictory about),

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24 Ibid, 10.
26 Khanna, 10.
27 Ibid.
thereby reinforcing misogynistic views on the female (and Oriental) Other. Gender performance and passivity verses activity is another crucial character to the photographic Spectacle. I am interested in this idea of exhibition and performance — the nudes in Delacroix’s photographs are also put on display; they are performing for an audience, for the gaze, both privately and publicly. Timothy Mitchell’s essay, “Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order,” discusses the West’s use of the East as a staged object, which includes both people and material items. 28 Not only are the pictures a part of the material imagination, but the figures inside the visual plane play a crucial role in producing imperialistic ideals via Lacan’s mirror phase and the gaze. The viewer is solidly one of the most significant pieces to building the Spectacle. As judge and contributor, the spectator remains outside of the image, yet inherently a part of its power. The viewer-operator will also be analyzed in this chapter, in relation to the photographer’s connection to the image, which is a form of “lack,” or castration.

Chapter two, “The Body of the Orient,” is built off of the concepts derived from chapter one. Instead of looking at photography as a mediator of the Spectacle, chapter two investigates the figures within the photographic space, but more specifically, their bodies. The body is not used as an autonomous being of agency and matter, but as a contained vessel for patriarchal ideologies to dominate and control. I examine the imperialist constructs of the Orient in relation to assumptions made about the Oriental female body. The physical appearance of the nude female in the male-female series comes into question as her physiognomy, for Delacroix, is crucial to understanding and

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formulating ideas about the non-west (although, I will demonstrate, as a representation her *actual* identity is insignificant). Additionally, Said notes that imperialist knowledge about the Orient motivated colonial occupations, as well as justified violent actions. If knowledge is what Orientalizes the Orient, then this same knowledge can Orientalize gender as well. The female is the literal body of the Orient, which is in itself a body of knowledge constructed by the Western imperialist.

The third chapter, entitled, “Orientalist Vision,” focuses on the individual, Romantic male (opposed to the imperialist, noted in chapters one and two), who both fantasizes and creates images within European boundaries that expand into what the Romantic calls, the Orient. As one who has a “taste for drama and action,” the Romantic fulfills his fantasies by employing Orientalism. As an imaginary location, the Romantic uses the Orient, and the Oriental female to satisfy his own desires via the gaze. As a Romantic artist, Delacroix’s photographs are proved to be Romanticist in nature, and therefore adhere to the condition of the nineteenth century bourgeoisie in France. This alternate kind of vision remains inside of the image, unlike very real colonial enterprises. However, Romantic ideologies still influence and produce messages about the Other that carry on for generations. This chapter also looks at the genre of Delacroix’s photographs, either as art or pornography. Delacroix did not consider his work to be erotic, yet aspects of his nude odalisques question this categorization. To conclude, the last section of chapter three looks at the female in the male-female series as she stands as a non-western

30 Hannoosh, 134.
photographic model. Orientalist vision manipulates such imagery to fit agendas and standards, thereby shaping nineteenth century notions of identity and difference.
CHAPTER 1: THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SPECTACLE OF THE ORIENT

Eugène Delacroix’s male-female series of twenty-six calotypes, *Nude male seated forward, nude female kneeling backwards* (1854, Fig. 3), *Reclining female nude, nude male looks* (1854, Fig. 4), *Nude male reclining, nude female facing forward* (1854, Fig. 5), and *Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude female model* (1854, Fig. 6) are symptomatic of nineteenth century bourgeois notions of identity and difference. Difference, for Delacroix and for his contemporaries, lies in the Other, who is essentialized as female and Oriental. Four images out of the twenty-six emblematize imperialistic ideals of superiority through the figures’ poses, gestures, and bodies as a projection of the Western Spectacle.³¹

Both *Reclining female nude, nude male looks* (1854), and *Nude male reclining, nude female facing forward* (1854) perpetuate gender performance (as demonstrated below) by depicting an academic reclining female in the former photograph, and alternatively a reclining male nude in the latter. By placing the male and female together in the same scene, each figure models a passive verses active binary, directed by the artist, Delacroix. Both of the above works are not fixed within an active or passive binary, as Delacroix himself is not steadfast in one absolute belief about gender relations. However, the complex possibilities of Delacroix’s photographs both conform and skew nineteenth century ideologies about gender and the image. This duel relationship

³¹ See Aubenas, “Les albums de nus d’Eugène Delacroix,” *Delacroix et la Photographie*, 23-51. This series was shot most likely in June of 1854 in Durieu’s Paris studio (read more on studio practice in chapter three). The models are unknown, however, both are presumed to be professional models. Delacroix refers to the nude male as “the Bohemian,” and within the twenty-six (out of thirty-two) photographs are many where the male is posed alone, but then several where the nude woman is present. For the purpose of this thesis I will be discussing the photographs in which both male and female nudes are modeling, along with the pair of odalisque photographs.
between the figures asks questions about Delacroix’s own interest in a Western to non-western context, as an imperialist photographer, as well as accepted modes of gender roles in the nineteenth century. Alternatively, *Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude female model* (1854) will be discussed as metaphorical and unconscious desire enacted onto the photographic plane as a possible means for misogynistic and imperialist ideologies to exist.

As shown by the mirror phase, the Orient was created in order to self-realize nationality and difference within the West. Orientalism is a Western construction for identifying itself — using what is Othered to recognize one’s own Self.32 Ranjana Khanna states, “The development of psychoanalysis brought into existence a new way of being in the world for men and women … in its rendition of modern national selfhood.”33 In this way, it was acceptable for the Orient to be literally put on display because this difference was what the European male needed to identify himself. During the mirror phase, when the child acknowledges his lack (of what he needs) he takes on an image that is also apart from himself in order to fully recognize his own desires.34 The male nude literally acts as the material signifier of Western identity via the Spectacle. The same is true for the female relationship to males. Unlike the family portrait, where identity is forgotten over time, individuality in Delacroix’s photographs is misplaced and rejected before the image is even produced. She gives the performance of anonymity. The Self identifies with the Other by recognizing and identifying himself with the unattainable.35

32 Said, 1.
33 Khanna, 2.
34 Grosz, 41.
35 Khanna, 225.
Just as Said points out how the West used the Orient to identify itself in this way, “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West).” 36 In psychoanalysis, “The child identifies with an image that is manifestly different from itself, though it also clearly resembles it in some respects. It takes as its own an image of which is other…. This other is the foundation and support of its identity.”37 Nineteenth century imperialist notions of identity are thus defined by difference, which is both separate and internalized. Both the male and female nudes are a priori nameless because of previously defined expectations of the Self and Other. 38 In painting and in Delacroix’s photographs, the nudes are the items on exhibition, each defining the other by difference.

In his journals, Delacroix continuously contradicts himself by debating between Realist notions of the function of the photographic medium, and his own Romanticist ideologies about art, truth, and imagination. Delacroix’s photographs in particular encompass the space between detailed analysis of the new medium and the flexibilities of portraying reality. It is clear that Delacroix was ambiguous on his view of photography, thus aligning him not in one definitive category of critical or accepting, but rather he must be analyzed for his own innovative use of the medium that attempts to balance art and industry (even if unconsciously so).

As a founding member of the first photographic society, Le Société Héliographique, in 1851, Delacroix does appreciate photography for its potential

36 Said, 1. Parentheses in original.
37 Grosz, 41. The other is internalized within the Self, and necessary to its identity.
possibilities in expanding and enriching the field of vision. Delacroix cannot fully understand his own ideologies, being neither an avid enthusiast nor harsh critic about the new medium. Instead, it is clear in his journals that Delacroix battles with the idea of the photograph and its proper function in nineteenth century society. His contradictory beliefs on photography can be seen in the photographic images he produces as he attempts to balance the aesthetic realism of photography (detail) with his own Romanticist artistic style. He is both enthusiastic and fascinated by photography, yet wary of its potential categorization as art. Nonetheless, Delacroix praises the photograph as a new way of reading nature (but not reality), stating, “I look passionately, and without wearying of them, at these photographs of male nudes, this admirable poem, this human body on which I am learning to read.” Delacroix identifies the body as a work of art made clear by photography, yet is hesitant to grant the new medium the same categorization as art. Contradictorily, the precise detail Delacroix criticizes, as I will soon show, is also seen as a virtue by freeing the eye from structural habits and by stimulating the imagination. Photography allows Delacroix to rethink imagery, thus, despite his ambiguous critiques of photography, this thesis argues that Delacroix’s photographs not only stimulate imagination, but create imagination that both consciously and unconsciously constructs French bourgeois ideologies and materiality.

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40 See chapter three for more on Delacroix’s use of Romanticism and photography.
41 Hannoosh, 82.
42 Ibid, 85. (Entry: 5 October 1855.)
43 Ibid, 86.
44 Ibid.
Although he experimented with photography Delacroix continued to paint throughout his career. It would appear that he wanted to psychologically separate painting from photography, stating that while painting grasps the spirit, photography mimics the external.\textsuperscript{45} Art in Walter Benjamin’s analysis is subject to the imagination, pointing to the auratic nature of the photograph as a modern art, and because the apparent external reality in Delacroix’s photographs are just as much a part of the imaginary, photography can therefore be placed into the artistic canon, and not as something autonomous from other mediums, such as painting, that are supported on creativity and fantasy.\textsuperscript{46}

Delacroix created Orientalist photographs, which interpretively reflect his own contradictory perspectives on photography. On the one hand, he creates images that are detailed and precise, operating not unlike forensics, an instrumentality into which photography was being increasingly pressed at this time (despite being calotypes), as is inherent in the medium itself. The inclusion of the nude further exemplifies Delacroix’s fascination with photography as allowing the viewer to learn about the human body.\textsuperscript{47} Yet, \textit{because} these objects describe the Orient, they are necessarily and irrevocably fictional. Thus, because of the medium \textit{and} the content, these objects reflect not reality, but the artist-imperialist imagination, which in turn creates a fiction misunderstood as reality for the nineteenth century viewer, who sees the photographs as truth. In order to understand these photographs, one must embrace the variable ways in which these

\textsuperscript{45} Freund, 80-81. Perhaps Delacroix’s belief in the division between painting and photography is why he only completed one painting, \textit{The Odalisque} (1857) from one of his photographs \textit{Female Nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm} (1854).
\textsuperscript{46} Benjamin, 202. Emphasis in original.
\textsuperscript{47} Hannoosh, 85.
photographs act. There is no linear line between one object or the next — one ideology or another — Delacroix does not define his projects because he is unaware of their complexities himself.

Simplifying these photographs as tools for drawing is disregarding their layered influence and agency within mid-nineteenth century French culture. As specifically Orientalist, Delacroix’s photographs confuse the spectator by neither belonging to science or art. The presumed “objectivity” of the photograph allows viewers in Europe to experience the Orient as reality and “imperial truth.” Yet, the Romanticized quality of the figures disturbs the boundaries between reality and fiction. As a contemporary critic, with a focus on post-colonialism, to classify Delacroix’s work as truth would be to accept Western notions of superiority towards the non-west, and equally towards women. They create much deeper embodiments of psychological and psychoanalytical notions of patriarchal and imperialist authority, demonstrated by Delacroix, and by his nineteenth century, bourgeois contemporaries. However, to the nineteenth century viewer these photographs lack artistic spirituality (i.e. imagination), not because of their material qualifications, but because of the observer’s inability to understand the modern complexities of photography.

Like his peer, the poet and art critic, Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), Delacroix critiqued the new medium by recognizing its limitations as a tool for teaching and not as an artistic implement. Unlike other early photographers, who were interested in mimetic Realism, Delacroix did not see photography as a means for depicting nature in

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48 Mitchell, 414.
49 Freund, 80.
its exactitude, alluding to ideals that photography was to be used for inspiration for painting, and not to be seen as reality. Delacroix and Baudelaire believed that to be classified as art, photography must allow spirituality (and imagination) to exist beyond the surface of visibility, something that photography for them cannot accomplish.

Baudelaire remarks that photography was invented in part to extract what remained of the spirit (found in poetry and painting) from the French mind. Likewise, Delacroix views the medium as harmful to the eye because it lacks materiality and “aesthetic emotion.”

Photography is thus an enclosed and abstract space that “freezes” the viewer’s mind. As an experimentation for reflecting nature, and not for creating art, the photograph is thus inferior because of its paralyzing effect on the viewer’s imagination.

Baudelaire further criticizes the new medium of photography for both its lack of artistic imagination (which he considered to be the truth in art), but he also shows distain for enthusiasts who saw photography to be a mirror of physical facts. Recognizing that photography could not, or should not stand in for visual reality complicates the picture as a mediator between truth and imagination, since, in Baudelaire’s explanation, the truth in art is actually in its imagination. In reality, the mirrored image is no mirror at all, but an illusion of realism, further enhancing the viewer’s masterful image of himself.

Baudelaire writes, “And then [the public] said to themselves: ‘Since photography

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51 Freund, 80.
53 Hannoosh, 84.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid, 82.
56 Baudelaire, 83.
57 Ibid.
provides us with every desirable guarantee of exactitude’ (they believe that, poor madmen!) ‘art is photography.’ From that moment onwards, our loathsome society rushed, like Narcissus, to contemplate its trivial image on the metallic plate.58 The object the Self recognizes is not one of tangibility, but a representation of the viewer’s desire. Siegfried Kracauer also suggests that the photograph is not a mirror because it transfers a three-dimensional object onto a two-dimensional plane.59 Rather, the photograph gives the impression of a mirror.60 Delacroix’s nudes are therefore not concrete reflections of the Self or Other, but perceptions of physical beings.

For Delacroix another weakness of photography lies in its “excess of detail,”61 which “betrays vision” by clearly showing all objects in the image, rather than one select, important object.62 In his own photographic enterprise, Delacroix favored the calotype because of its imperfection and impreciseness.63 Baudelaire sees the mimetic exactitude of the photograph as beneficial for the arts and sciences and for memory, but to be discredited when it involves the realm of art.64 He even goes as far to state that photography is for lazy or failed painters.65 As a product of industry, photography for Baudelaire “contributed to the impoverishment of French artistic genius,” as progress is inhibiting to art and taste.66 Enhanced by the “stupidity of the masses,” photography will

59 Kracauer, 259.
60 Ibid.
61 Hannoosh, 83.
62 Ibid, 84.
63 Ibid.
64 Baudelaire, 88.
65 Ibid, 87.
66 Ibid, 87, 88.
corrupt the art world by disillusioning the public into thinking that photographic Realism is truth.\footnote{Ibid, 88. None of Baudelaire’s or Delacroix’s criticisms about photography, however, stop them from getting their portraits taken by Nader.}

The real subjects in the photograph relate to the viewer because of the emotions projected from face-to-face contact, something that painting can only speculate, giving the photograph what Benjamin calls “a magical value.”\footnote{Benjamin, 202.} Even if photography was used to display reality for scientific and medical research through detail and exactitude, this “magical” medium also crosses boundaries into the realm of the imagination by creativity and thoughtful organization of figure and space, categorizing it between imitation and fantasy.\footnote{Both Walter Benjamin and Charles Baudelaire attribute photography as an aid to science, and question it as art. (Walter Benjamin, “A Short History of Photography,” and Charles Baudelaire, “The Modern Public and Photography.”)} Kracauer writes that both Realist and Romanticist theories on photography fail to see the medium as “neither imitation nor art in the traditional sense;” that photography does allow creativity and realism to exist at the same time.\footnote{Kracauer, 250.} Baudelaire revolts against the idea of photography having the fictional potential of painting and literature by stating, “once [photography] be allowed to impinge on the sphere of the intangible and the imaginary, on anything that has value solely because man adds something to it from is soul, then woe betide us!”\footnote{Baudelaire, 88. Brackets added.} From the contemporary advantage of the ability to think retrospectively, Baudelaire’s fears of the painter painting what he sees and what not what he dreams\footnote{Ibid.} is an overreaction to the thrust of the new medium. Delacroix relies on his imagination for the purpose of his art, 	extit{all} of his art, be it painting, drawing, or
photography. Although he denies photography’s ability to capture emotion and spirituality, Delacroix produces images that stand on their own as markers of modern French identity. Artists like Delacroix utilized photography for exhibiting fictional locations and characters (i.e. the Orient) as a means for identifying the European Self through imagery. Thus, despite his belief that photography existed purely on the surface and not in the spiritual is proven to be contradictory by his own use of photography, not for empirical research, but for imagination and desire to exist on a two-dimensional plane.

As for the particular Orientalist photographs, Delacroix poses a French male (who represents the Self) and an Oriental female (the Other) together, which further enhances and enlivens the Spectacle, on which this chapter focuses. The Spectacle is formed out of the relationship between the Other and the European spectator, whose gaze creates and dictates how the Orient is “presented,” or mediated to the West in visual representation or verbal discourse, as manipulated by the dominating system of control.

The Spectacle results from the desire to organize the world into clearly differentiated spaces. It “was to set the world up as a picture…. an object on display to be investigated and experienced by the dominating European gaze.”73 The spectator necessarily becomes a part of the Spectacle, without whom the object to be gazed upon would not exist. In his significant book, Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle,

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73 Mitchell, 412. Actual staged scenes could be seen in Paris at the Egyptian Exhibit in 1867, and at the Exposition Universelle in 1889. Egyptian delegates recalled traveling down the imitation marketplace of La rue du Cairo in Paris, an Oriental exhibit. The delegates themselves were part of the scene, spectacles because of their nationality and ethnicity. Egypt was whittled down to rows of faux clay houses and exaggerated throngs of chaotic markets. If the East was “recreated” in this way for the West, it was for the sake of the imperialist gaze. (Mitchell 410, 411, 415) The Exposition Universelle of 1889 commemorated the French Revolution and imperial conquests. (Mitchell, 409.)
and Modern Culture (2001), Jonathan Crary insists that the Spectacle is publicly recognized in the second half of the nineteenth century, at the same time when imperialism is prominent in France and when Delacroix’s photographs come into existence. The Spectacle is set upon a “stage” where Europe is the designer and the Orient, the model. Within Europe, “the Orient [is] always represented as [an] outsider having a special role to play inside Europe.” Bringing the Other into the space of the Self was a way to control and contain. Here there is no separation between the Self and the picture, where “The experience of the world as a picture set up before a subject is linked to the unusual conception of the world as an enframed totality.” For Timothy Mitchell and Edward Said the image becomes for the Westerner an image of the world as a whole, and not as a fragmented piece of a larger, more complicated structure.

The spectator’s Spectacle followed the guidelines of a larger picture — what was unfamiliar was Othered, and that Other was the result of a great (but not universal) concept of what it meant to be different and strange. Because Orientalism is a broad term for the Western notion of cultural and geopolitical difference, Delacroix’s nudes represent a small part of material Western identity that provides evidence of the bourgeois Self in relation to difference. This is the materiality that builds and identifies with the Orient — the Self seeking and confining the Other.

75 Said, 61.
77 Mitchell, 420.
78 Said, 66.
79 Ibid, 67.
This kind of careful organization of place and people was a way for the West to understand the East, or that which is different. In short, “we must still find a way by which the developing world can be contained.” However, for Delacroix’s photographs the exhibit remained inside Western boundaries and national lines. The spectators were able to experience the mysteries of the colonized world within a closed location. As previously stated, the West sought to contain the Orient into a manageable space, just as Delacroix’s nudes were contained within the photographs. However, with colonization, the imperialist extended the Spectacle into Eastern territories, where one lost sight of where the exhibition ended and the real world began.

The photograph here acts as a stage, the models as actors, and the viewer as audience. However three-dimensional, mimetic, or “real” the Orientalist photograph may seem to Delacroix or to the audience, it is still and will always be a marker of the imagination because the Orient is always a fantasy. Even if the figures were once alive and real, the image itself is as imaginative as a painting or sculpture. If the painting for Delacroix can provide access to the spirit because of its romantic, imaginary qualities, then necessarily his photographs act in the same way. Although the camera lens attempts to only copy the surface, the organization and thought given to each pose, each picture, functions in the same way as the painted model. In so far as Delacroix’s Orientalist works, the photograph is able to capture detail closer to reality that could “prove” how “Orientals” lived and looked — something that painting could only attempt to

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80 Ibid, 47.
81 Mitchell, 419.
accomplish.\textsuperscript{82} As tools for painting and drawing, photographs are still set up in a way that is equal to the painting process, making the color and skill requires for painting nearly arbitrary in comparison to the context and significance of the preliminary sketch (i.e. the photograph). The viewer is as much a part of the imaginary scene as the figures themselves because the viewer is essential for the Spectacle to exist.

The Orient on Exhibition

Said marks the Orient as a confined stage, one that perpetuates the theatricality of representation.\textsuperscript{83} The act of confinement is fundamental to Western imperialism, and results from the desire to contain the world.\textsuperscript{84} To imperialists of the nineteenth century, the Orient was a place of sensuality and allure that bore the marks of unchanging archaic “splendor.”\textsuperscript{85} A non-western society that lacked industrialization could therefore be “seized,” both literally and psychologically by the European imperialist as an indicator of power. The imperialist convinces himself of the Orient’s vulnerability, which allows him to treat the Orient (with all it contains) as an exhibition — as a place for the Western gaze to objectify.

The Spectacle is inherent in Delacroix’s photographs. The figures are a part of the scene that is gazed upon by the viewer, who also physically and psychologically sets up the scene. This essential relationship between spectator and object is necessary to bring the Spectacle to life. In \textit{Nude male seated forward, nude female kneeling backwards} (1854), the models are sitting on boxes placed over a tarp, and although the

\textsuperscript{83} Said, 63.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, 47.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid, 1.
backdrop is blank, there appears to be some rough foliage and grass in the background.
The nude male is sitting on a wooden box, glancing at the floor, with his left hand resting on his thigh. Covering his genitalia is a white cloth. His right hand is lying on another box in front of the nude female, and there is a definite twist to his body, giving the appearance that his muscles are tense and that he is perhaps about to stand up. The male model’s nudity does not make him vulnerable, but rather his pose and muscular physique pay homage to Italian High Renaissance notions of academic nude propriety in high art.86

The female nude is facing backwards, and she is kneeling with her right leg pushed more forward than her left. Her left hand rests on top of a tall wooden box, and she looks straight at the camera. Her gaze is not one of defiance or agency, but rather it quietly invites the audience into the image. This look appears several times throughout the images of the nude female in *Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude female model* (1854). It is a gaze of austere, yet humble voyeurism on the part of the woman, as her eyes focus on the cyclopsed reflective glass of the camera lens. Her gaze penetrates beyond the hollow fixture, where the viewer catches a glimpse of a moment passed, yet her two-dimensional body is as empty and lifeless as the machine that permeates the image. The male nude’s face, on the other hand, remains expressionless. We do not have access to his eyes as he casts them downwards. His rejection (or perhaps ignorance) of a returned gaze fixes him to the plane. Where her eye contact (though impenetrable) attempts to access what is outside the picture surface, his already stern bodily inwardness voluntarily stations him within the image — never to expand beyond the framed

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86 More about the body of the male and female nudes and their relation to each other can be read in chapter two.
Spectacle — Delacroix’s unconscious manifestation of the struggling dynamics between tradition and progress, of art and machine. Here, the seemingly real connection between figure and spectator is one that defines the Spectacle, where the viewer believes he has access to the female nude (or Near East in imperialistic terms), but in reality what he sees is an imaginary depiction of a body as site, and is not only falsified, but intangible.

The viewer can see her back and buttocks most clearly, but the slight curve in her body reveals part of her right breast. The female sitter evokes Delacroix’s own style of painting as her pose directly recalls the positioning of the captured nude female in the foreground of Delacroix’s painting, *The Death of Sardanapalus* (1827, Fig. 7).87 *Nude male seated forward, nude female kneeling backwards* (1854) is one example of how Delacroix rejects strict categorization of his photographs by posing them as classical forms, yet by characterizing his nude model as the European male or non-western female, he creates and influences imperialistic enterprises. These photographs are unusual in that they both accept and produce the Other, yet conform to accepted nineteenth century ideologies denying autonomy to the bodily marker of the Orient (the nude female).

In the field of imaginary spaces, the Orient stands firm in nineteenth century imperialist history as a means for political, economic, and psychological control. By producing images of the Orient that fit into a confined space, the Western viewer is falsely assured of his command over the object-spectacle. Mitchell suggests that the Orient was part of an “‘external reality’ of modern Europe — the most common object of its exhibition.”88 The Near East was therefore made into a pseudo-reality by the West.

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88 Mitchell, 419.
Middle Eastern and North African cultures were homogenized into one passive, cultural grouping and highly exploited by means of the Spectacle. As part of European identity, the Spectacle plays a crucial role in creating and then reinforcing difference. The main piece of this Spectacle for Delacroix and the nineteenth century, bourgeois male was the Oriental female, who was ingrained into the male imagination as an object of desire. The delusion remained that the Spectacle was truth. The photograph was created out of the Spectacle as a material object of truth, differentiated from art and the imagination. The Spectacle as a stage for performing difference utilizes the photograph as a means for presenting what is imaginary as “real.”

In painting, photography, and literature, the Oriental “scene” is often composed of several essential elements or attributes: elaborately patterned silks and fabrics, colorful mosaics, Persian rugs, clay buildings, turbans, camels, hookahs, and any other material objects associated with the Near East. Added to the scene of the Spectacle are the actors, or “character-types” — thieving, corrupt, dark men, and beautiful, seductive, uninhibited women. These actors are objects that are posed among the mosaics and hookahs — they are essential to the scene, yet only as silent extras (after all, the Oriental had no voice of his own). The Westerner, on the other hand, acts as the director as well as the audience. Materiality as “proof” allows the European to experience the Oriental world as real. Objects play a crucial role in the development of photography as props and

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89 See Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950*. This can also be seen in nineteenth century postcard images of the Near East, along with studio portraits of Oriental subjects.
90 Said, 39, 66.
91 Ibid, 20.
92 Mitchell, 414.
scenery were used as a means for inhabiting an imaginary location, where the photograph itself becomes an attribute of the real as documentation of the Orient in a European project. Photography, Benjamin notes, is capable of documenting every incremented detail in a way that organizes knowledge through an “optical unconscious.”  

Simultaneously, the Western portrait bids the viewer to seek any imperfections in the moment in the faces of the figures when the exposure lapsed, “the here and now.”  

Delacroix’s photographs perform in both of these ways — as physiognomical knowledge in his male-female series, and as timeless creations of space and material in his pair of odalisques (*Female Nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm* (1854, Fig. 8), and *Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms raised* (1854, Fig. 9)). Thus, as the Orient is an imaginary and unchanging location, its people are projected by the Western imperialist-artist as both factual and imperfect.

In Delacroix’s male-female series, the Western spectator is interestingly already in the image, as well as outside of it. As a presumably French model, the male nude is part of the Spectacle because he is in the photograph, or object of vision, yet not without subjectivity. He is the psychoanalytical reflection in the mirror phase, attempting to obtain the Other, represented by the nude woman. This is the phase when the child (here represented by the viewer) recognizes him-Self for the first time, and acknowledging the lack of his needs, he disavows the (m)other, and turns to an outside object of desire, the Other (i.e. female).  

Since the viewer is inherently male, the male model is the reflection of the spectator, or Self. The photograph acts as a mirror, framing the picture.

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93 Benjamin, 203.
95 Grosz, 32.
and the objects within as congruent to the transformation of the Self from need to demand and desire. The nude male places himself (or rather, is placed by the director) within the Spectacle because this is how he will metaphorically gain access to the Other. The internal and reflective Self marks the relationship between viewer and object as bonded by a mediating force. Additionally, by placing the Self’s reflection within the Spectacle (the photograph), the Self can simultaneously be near as well as away from the object of desire also within the Spectacle. Delacroix is therefore not just producing an image of the present, but is a priori using the reflection as a device to fast-forward past the optic stage of the mirror phase, and into the visual seeking and “obtaining” of the Other via the materiality of the photograph.

Said and Mitchell point to the object materiality of the Orient — it was a commodity item that was found in the living, political, and artistic: “an integral part of European material civilization and culture.” The evidence of this “material culture” was put on display via the Spectacle. Increased industrial commerce played a role in defining the “real world” in terms of materiality and consumerism as a form of exhibitionary machinery. The camera, as a machine is therefore a creation invented out of the desire to exhibit and display, reinforcing the photograph as necessary to the nineteenth century Spectacle. From large faux scenery to small photographic prints, the objects within the exhibition (whether a lamp or a woman) are on equal ground. They are seen in the same way by the spectator, who only shares in the object’s difference and not its individuality.

96 Ibid, 47.
97 Said, 2. Emphasis in original.
98 Mitchell, 416.
Gender Performance and the Object of Castration

Delacroix certainly understood the dynamics of essentialized gendering of his time, and in some ways reenacts the typical and misogynistic use of male verses female, active verses passive, yet the following two images, *Reclining female nude, nude male looks* (1854), and *Nude male reclining, nude female facing forward* (1854), question any absolutist ideology as Delacroix ambiguously plays with traditional gender roles. In *Reclining female nude, nude male looks* (1854), the female is reclining, her legs crossed at the ankles. She is resting on her right elbow and looking towards the ground. There is a slight, relaxed smile on her face. This smile seems to be an alternative expression to the woeful gaze she presents to us in *Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude female model* (1854), and *Nude male seated forward, nude female kneeling backwards* (1854). She carries a smile even in some of her returned gazes. Returning to *Reclining female nude, nude male looks* (1854), the male is in the process of standing up, his right hand on his knee and in his left, a blanket. He is gazing at the woman’s chest or torso, but his face is out of focus. The nude woman is in a passive, reclining pose, resembling that of an unadorned odalisque. The man is obviously in active movement as his face is blurred, differentiating the submissive passivity of the female to the active involvement of the male. She is performing for him (and for us) by being posed in an academically passive reclining position. As his out-of-focus face makes him less noticeable, the woman’s highlighted body and slight smile essentializes her gender as the main point of interest on stage. She is the Oriental actor; the nude male plays the role of the Western
participant in the Spectacle — within the scene, yet in the background. The nude woman is put on display in a typical rendition of artistic and social philosophy.

Judith Butler claims gender itself is a social illusion, that “gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo.”

The Other is essentially tabooed and formulated by the Self, who sees the Other as different and bizarre. The social relationship between gender identities is produced by ideologies of the imperial age, severing and simultaneously joining the ties of male and female, colonizer and colonized. In psychoanalysis, the connection (typically prescribed as sexual) between sexes/genders (seen as one in the same in the nineteenth century) is clearly differentiated between “lack” and “has,” where the patriarchal Father uses social acceptability to maintain a strict othering of male and female.

However, in reality, the division between genders is much more ambiguous. Prescribed gender is a performance, produced line-by-line, scene-by-scene by a (patriarchal) director. Both male and female acts participate in a long history of exploiting, mastering, and subduing.

This kind of performance is part of a larger “strategy” controlled by the dominating male. “Doing gender right” is necessary to avoid mockery, punishment, and alienation.

Delacroix must have been very aware of the designated roles for women, as seen in his paintings, The Death of Sardanapalus (1827), and Louis d’Orléans Unveiling his Mistress (1825-26, Fig. 10). Here, the women are clearly under the control and gaze of the men within the image, as well as the implied male viewer. The mistress

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100 Grosz, 80.

101 Butler, 522.

102 Ibid.
of Louis d’Orléans is blatantly being exploited as a man lifts up a white sheet to display her genitalia to Louis, who acts as a man picking out which fish to purchase at market. He examines her “lack” because he feels entitled to her “absence.” The women in The Death of Sardanapalus (1827), on the other hand, are being violently restrained and killed. The photographs that appear twenty years later are not outwardly violent like his earlier paintings, but they still seep with patriarchal domination. Delacroix was not alone in his acceptance and rejection of the Other; his “private fantasy did not exist in a vacuum, but in a particular social context which granted permission for as well as established the boundaries of certain kinds of behavior.” Delacroix was an imperialist, a “romanticized” imperialist, but one nonetheless. As an Orientalist artist, he ruled over location and body.

As a material object the woman is as passive as the foliage or the leopard skin in Delacroix’s studio portrait. Said quotes Anwar Abdel Malek, who qualifies the passivity of the Orient in relation to the woman: “the Orient and Oriental[s] are considered by Orientalism] as an ‘object’ of study, stamped with an otherness — as all that is different, whether it be ‘subject’ or ‘object’ — but of a constitutive otherness, of an essentialist character …. This ‘object’ of study will be, as is customary, passive, non-participating.” The active in Lacanian psychoanalysis is representative of the male-imperialist; the passive is necessarily the (colonized) female. From one perspective,

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103 Nochlin, 42.  
104 For more reading on the “Romantic” imperialist see chapter three.  
106 As part of the Spectacle, the passive female child is a castrated other in ordinance with the mother (other), or woman (Other). She therefore accepts her subordination to the Law of the Father (male, imperialist). Jacques Lacan describes the girl as accepting her inferior role to the Father, and at the mirror
Delacroix’s portraits are the tangible results of this active-passive materiality. The melancholic experience the photograph possesses is another form of passivity, subduing the object while livening the viewer.¹⁰⁷

This significant and controversial idea of passive verses active was formulated out of centuries of a structured and carefully organized system of patriarchal control.¹⁰⁸ The colonized, like the mother, is “castrated, passive, [and] an object of desire for men rather than a subject who desires.”¹⁰⁹ This castration also includes the female nude, as she is “colonized” as well. She, like the Orient cannot speak for herself, but is in control of the “masculine, phallic subject.”¹¹⁰ The woman is *phallic* because she is the object of desire and fantasy.¹¹¹ Therefore, the phallus, desire, and the object of desire build a sense of superiority that the man identifies with and maintains.¹¹² Psychoanalysis is therefore as politically constructed as the Orient itself. It is a “colonial discipline;” one that uses the colonized as a means for building upon the Self.¹¹³ What binds imaginary location and imaginary position together is the dominating male, an imaginary identity reinforced by patriarchal society.

Interestingly, in *Nude male reclining, nude female facing forward* (1854), the nude male is reclining on the ground, his left knee slightly raised. *He* is now in the

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¹⁰⁷ Kracauer, 261.
¹⁰⁸ Grosz, 6, 10.
¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 71-72.
¹¹⁰ Ibid, 72.
¹¹¹ Ibid, 151, 181.
¹¹² Ibid, 124-125. Elizabeth Grosz summarizes the importance of the phallus by stating, “The phallus is the crucial signifier in the distribution of power, authority and a speaking position, a kind of mark or badge of a social position.” She continues, “The relation between the penis and the phallus is not arbitrary, but socially and politically motivated …. It is motivated by the already existing structure of patriarchal power.”
¹¹³ Khanna, 6.
position of the “odalisque,” but as “sultan.” On the one hand, his reclining position may feminize him, as the woman kneels above the man. However, kneeling for a woman is a sexually suggestive pose, and as the man “relaxes” he temporarily allows the woman to take control for the sake of his desire. She is seemingly active in this image, while he is passive. Yet, the passive male maintains his dominance, reclining or not because she is essentially performing for him and for the audience. Therefore, the woman can only become falsely active when sexually motivated. Still, one cannot overlook the reclining position of the male, which is traditionally a passive female role. Interestingly, another reclining male can be found in Delacroix’s painting, *The Death of Sardanapalus* (1827), where the legendary Syrian ruler, Sardanapalus, is reclining on a bed, high above his mistresses and servants, who are being brutally murdered. Here, Sardanapalus is incredibly passive, yet in a position of command. While Delacroix’s male nude is certainly not in the same circumstance as Sardanapalus, his reclining body still presents itself, not as feminine, but in a state of immense authority, where passivity is a privilege given to those in power (i.e. the “sultan”), and not a condition of vulnerability or inferiority. His left arm is held above his head, the back of his hand is resting on his forehead. His eyes face downwards, or could be completely closed, while his torso is tilted at a forty-five degree angle towards the viewer, noticeably highlighting his muscular physique. Delacroix has placed a small towel over the genitals of the man, which acts as a protective shield, an object that maintains the male viewer’s sense of control; it differentiates him from the reclining female, who freely puts her body on display. On the other hand, the cloth covering the genitalia of the nude in *Female Nude*
sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm (1854) hides her “lack,” a metaphor that tempts the desires of the viewer to reveal what is underneath the cloth. If the “nude is definable by the absence of dress” then this odalisque is both nude and clothed, giving the spectator the satisfaction of her state of undress, yet pointing to her mystery of what may be revealed underneath the cloth.  

Lacan uses mythology to describe castration by stating, “When the veils are lifted, there is only the Medusa — woman’s castrated genitals, lacking, incomplete, horrifying (for men). Salome’s dance, like strip-tease, can only seduce when at least one veil remains, alluring yet hiding the nothing of women’s sex.” Due to the male’s “inherent” masculinity, the covering in Nude male reclining, nude female facing forward (1854) does not veil any lack, but it may raise suspicion about the male’s unconscious anxiety and fear of castration. The male’s supposed fear marks not only a fear of the female, and relates lack to monstrosity, but the device in which he uses to possess, namely the camera (or even the paintbrush). The camera therefore holds more power than the eye. It is a tool that not only is a metaphorical means of obtaining the phallus in the Other as the “imaginary object,” but it is also a mechanical “penis” in that it is extendable, detachable, permanent, and one that bridges the gap between the male penis and the castrated female Other.

115 Grosz, 121. Emphasis and parentheses by Grosz.
118 Ibid, 116-117.
The popularized Orientalist idea of the *Femme Fatale* is not seen in Delacroix’s Oriental nudes. In fact, his nudes are modest. Legendary figures, such as Cleopatra, Salome, and Isis were associated with the rich, mysterious fantasies that went hand-in-hand with the imagined feminine sexuality of the Orient.¹¹⁹ Both the threat and fascination with the *Femme Fatale* are symptomatic of the *vagina dentata*, a “paranoid fantasy” in which the “sexually insatiable woman” diminishes the sexual ability of the man.¹²⁰ Delacroix either denies or rejects the use of the treacherous woman by making his model as passive as possible, as in *Reclining female nude, nude male looks* (1854), perhaps in an effort to mask his own paranoia of castration, and to fortify his masculinity by emphasizing her femininity.

Yet, in *Nude male reclining, nude female facing forward* (1854), the nude woman in is sitting on her feet behind the reclining male, but in a position that looks as if she is about to stand up. Her right hand is gripping the leopard blanket on the ground, and her left hand is pushing off of a square platform covered by a white cloth. What is also truly fascinating about this particular photograph, and even comical, is the woman’s look of annoyance and disgust. Her eyes look up towards the ceiling, and she has a slight frown on her face. Like the smile in *Reclining female nude, nude male looks* (1854), her rolling eyes give her the slightest bit of individuality, something rarely seen in Orientalist subjects. This peculiar, almost proto-snapshot quality is found frequently throughout Delacroix’s photographs. The sense of movement seen in both *Reclining female* and *Nude male reclining*, shown on behalf of the man in the former and woman in the latter,

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¹¹⁹ Said, 180.
¹²⁰ Grosz, 135.
and the unusual, even “natural,” unforced expressions on the face of the female nude in particular, present to the viewer atypical studio scenes that differentiate dramatically from the individual works by Durieu, such as Nude (ca. 1855). Delacroix adheres to traditional artistic poses and uses simple, nondescript scenery, yet he adds subtle touches to his work that either confuses or reevaluates early photographic practice, though he appears to be unaware of it himself. Delacroix again confuses traditional roles of men and women, West and non-west, by both accepting and rejecting the Orient — as a place to be respected, yet backwards and “primitive,” where the “Oriental” female can gain some slight individuality (with her smile), but remain under the close watch and control of the artist-viewer. His contradictory views on photography are actively played out in his photographs. The ambiguous dynamics of the relationship between the nude male and female in his male-female series reflects his own uncertainty about the medium itself.

To recapitulate, psychoanalysis states that the woman is castrated and therefore “lacks” what the man has — a penis (which can also be used metaphorically for control or authority).\(^{121}\) Guided by desire, men are thus assured of obtaining the phallus through sexual interaction with the woman.\(^{122}\) In turn, the Orient lacks what the West is equipped with: civility, modernity, and reason.\(^{123}\) When the imperialist believes he has control over the colonized, he has filled the lack and obtained the phallus. However, just as desire rests upon the imagination, imperialist dominance is one-sided — the colonizer has no real control over the Orient and its people, despite political doctrines and social acts

\(^{121}\) Ibid, 119.
\(^{122}\) Ibid. Lacanian psychoanalysis only focuses on the heterosexual relationship between a man and a woman. This is one way in which Lacan is limited.
\(^{123}\) Mitchell, 409.
that dictate authority. Delacroix’s nudes represent just a small piece of Orientalist culture for the spectator to (vainly) fill the lack. The image of the nude woman also acts as a temporary location for the Self to find satisfaction when the physical Other is not present. The Orient is akin to the phallic, the castrated female the male seeks.

The Orient is feminine because it must be so for the masculine-Occident to dominate and group the entire Orient as an Other. The Law of the Father (West) rules over the Other and brings the Orient into being. Without the Other there would be no Self and vice versa — the Self relies on the Other, though only until desire is temporarily fulfilled. However, the Self can never truly be satisfied, for the phallus the Self seeks to obtain in the Other does not really exist. In this way desire is unquestionably disillusioning. Additionally, the “lack” in the female is nonexistent. From a contemporary, feminist approach to psychoanalysis, the female is not “without” the metaphorical and biological penis, she is “with” the clitoris.

The female does not lack, but is equipped. Difference in the nineteenth century is marked by her sex, not her gender. Psychoanalysis fails to separate sex from gender, which reinforces prescribed social roles of women based on their biology. Therefore, although the clitoris is biologically different from the penis, the once linear lines drawn between male and female are skewed by an intersecting contemporary desire for equality.

124 See chapter two for more on the photograph as a space for the female body to be produced.
125 Grosz, 34, 128. The (m)other is internalized in the child, as well as dependent on the Law of the Father for her value, thus disallowing the woman to be anything other than (m)other. This denial of autonomy stretches beyond the child-mother dyad, into colonialism.
126 Ibid, 76.
and celebration of difference.  

Similarly, the Near East, although cultural different from France, is not lacking in what the French has, but is equipped with other qualities different from the West. Difference for the nineteenth century imperialist is defined by lack, which fails to reach outside delineated boundaries of social control. Presence is forgotten or overlooked by those who only see absence — a negative cutout of a greater picture.

As discussed in the previous section, in an enclosed, theatrical setting, the Orient on exhibition was acceptable. Like a play, the Orient under the watchful eye of an outside power (imperialism) stayed “under control.” Its mysteries could be explored in a false setting, where the illusion was protected. However, the real Orient was not equipped with this distancing safety net — it was feared. Gender, too, is played in the same way. As suggested in Delacroix’s *Reclining female nude, nude male looks* (1854), “onstage” gender is secure; in the photograph, gender is performed by the actor, and produced by the director. The Orient is passive in the bourgeois imagination, but active in reality. The “Oriental” actor is harmless, but the native is cause for apprehension and perhaps disgust. Butler states, “In the theatre, one can say, ‘this is just an act,’ and de-realize the act, make acting into something quite distinct from what is real …. one can maintain one’s sense of reality in the face of this temporary challenge to our existing ontological assumptions about gender arrangements.”

Gender and colonialism therefore complement each other because of the Self’s belief in the security

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127 It should be acknowledged that although in recent decades women’s equality in the West has progressed rapidly, that is not all inclusive to other parts of the world, and understanding other cultures and difference is still a slow process.

128 For other, more contemporary examples of theatrical and non-theatrical gendering, see Butler, 527.

129 Ibid.
of the Other. In actuality, there is no “safety net” between the “imaginary character” and reality. The fear of the unknown, of castration, of difference is therefore not some arid, purely linguistic fantasy; it is reality in the sense that those who believe in the truth of the Other make it exist in the real. The European tourist, imperialist, and the viewer at home came to believe in the theatricality of the Orient and of the woman as reality, so that acting upon those beliefs were acceptable and “natural.” Thus, gender and cultural understanding stand motionless for the majority of the nineteenth century.

Imperialistically, the Father (West) must take the Other (non-west) as his own because he sees her as weak, vulnerable, and most of all, easily obtainable. Delacroix acts as Father, using the camera as a symbolic means to gain access to the phallus. He represents the nation’s identity as an imperial authority figure. Delacroix did not however, belong in a homogeneous community no more than the people of the Orient, but the difference between the Western imperialist and the non-western native was that imperial conquest was politically real. It was not part of the imagination, though delusions of fantasy and superiority act as cause and resolution. Although the Orient was developed out of the Western imaginary, colonialism made the relationship between fantasy and reality a balancing act of domination and vision. Imaginary places therefore became reality to the Father-Self, and allowed him the entitled position of the Law. Like the photograph, the female form was a living version of an “inferior” conquered land. If the West was believed to be superior, it was therefore the only body

\[130\] Ibid.
\[131\] Said, 5.
strong enough to make up for the non-west’s absence. The mirror stage begins when the child acknowledges this absence within the Self and the Other.\textsuperscript{132}

The Gaze of the Operator-Spectator

In the photograph entitled, \textit{Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude female model} (1854), the Oriental woman is looking out towards the viewer, acknowledging the hidden audience’s gaze. Here, it may seem that she is aware of being a Spectacle, but the reality is that while the viewer can meet her eyes, her returned gaze is unfulfilling because she is looking at no one. Therefore, her gaze is arbitrary, except in Sartre’s sense that there is a shame in being seen.\textsuperscript{133} The gaze alienates the subject “for it is defined on Lacan’s model as … being seen, without being able to see either its observer or itself.”\textsuperscript{134} We can necessarily see her, but she can never see us. She is looking at the camera — a machine that represents another extension of the eye (and penis) of the viewer, but is not nearly as confrontational or real.

The male model, in turn, gazes at her highlighted breasts, while resting his right hand on her right shoulder. Here, he is an involved spectator. He focuses on the nude woman because “The Orient is watched …. the European … is a watcher, never involved, always detached.”\textsuperscript{135} The photograph allows the operator, as well as the viewer to enter a confined and private space in a privileged voyeuristic position.\textsuperscript{136} Contradictorily, as the Self’s reflection, the male model is physically touching the female model, therefore relating to the Other; yet, because he is only a reflection, the operator-viewer can remain

\textsuperscript{132} Grosz, 34.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, 80.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid, 79.
\textsuperscript{135} Said, 103. Emphasis in original.
\textsuperscript{136} Graham-Brown, 74.
at a distance. His touch is a projection of the Self’s desire. The artist has placed the
models in this position because the reflective Self is the only way to physically obtain the
Other through the image. Delacroix behind the camera remains necessarily detached. As
the Western artist-imperialist-bourgeois-male, Delacroix created images that defined
French identity in the imperial age.

The photographer who traveled to the East or stayed within European boundaries
was hidden behind the camera in an ideal position of the authoritative gaze, which
defines and creates the Other. In Delacroix’s photographs, both the nude male and
female are objects of the gaze. However, since the woman is an Other because of her
ethnicity and sex, the nude male as the Self’s reflection is not judged or dominated by the
viewer’s gaze. He is an extension of the gaze, bringing the visual experience into the
image itself. Therefore, the male as object is separate from the female because of the
implied viewer’s sense of superiority over the female-Other. The outside spectator
possesses the object (both literally and metaphorically), not only because the Other is
presumably unaware of the gazer’s presence, but because she is representative of a
colonized Other and is already owned and controlled a priori by the viewer (West).
Nochlin writes, “Our gaze [includes] both the spectacle and its spectators as objects of
picturesque delectation.” It provides both physical and visual pleasure to the
Spectacle.

The camera-operator acts as an influential observer of the private and public eye.
As recalled in the section, “The Orient on Exhibition,” the completed “Oriental” print is a

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137 Mitchell, 421.
138 Nochlin, 35.
priori a Spectacle because imperialist ideas were set forth before the scene was staged and the photograph taken. Delacroix’s nudes are spectacles, put on display by the bourgeois European and set upon a well-organized stage of props and pre-formulated ideas. The model needs not to even be in the photograph, for she is innately already present. Of course, visually and physically, she is there. She (whoever she may be) is at what the camera aims, and where our gaze meets.

European identity was partially built upon the invention of machines in the nineteenth century. Benjamin states, “the hour for the invention had come.” The camera as a “new apparatus of representation” is one of the machines developed for organizing the world and “rendering up and laying out the meaning of the world, so characteristic of the imperial age.” Durieu’s camera and Delacroix’s nudes mark an essential moment in imperial history by giving the camera the power of constructing otherness.

The operator plays a crucial role in the part of the imperialist gaze. He is both controller and spectator. The eye itself holds no permanency, but the camera — the extendable eye — not only “traps” the image, but disguises the operator-spectator from being seen. Without the operator the camera would be arbitrary — a useless instrument. If the absence of an operator and audience changes the meaning of the camera then the figures in the photograph become arbitrary as well. Delacroix notes that “the artist becomes a machine harnessed to another machine,” literally fixating the operator to the camera, while making reference to the reproducibility of the “machine” as both invention

139 Mitchell, 409.
140 Benjamin,199.
141 Mitchell, 409.
and person. Yet, the artist has his own vision and selectivity, as one who is both “harnessed” and autonomous to the camera. The lack of the camera — the machine that fixes the object — would metaphorically “castrate” the male. Without a way to make the gaze permanent, control would be meaningless. The paintbrush works in the same way as the camera; however, the camera as a new invention is representative of the bourgeois desire to grasp “reality” and control what needs to be “tamed” (i.e. the Orient) via a powerful apparatus of modernity.

In an Orientalist context, it is also essential that the camera-machine have a hidden operator. This can be said for French imperialists and tourists who visited the East and who operated much in this same way as “behind the scenes,” yet as also the ultimate controllers of the site. The European tourist can then be part of the Other, yet withdrawn. The camera-machine in this respect tricks the viewer into believing it has both captured and “lived” within the boundaries of the mysterious Orient. The operator has thus found his Self within the Other, while extending himself away from the (m)other.

To the models, the artist is of course visible, just as the Europeans were visible to the Moroccans or Egyptians, but what the distanced spectator sees is an absence of European influence. The image thus remains a part of the Spectacle because reality is out of context. Unlike painting, the viewer sees the figures in the photographs as real, yet, “the model, however realistic, always remained distinguishable from the reality it

143 Kracauer, 260.
144 Nochlin, 37.
145 Ibid.
claimed to represent.”\textsuperscript{146} The visual evasiveness of the photographer within the image of representation is a continuous absence of Orientalist artistic practice. In order to set up the world “as an object on exhibit,” the photographer-imperialist had to “create a distance between oneself and the world and thus constitute it as something picturelike.”\textsuperscript{147} The European eye separates itself from the scene, while remaining an integral part of it.\textsuperscript{148} The nineteenth century photographer could literally hide behind the black cloth and lens of the camera, where the eye of the camera would stabilize and extend the gaze. In Orientalist artistic practice, “The ability to see without being seen confirmed one’s separation from the world, and constituted at the same time a position of power.”\textsuperscript{149} If the imperialist’s power (also the Law of the Father) was breeched by complete emulsion into the Orient, then the dominating attitude would be arbitrary. To maintain order, superiority, and submissiveness on the part of the Other, the Western audience had to remain outside of the \textit{Othered} image, whether it be the Orient or woman. Delacroix followed these social guidelines that not only created, but projected an \textit{Othered} Spectacle through careful detachment and contained, imaginary control.

\textsuperscript{146} Mitchell, 414. “The model” Mitchell refers to here, is about a model of fake, Egyptian architecture, but “the model” translates to human figures as well.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid, 421.
\textsuperscript{148} Grosz, 38.
\textsuperscript{149} Mitchell, 421-422.
CHAPTER 2: THE BODY OF THE ORIENT

One of Eugène Delacroix’s photographs in particular, *Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude female model* (1854), along with his two images of odalisques, *Female Nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm* (1854), and *Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms raised* (1854), epitomize a view of the body that demarcates the roles of Oriental women into a European setting and, therefore, the hegemonic European imaginary. Continuing from chapter one, where the photograph is a form of containment (the *photographic* Spectacle), this chapter uses the *body* as another framing device — the body as an outline within the Spectacle that is also created *out of* the Spectacle, an imaginary manifestation that identifies the Western nineteenth century male. Here, the individual figure or body is the context in which otherness is prescribed. Both the camera and the body are connected by way of the Spectacle; however, the body plays an important role in and of itself, which delves into as well as away from the mechanical usage of the camera, and highlights the physical body as a creation of the photographic Spectacle, but also as its own space for displaying and creating difference. Language, or knowledge also plays a role in dictating demand over the body, which is not visible on the surface of the photograph, but wrapped within the context of the figural body.

Delacroix writes on the fragmented effect of photography, which sacrifices the body as a whole in order to capture a detail. This array of imaginary ideologies internalizes itself into the construct of the body. Thus, the *body* in this chapter works on several levels: the territorial body of the Orient as a part of the body of knowledge from

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150 Hannoosh, 111.
which the Orient comes to exist, and the physical body of the woman, who is neither in control of or a part of her real body. Here, the body is not a living, breathing biological necessity; the imaginary body is autonomous from the real, as an ideological representation. It is a contained location upon which the woman, or the non-westerner is placed by the imperialist, bourgeois male. The body of this Other is a stage (much like the photographic Spectacle, yet autonomous from) constructed by desire and defined by boundaries.

Edward Said opens his discussion of Orientalism by examining how archeological and historical knowledge produces fictional assumptions about the Orient by categorizing imperialistic justifications into a “body of knowledge.” This describes an endless, contained cycle in which the imperialist collects knowledge to store in a body-like vessel of language. Alternatively, Elizabeth Grosz presents the psychoanalytical theories of Jacques Lacan within a feminist structure, re-edifying the female physical body into a platform for patriarchal desire and control. Both classify the “body” as an imaginary space for the male (imperialist) to dominate. Lacan recognizes the body to be “fragmented,” an “imaginary anatomy,” as a place for fantasies to collect and organize into chaotic “bits-and-pieces” that manifest as a seemingly coherent “map.” My goal is to explore different psychoanalytical and imperialistic notions of the body, from the female body as a position of masculine power, to an object of societal control, to the motivations and justifications of how knowledge and language create a sense of entitlement that expands beyond the female body and into the territorial body of the

153 Ibid, 43-44.
Orient. Delacroix utilizes the body in both its external, visible form, as well as its expanded rhetorical meaning within a greater context of French identity.

**Dark Women**

Delacroix poses his models in such a way that clearly identifies the women and the Oriental Other, and the man as the European Self. The nude male’s arm over the nude female’s shoulder in *Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude female model* (1854) is obviously a way to visually recognize and relate to the notion of rescue and control, whether in Delacroix’s conscious or subconscious. Furthermore, male and female are directly connected by way of the linear arm (though according to Lacan, the two can never become One because of the constant conflict between the Self and Other).\textsuperscript{154} The male’s arm as the metaphorical phallic limb visually takes over for the seemingly passive penis, left exposed within the photograph (due to artistic propriety or to Delacroix’s subconscious as a male possessor). The female nude is where the male’s arm rests, and where he can hope to master the Other via human-sexual contact. As such, Freud’s “understanding of female sexuality as necessarily bound to male sexuality” presents itself in Delacroix’s image of the male and female nudes.\textsuperscript{155} Lacan does grant women the right to deny a man’s desire, but by deeming female pleasure as passive, he once again adheres to Freud’s assumptions about male to female sexuality.\textsuperscript{156}

Delacroix conforms to the typical use of white, European nudes juxtaposed against an Oriental background in his odalisque figures, *Female Nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm* (1854), and *Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms*

\textsuperscript{154} Grosz, 137.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid, 139.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
raised (1854). The same model poses for both photographs, each only slightly different than the other. Delacroix’s odalisque photographs are consistent with the quality of the male-female calotypes in focus and in camera distance. Delacroix has included in his odalisque scenes a couch with many fine patterned blankets and pillows, and a traditional drape in the background. The exotic patterns on the pillows and curtain place the model in the Orient, but her pale body stations her in Europe. This odalisque is more in tune to the odalisques and bathers of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), echoing centuries of idealized forms of disguised feminine beauty. Delacroix’s reasoning for using a white, clearly European model for his odalisque photographs, yet critiquing those artists, like Ingres, who comply with that technique is uncertain. However, given that the male-female series and the odalisque images are so similar in technique, and because he does place Oriental attributes in his images of white odalisques, and not with the male-female series demonstrates his confidence in the physiognomical appearance of the latter female nude, thereby strengthening the argument that she is in fact “Oriental.”

It can be argued that in any of Delacroix’s male-female series, the woman appears in the same manner — nude and non-western, as in *Nude male sitting on a leopard skin, standing female nude* (1854, Fig. 11), or *Standing female nude, nude male sitting supported by an arm* (1854, Fig. 12). The darker model needs no objects to prove her “exoticism.” Difference here lies in the material objects of the odalisques, but in the physiognomical features of the female in the male-female series. Both body and object are used in the same way by pointing to the Orient as an eroticized Other. Thus, although the concept of the female body as object is not unique, Delacroix displays this difference
in a literal way by juxtaposing his white odalisque with the darker, Oriental female in two separate photo sessions. He isolates the female nude in the male-female series by containing her body as the entirety of the Orient — as the “real thing.” His odalisques, on the other hand, must be identified as Oriental by way of scenery, and by placing both series together they simultaneously produce a fictional, yet real effect for the viewer. Delacroix confuses the space between the Romanticized Orient and the geographical Near East by depicting an Oriental body next to a European body with Oriental attributes.

The Orientalized nude was not a new concept to the art world. Ingres, Delacroix’s contemporary, utilized the Oriental nude in works such as Le Grande Odalisque (1814, Fig. 13), and others, such as Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), were soon to follow in Ingres and Delacroix’s Orientalist footsteps. These academic painters concentrated on the bodies of their nudes as platforms for idealistic pleasure, disguised by attributes associated with the Orient. Again, Delacroix performs this with his odalisques, but on the other hand, he brings us a woman in his male-female series, who appears as if she is actually from the Orient. To Delacroix, she is reality — a representational and material marker of the Orient, proven through the lens of the camera.

The odalisque model in Female Nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm (1854) is presented to the viewer in a gisante pose, semi-reclining, with her left arm held behind her head, evocative of Delacroix’s own style of painting. Her right

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158 Said, 66. Said states that images of the Orient represented the Near East as a whole.
159 Fred S. Kleiner, Gardner’s Art Through the Ages (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 622. As a Neoclassical painter, Ingres, along with Delacroix, a Romanticist, continuously debated the importance of color verses line. Rubeniste painters, such as Delacroix, emphasized the importance of color within painting, and Poussinistes, like Ingres, debated over line quality. The Rubeniste versus Poussiniste argument continued from the late 17th century into the 19th century.
160 Scharf, 93.
arm hangs by her side, and her left leg is tucked beneath her right thigh. Her right foot rests delicately on the ground, while her right hand brushes the side of her left foot. The model’s gaze is indistinct as she appears to be looking both at the camera and off to the side of the camera, and her face appears calm, placid, and indifferent. Either way, her gaze is squinted and indiscernible. Her look is insignificant compared to the centralization of her body. In addition, although the images of the female nude in the male-female series outnumber this pair of odalisques, a sense of experimentation and relaxation is lacking in this reclining odalisque that is often present in the “Oriental” female nude. This nude odalisque is stiff and awkward. Her pose is deliberate and traditional, and does not have the “snapshot” quality found in the male-female series (as previously discussed in chapter one). This particular photograph was used as the model for Delacroix’s well-known painting, The Odalisque (1857, Fig. 14). It remains the only photograph from the album that was used as a reference for one of Delacroix’s paintings.¹⁶¹ She is entirely nude, except for a cloth that covers her lower genitalia.¹⁶²

As recalled from chapter one, this cloth makes her more desirable to the man because it is veiling her “lack,” thereby pointing to her mysteriousness (it is when the male uncovers her veil that he loses interest in the female, and must move on to an-Other).¹⁶³ Additionally, the drapery in the background and the cloth covering her genitalia works as a frame, “which both displays the subject and contains the body.”¹⁶⁴ Referring to the

Other as both Oriental and feminine, Joan DelPlato remarks that clothing or drapery acts

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 92.
¹⁶² See chapter one for a discussion on the significance of covering genitalia, or “lack.”
¹⁶³ Grosz, 136.
¹⁶⁴ DelPlato, 267.
as a boundary that divides the Self from the Other, “thereby establishing identity.” She is the only female to be covered in Delacroix’s Orientalist photographs, though the male in the male-female series appears with a cloth covering his genitalia in *Nude female standing*, *nude male sitting supported by an arm* (1854), *Nude male reclining, nude female facing forward* (1854), *Nude male seated forward, nude female kneeling backwards* (1854), and in several images where the nude male appears by himself. To necessarily reiterate what was mentioned in chapter one, the male’s body could be covered because of artistic propriety and the unconscious fear of masculine vulnerability and castration. Therein lies the difference between the male and female body — the former as a place for recognizing the Self, and the latter as a location to unsheathe desire.

*Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms raised* (1854) uses the same props as the other odalisque image. This time, however, the couch and body are reversed. The pose is once again awkward and rigid, as the woman is again semi-reclined, but with her torso facing outward along with her head, hips and feet, but her arms, breast, and legs turned towards the right side of the photograph, conjuring up an homage to Michelangelo’s *Ignudi* (Fig. 15) serpentine figures in the Sistine Chapel. Her arms are raised and bent towards her neck with her hands completely out of view. Her head and gaze are turned upward in a way that gives her the appearance of being completely bald. Her eyes look into the far distance, outside of the photographic plane. Her arms bend upwards behind her neck, exposing traces of underarm hair. By twisting her body, her breasts and waist seem more exposed and open, as her means of protection, her arms, are

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165 Ibid.
hidden. Here, her genitalia is exposed and frontal, and Delacroix emphasizes her curves and highlights her breasts.

The Oriental female body is noticeably characterized as sensual, erotic, and available, seen in depictions of dancers, almahs, odalisques, and bathers. The female form was merely an extension of what the Orient was already thought to be — mysterious, exotic, and easily accessible. This illusionary idea of what a woman of the Orient is, or ought to be is essential to the Western imagination in the nineteenth century. Geographical distance allowed the Self to socially accept the erotic by way of the Oriental mask. Master artists of the Renaissance, such as Titian and Botticelli painted nude “Venuses” as a way to represent the contemporary woman sexually without including sex in the image at all. The iconographic goddess disguise or the odalisque disguise in Orientalism, celebrated a long tradition of academic nude propriety. The artistic nude was “acceptable only when subdued by a romantic, sentimental, or exotic context.” Thus, the female body is more than an object of castration; it is a location to put and contain male desire by covering up that which is absent.

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166 See Linda Nochlin, “The Imaginary Orient,” *The Politics of Vision*, for a feminist reading on the portrayal of Oriental women in French painting. An “almah,” or “alemah” refers to a “learned woman,” but colonists in the nineteenth century gave the name to dancers, who were also prostitutes. (Said, 186.) An “odalisque” is the slave of a sultan’s wife or concubine, but is depicted as a prostitute by many artists. Oriental dancers, odalisques and bathers can be seen in many works by such French artists as Ingres, Gérôme, and Delacroix.

167 Lacey, 27.

168 In psychoanalysis, the female remains an object of desire by hiding, or veiling her lack. Lacan claims that this kind of “masquerade” is typically feminine “because it operates to deny or cover over lack.” The veil is therefore a metaphorical covering of the absence of female subjectivity. This disguise serves as both desirous in mystery and fascination, yet frustrating to the male because if he can occupy the woman, her “attainment” delimits his fantasies, reminding him of his potential castration, and causing him to seek the “woman he does not have,” who will always have a place in his unconscious desires. The male seeks solace in images because they are created by the male’s longing for the insatiable Other — a temporary form of satisfaction. Masked nudes are therefore manipulated by male desire, standing in for the physical and sexual Other. Grosz, 134, 136-137.
Ingres’ *Le Grande Odalisque* (1814), accompanied by Delacroix’s *Odalisque* (1857), despite stylistic differences, exemplify the male unconscious by attempting to make permanent the object of desire (i.e. the female/Oriental Other). The control of the paintbrush or camera allows these artists to maintain their desire for the Other, while holding onto the metaphorical phallus. These nudes can never be sexually penetrated (though visually they are), and they can never take away from the operator’s masculinity or imagination. The nude is a medium for which the male can protect his power and fantasies, even when the living woman attempts to castrate him by way of romantic love.

The nude woman from Delacroix’s male-female series lacks the material Oriental attributes (such as mosaic patterns, hookahs, turbans) typically found in Orientalist works, excepting the occasional appearance of the leopard blanket, as in *Nude male sitting on leopard skin, standing nude female* (1854). Since it was common practice among academic painters to use white, European models (usually prostitutes) as the subjects for their works, to successfully offer the disguise of chastity, the models would be adorned with props, jewelry, and anything else that would place them into an imaginary time and setting. Delacroix does not apply this technique with the male-

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169 The female nude is one that echoes patriarchal desires, witnessed through visual art of the nineteenth century. The body has been recalled in chapter one as a performative space, as exhibited by the Western, bourgeois male. It is a place for the imagination to fulfill desire, to obtain the phallus sought in the Othered woman via sexual experience. During intercourse, the female desires the male’s penis in order to mask her lack. The male in turn, affirms the phallus by the female’s desire for his penis, thereby “detaching” the penis and temporarily giving it to his sexual partner. This both verifies his possession of the phallus, while reminding him of his own possible castration, rendering desire unsatisfactory. The animosity between demand and desire moves between the male and female, in an unresolved exchange between possessor and object. Of course, the female is necessarily a “sexual receptacle, property, object, lacking, wanting what men have.” Her moment of would-be satisfaction in filling the lack is denied because when the man offers the phallus to her, thus becoming a sexual object himself, the phallus is then reduced to the penis, concluding that neither partner receive the phallus. Ibid, 134-135.

170 Benjamin, 206. Due to prolonged exposure times, models would often balance on platforms or columns, covered in drapery for aesthetic affect.
female series of photographs. Largely, he rejects the use of props, insuring that the models, or rather, their bodies, become the props instead. Because the models are classified into a certain ethnicity and class based upon their appearances, they can be recognized as tools for dictating Delacroix’s artistic agenda through their physical bodies, especially since photography for Delacroix existed purely as what was visible on the surface.\footnote{171 Freund, 80.} The nude woman functions as her own Oriental attribute because she lacks the industrial material signifiers commonly seen in Oriental scenes. Likewise, the nude male is a prop, as his physiognomical features and body (light skin, thick mustache, musculature) in the nineteenth century, declare him to be European and working class.

What I have to base my assumption that these are indeed Orientalist is based upon the woman’s physiognomical features — her dark skin, large, brown eyes, unibrow, wide-set nose, and long, thick, dark, braided hair. These signifiers tell me her identity because of circumscribed stereotyping of an “Oriental Other’s” appearance. She does not have the idealized body type of the nineteenth century academic Western nude, found in the odalisques and Venuses of Ingres and Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1888). Juxtaposed against the muscular and white nude male, the female model’s features stand out, allowing the viewer to easily recognize her as non-European. Delacroix does not need to add hookahs and patterned fabrics or tiles to the scene because she is enough. Her body alone makes the Orient exist within the imagination of the artist-viewer.

Her lack of attributes, including any sign of a headdress or scarf to formally categorize her as “Oriental” makes her identification that much more difficult, except that her lack of clothing homogenizes her as an “Oriental” demographic perhaps as much so if
she were in costume. 172 As such, she can be identified as “Oriental” with or without clothing. Delacroix’s history as an Orientalist painter, along with his interest in showing the viewer a Romanticized, subjective nude, and not as a case study of culture, is enough to Orientalize this female based on her facial features alone. She is a representation of the Orient because of Delacroix’s known fascination with the Near East and because her physiognomy declares her to be non-white, despite the absence of material objects. Said notes that the “Oriental” is not defined by geographical location, but by race.173 Thus, the female nude in the male-female series may or may not be European by birth, but her bodily differences in the nineteenth century were enough to homogenize her as geographically Othered, and Delacroix is clearly using her for her exotic appearance, not as simply a classical model of French or European origin.

When Delacroix traveled to Morocco in 1832, he continued to criticize the “single-sidedness” of Ingres’ subjects,174 stating that Neoclassical artists, such as Ingres and David, depicted figures that were “over-praised beauty of fashionable paintings … their rose-pink limbs would cut a sorry figure beside these [dark-skinned] children of the sun.”175 In his later work, and after returning to France after his voyage to Morocco, Delacroix obviously disapproved of the extensive use of idealized, white, European models to depict the Orient. Perhaps this is why his most of his female photographic models characteristically resemble the women in Delacroix’s painting of The Women of

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172 See Graham-Brown, “Chapter IV: Dressing the Part,” Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950, 118-143. Homogenization and the relationship between model and costume are themes that are repeated throughout this chapter.
173 Said, 92.
174 Hannooosh, 67. (Journal entry: 24 March 1854.)
175 Kleiner, 624. Brackets added. From a letter to Frédéric Villot while Delacroix was visiting Morocco (29 February 1832).
Algiers in Their Apartment (1834, Fig. 16), who, although slightly paler, physiognomically appear to be and are indeed Moroccan women.\textsuperscript{176} However, the models in Women of Algiers are thought to be Jewish, and not Muslim.\textsuperscript{177} This would account for Delacroix’s easy access to a harem-like setting, along with his frequent use of unveiled, Jewish women, where the full veil was less common than with Islamic cultures.\textsuperscript{178}

Delacroix’s photographic female nude in the male-female series, despite being produced twenty years after his return home from Morocco is consistent with his Orientalist paintings, post-voyage, where the Oriental men and women are less idealized, and closer to Delacroix’s imaginary reality of the Orient.\textsuperscript{179} Additionally, whether or not the woman in Delacroix’s male-female series is Jewish (which is considered to also be an Oriental Other), Moroccan, Eastern European, or even Italian, her bodily signifiers classify her as non-white, therefore limiting her to the homogenized category of “Oriental” (non-westerner). Her birthplace is insignificant, along with her parentage and language (after all, her identity is unimportant and she is voiceless); what is important for the viewer and for Delacroix is her appearance and appearance alone. Her actual ethnicity is irrelevant because her nudity qualifies her as all Othered races, just as a clothed Oriental model would be characterized as a “type,” having little or nothing to do

\textsuperscript{176} Stephen F. Eisenman, et al, Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 238. Delacroix gained access to a Moroccan harem in 1832 during his visit. This may have been possible because of France’s recent occupation of Morocco.
\textsuperscript{177} Graham-Brown, 70.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid, 134.
\textsuperscript{179} Refer to examples of Delacroix’s post-Morocco Orientalist works, such as, A Jewish Wedding in Morocco (ca. 1837-41), Soldier of the Moroccan Imperial Guard (1845), The Abduction of Rebecca (1846), and View of Tangier (1852-53), not to mention countless sketches and drawings of Arab men and women.
with her actual culture.\textsuperscript{180} It is the visual qualities on the surface of the image that are crucial for Delacroix, not the structures behind them.

In Delacroix’s \textit{Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude female model} (1854), both nude figures are standing in slight contrapposto. The female is (very seriously) looking out at the viewer, and her right hand gently rests on her stomach. A long, dark braid hangs down her right shoulder. The nude male securely stands to the left of the female with his right arm resting on her shoulder. His gaze looks directly onto her highlighted breasts. His left arm is staunchly held slightly away from his body, and his left index finger points towards the ground. His muscular body creates a shocking contrast to the soft, curvaceous body of the female. There is nothing more in the image but a dark, tall platform in the background and some white drapery to the left side of the man.

This photograph psychoanalytically demonstrates gender and geopolitical dynamics of the Self’s relationship to the Other. As a woman from the Orient, Delacroix’s nude embodies both sexual and non-western Othering. She is already an Other because of her sex, and additionally so because of her supposed location (which also deals with race and ethnicity), the Orient. Both gender and geography are political because of France’s colonization of the Near East and North Africa during the nineteenth century, adding economic and political circuits to the already established cultural imagination of France.\textsuperscript{181} The nude male’s gaze is directed toward the nude female, who

\textsuperscript{180} Graham-Brown, 119.

\textsuperscript{181} This includes Algeria (occupied 1830-1962), Tunisia (occupied 1881-1956), Morocco (occupied 1912-1956, but strong colonial presence around 1830), Madagascar (occupied 1894), much of West Africa (occupied off and on from the 15\textsuperscript{th}-20\textsuperscript{th} centuries), Syria (occupied 1925-1944, but presence in 19\textsuperscript{th}}
gazes at the viewer. His arm resting on her shoulder points to his control and dominance over the Other, and his pointed finger seems to suggest a permanency to the position that he holds — it is a gesture of authoritative command. She, too, points an index finger diagonally towards the ground, but it is barely recognizable as her right hand rests gently on her stomach. Whether read from left to right or right to left, her hand gesture meekly echoes that of the man’s concrete one, as if to submissively agree to his superiority.

Although she makes eye contact with the viewer, her gaze is not bold or authoritative, like the male’s pointed index finger. In this way she lends herself to the male standing next to her, while also giving herself freely to the external gaze of the viewer. Her facial expression is arguably one of fear, hidden by sternness. As an “Oriental” model, Delacroix poses her in such a way that makes her vulnerable to Delacroix’s imagination. There is a sinister quality to this particular photograph, partially because of her determined gaze, and the male’s hard glance towards his female counterpart. While the viewer cannot see his face, a triangular connection can be made from us to him, him to her, her to us, and back again to her. The viewer can make a linear association between her, and us but the male remains outside of that viewing line. Yet, because he is placed within the image, his arm and his gaze towards her breaks the gaze between the viewer and female model, putting him in control of her. He may be unaware of the viewer’s presence, making himself ignorant or vulnerable, where the viewer is intruding on a private scene played out by two people, accepted into the scene by her gaze, and simultaneously excluded by the male figure’s disregard and arm’s length.

(century), Lebanon (occupied 1920-1943 with strong presence in 19th century), with added presence in Egypt, Turkey, and Persia (modern Iran).
connection to her. The viewer can never access her beyond sight because the nude male’s arm over her shoulder and pointed index finger claim her. She remains a symbol of male possession by her “delicate,” obedient femininity. This fits the circumscribed pattern of not just femininity, but femininity of the Orient in terms of the Western imagination. Femininity as such can be seen in the visual culture of the nineteenth century. The writer, Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), referred to women of the Orient as “no more than a machine: she makes no distinction between one man and another man.”182 This description inhibits the recognition of the individualization of women, demarcating them as distinctively feminine, and nothing more.183

The same ideologies that play out between the male and female bodies play out between imperialist and native. As colonial occupation was a very real and violent enterprise, the same motivations for female conquest dominated colonial invasion, allowing the West to easily objectify and justify imperialistic violence. Said summarizes text from Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Fourier’s (1768-1830) preface in the massive, three volume book, Description de l’Égypte (1809-1828), that rationalizes the why of Europe’s attack on the Near East.184

To restore a region from its present barbarism to its former classical greatness; to instruct (for its own benefit) the Orient in the ways of the modern West; to … underplay military power in order to aggrandize the project of glorious knowledge acquired in the political domination of the Orient; to formulate the Orient, to give it shape, identity, definition … its importance to imperial strategy, and its ‘natural’ role as an appendage to Europe …. to feel oneself as a European in command … of Oriental history, time, and geography …. to make out of every observable detail a generalization … about Oriental nature, temperament, mentality, custom, or type; and, above all, to transmute living reality into the

182 Said, 187.
183 Ibid.
184 Ibid, 84.
stuff of texts, to possess (or think one possesses) actuality mainly because
nothing in the Orient seems to resist one’s powers. 185

Fourier spells out the reasoning for imperialism, and in turn, justifies great
violence towards an entire region of the earth based upon imaginary assumptions.
His contribution to the archive of Orientalism is unquestionable. Description was
a way to “bring the Orient closer to Europe, thereafter to absorb it entirely.” 186
Said paraphrases Fourier’s text by describing the Orient as a “natural appendage”
to Europe, an extension of the Self from eye to body, to eradicate any political
autonomy the Orient has with Europe.

Delacroix’s nude in Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude
female model (1854), her body at the grip of the man’s arm embodies this idea of
the extended limb; an appendage forever linking man to Other, owner to property,
protector to mute by way of the photograph. Be it a gesture of claim or
protectiveness, this image recalls the colonial adage of “white men are saving
brown women from brown men.” 187 As a European male, the nude male
essentializes her sex and ethnicity by asserting himself as the dominant figure.
His directed gaze aims at her face, thereby reinforcing his stake within the image.
The arm may have given a sense of comfort to the male viewer, as men believed
they were entitled to the female body. 188  His touch symbolically breaks the
boundaries between the Self and the Other, or “us” and “them.” The nude male is

185 Ibid, 86. Parentheses in original.
186 Ibid, 87.
187 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” Charles Lemert, ed., Social Theory
188 Nochlin, 42.
a representational device in which the viewer uses to gain access to the Other, when sexual intercourse is unavailable.\textsuperscript{189}

However, the contradiction remains that the added member is detachable. In metaphorically extending the appendage (i.e. penis) the male must temporarily give his phallus over to the (phallic) female, thereby castrating himself.\textsuperscript{190} So, never can the male permanently obtain the phallus because of this brief detachment. Likewise, when Europe extends its “arm” to the Orient, it must temporarily castrate itself in order to gain power (the phallus), thus creating an impenetrable distance, blocking access to what it desires (the Orient). Therefore, when a non-western country is invaded and occupied by a Western nation, it is never really overtaken because true access is barricaded. Although the imperialist believes he has penetrated these boundaries, the Orient is never occupied because it does not exist. It is in the European imagination. Thus, what appears to be colonial invasion is a temporary presence with no \textit{concrete} bodily infiltration.

Yet, colonial occupation has always been about political and economic gain, and in the nineteenth century it also becomes a mission of sexual conquest via desire for the Other. The romanticized notion of the seductive and mysterious Orient, along with the accessibility of the “primitive” and native women motivated artists and explorers alike to enter into this new territory. As a part of bourgeois escapism from modernity, the Orient was a place to break away from the sexual restrictions of France.\textsuperscript{191} As described in chapter one, the “dark” men of the Middle East and Africa were seen as treacherous by

\textsuperscript{189} See chapter one for more on the topic of the mirror phase.
\textsuperscript{190} Grosz, 134.
\textsuperscript{191} Said, 190.
European tourists, so “saving” the women from those men was not only acceptable, but necessary. Delacroix’s imagery acts as a representation of this sexual conquest, which becomes in colonial reality, a literal invasion of geography and body. Here, the metaphorical is seen as truth, where representational images have very real consequences.

Since the woman, let alone the Oriental woman has no voice of her own, no subjectivity to individualize her as woman, she is left only to the will of men. Lacan does not even classify woman as woman. To him, woman does not even exist; only the homogenized category of Women exists. Her body is, in fact a “sexual receptacle for him, interchangeable with any other.” Thus, to “protect” “dark women from dark men” is to maintain the Self’s ego in purifying and maintaining the category of Women as homogenous, dependent, and ironically anaclitic. The enlightened, good citizen or “good society” will always be the hero in the story of imperialism because as the castrator and therefore the Law, he holds authority over all Others.

192 Spivak, 611, 612.
193 Glazer, 85.
194 Grosz, 132.
195 Freud and Lacan divide adult sexual relations into anaclitic and narcissistic love, the former associated with men as dependent on the attachments of the mother, or the replacement of the mother (the Other). The latter kind of love is associated with the vanity and shallowness that accompanies the woman, who relies on herself as the love object. To compensate for the lack, the female “attempts to make her whole body take on the role of object of (the other’s) desire.” Therefore, the woman (or rather, her body) has no individuality, but as the phallic figure, bases her identity on how to satisfy the man. Ironically, she becomes anaclitic and dependent on the man for affection as her value is measured by his desires. She always remains at a distance, “a lack sustaining his desire,” in an effort to “maintain her apparent independence — an independence that is actually nonexistent. Furthermore, because the man is interested not in the woman’s “value as loved object,” but in “its own position of mastery, control, [and] activity,” he takes on the role of the narcissistic relation. As such, the woman’s body is always under the authority of the phallus, and never autonomous — “Her identity as narcissistic is in fact dependent on her being desired by the other.” Once again, a conflict between anaclitic and narcissistic, demand and desire, demonstrate the fallibility of the one-sided patriarchal system. Ibid, 126-128.
196 Spivak, 614.
Body Language

The other “type” of body one literally speaks of is the body of language, itself contained within the constructs of patriarchal society. In Said’s seminal book \textit{Orientalism} (1978), he notes that ideas and stereotypes about the Orient were constructed out of a Western notion of superiority.\footnote{Said, 19.} That supremacy was in effect, developed as a part of Enlightenment ideologies about the non-west, namely, the Orient. Said writes that there was “a growing systematic knowledge in Europe about the Orient, knowledge reinforced by the colonial encounter as well as by the widespread interest in the alien and unusual.”\footnote{Ibid, 39-40.} Said recognizes “a newly found scientific self-consciousness based on the linguistic importance of the Orient to Europe,” thereby making a connection between language and information.\footnote{Ibid, 98.} The Otherness of the Orient was appealing to the imperialist, and with increased travel and archeological developments in the nineteenth century, the “civilized” world (i.e. the West) processed new scientific knowledge by means of control and domination.

To return to \textit{Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude female model} (1854), although language is not visually depicted in his photographs by text, the figures and poses \textit{create} language and discourse, and therefore knowledge that dark women \textit{must} be saved by white men. Ideologies and assumptions about the Orient and its people are formed out of this kind of visual culture. Photography as a medium between reality and imagination produces false knowledge about the Oriental Other. Knowledge, or what was presumed to be factual information not only influenced, but created stereotypes of
what the Orient was and who it encompassed; “To have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it.” Knowledge as a construction of language is therefore influenced by the desire to control the body in both its physical and linguistic form. The photograph allows the imperialist to both recognize the body as a manifestation of knowledge, but also as an object to be controlled.

Lacan distinguished psychoanalysis from a Freudian science as a “series of techniques for listening to, and questioning desire — even those desires at work in the production of knowledge.” One can connect Lacan’s theory of desire and knowledge to power and knowledge (as desire and power are congruent) by reading into Said’s explanation of this relationship. He states, “knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control.” Here, Said and Lacan attribute knowledge to desire, power, and control. A sense of power and authority is thus developed from the Self’s excessive ego, which is “governed by fantasy.” Information about the Other, perceived to be accurate and true enveloped the minds of nineteenth century imperialists. Through scientific exploration and archaeological expeditions, writers like Fourier, and artists like Delacroix utilized this power to justify and motivate notions of superiority. Knowledge of the Orient gave “access” to the Orient — it “created the Orient.” However, the terms “access” and

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200 Ibid, 32.
201 Grosz, 14.
202 Said, 36.
203 Grosz, 31.
204 Said, 40.
“Orient” both recall the actual impenetrability of the Other because both are only active in the unconscious imagination.205

New scientific approaches, such as physiognomy and phrenology, surfaced from Enlightenment ideals of exploring and defining the unknown — that which is Othered. The world was divided into a “hierarchy of races and ethnic groups.”206 Allan Sekula writes, “Both [methods] shared the belief that the surface of the body, and especially the face and head, bore the outward signs of inner character.”207 Physical bodily signifiers were enough to draw conclusions about one’s personality, typifying entire cultures, peoples, and parts of the world into a single homogenized category of difference (this is what is seen in Delacroix’s male-female series). Eugenics was reestablished in order to move towards the ideal genetic disposition believed to be found in the ancient Greeks and Romans, and to shift far away from the “equally imaginary, threatening, Africa [and Orient].”208 The bourgeoisie made a very clear and desperate attempt to reject and deny the Other, in order to justify and strengthen the Self (male, West).

Delacroix’s female nude in the male-female series is essentialized by both her physical features and knowledge about her culture that coincides with the physiognomical archive. Her “character” is attached to her ethnic background, combining intangible knowledge with corporeal evidence. *Reclining female nude, nude male looks* (1854) is a contained bodily image that recalls a traditional female form, which created the knowledge and language in which Delacroix and imperialists alike

205 See above section, entitled “Dark Women,” which discusses the inaccessibility of the Other.
206 Graham-Brown, 47.
used to homogenize the Near East into the Orient. Thus the body of language and body language compliment one another by formulating ideas, which develops into imagery, which in turn creates more knowledge in a circulatory fashion of boundary and information. The body and knowledge are therefore interchangeably connected in the nineteenth century through science, information, and how knowledge was used to create violence upon the body (both as a physical vessel and as a territory).

In the mid to late 1800s, the practice of photography played a significant role in demarcating character based upon race and ethnicity. From asylums to prisons, the camera was vital in personifying diseases, afflictions, and any “unusual” behavior via portraiture. Photographs, such as Francis Galton’s *The Jewish Type* (1883, Fig. 17), Ernest Chantre’s ‘*Fellahin de Gizeh,*’ (1898-1899, Fig. 18), and J.E. Hannauer’s *A young married woman from Bethlehem* (1902, Fig. 19) appeared in the archives only a few decades after Delacroix’s portraits to simplify difference. Physiognomy was used to organize racial categories, as a means to “represent [European] control and displacement of the [colonized] populations and to justify the [European] presence.” I am not suggesting that Delacroix’s photographs act in this same, absolute way, for they are not scientific; however, his faces do enable the production of racist imagery. Photographs allowed the ideological to appear natural, marking the Other as truth — “photography came to establish and delimit the terrain of the other, to define both the generalized look

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209 Ibid, 348.
210 Ibid, 345.
— the typology — and the *contingent insistence* of deviance and social pathology.”

The Other was therefore not just an idea or a form of representation, but a “means of *creation.*” Classifying the Other (that which is strange) into immovable character-types was in fact “instrumental in constructing the very archive they claimed to interpret.” Thus, the archive legitimated itself via photography, further enabling racism throughout the world.

The effect that visual culture had on perpetuating ideas of superiority was profound. Without the materiality of these “discoveries,” Orientalism would just be an idea with no substantial result. Doctors, scientists, and scholars could “prove” that the Other was inferior due to facial characteristics, and artists and tourists, such as Delacroix were just as much a part of that imperialistic, “Enlightened” culture.

Delacroix chose his model in the male-female series for her non-western features because she embodied that which fascinated him, the Orient. The body of knowledge in which Delacroix derived his fantasies spoke *for* her. Here, information and creation go hand in hand. The photographs are somatic proof of the power of knowledge (or of what is perceived to be true knowledge). Truth, is therefore a “function of learned judgment,” and does not rely on the actual time or location from which is it derived.

While the materiality of the imperial project is real, the ideas that sparked colonialism are based off of Western biases that fit a certain agenda. This agenda is seemingly a result of curiosity

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212 Sekula, 345. Emphasis in original.
213 Said, 87. Emphasis in original.
214 Sekula, 348.
215 Ibid, 375.
216 Said, 23.
and a genuine “concern” for the “backwardness” of the Other, but really it is a quest for power and control, often cloaked by compassion.

When Arthur James Balfour invaded Egypt in the nineteenth century he justified, “We are in Egypt not merely for the sake of the Egyptians, though we are there for their sake; we are there also for the sake of Europe at large.”\textsuperscript{218} Balfour’s rationalization of “for their sake” echoes Spivak’s declaration of “white men are saving brown women from brown men.” Europe \textit{must} step in and save the backwards Other because they \textit{need} us. Imperialists could not speak directly to the “Orientals” because they spoke a different language, “yet he knows how they feel since he knows their history, the reliance upon such as he, and their expectations.”\textsuperscript{219} It is this kind of explanation that motivated imperialists to occupy certain regions, but it also gave the common European population peace of mind because we were “helping them.” Delacroix’s \textit{Nude male standing, holding the shoulder of a nude female model} (1854), and \textit{Nude male and female standing forward} (1854, Fig. 20) exemplify this notion of control to create the illusion of safety and command. Orientalist imagery played a significant role in justifying colonial rule before occupation even occurred.\textsuperscript{220} Additionally, Balfour’s statement that imperialism also helps Europe implies that there was some threat or reason to overtake beyond curiosity and boundary expansion. Even though the Orient was thought to be a place where time stood still, the people were also seen as untrustworthy and dangerous.\textsuperscript{221} Said writes, “the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{218} Ibid, 33. \\
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid, 34. \\
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid, 39. \\
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid.}
something into something else: he does this for himself, for the sake of his culture, in some cases for what he believes is the sake of the Oriental.”

Thus, imperialism was not just a conscious act of repression and violence, but an integral part of the Self that believed he was doing good. One could mark this justification as denial or defensiveness, but it was successful in assuring the colonialist of his actions.

Delacroix supports this imperialist argument in the photograph *Nude male and female standing forward* (1854). In this image the nude female is standing to the left of the nude male, who is kneeling with his left leg on the leopard skin. His left arm reaches behind the slightly smiling female, who is standing in contrapposto. He is holding a wooden staff with his left hand, and both figures are looking into the camera. There is also some foliage depicted in the background placed below a plain backdrop. The image this piece brings to mind of one of the protective male, shielding the female from an uninvited intruder, in this case, the gaze of the viewer or the artist with his camera. This is the one image in the male-female series where the viewer’s gaze is returned by both figures, even if the male’s face is darkened by shadow. Although the nude male sits lower than the female it is obvious by his austere expression that he is in control. On the other hand, their poses and the wooden staff recalls Delacroix’s affinity towards Greek statues.

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222 Ibid, 67.

223 Her pose is nearly identical to the American artist, Hiram Powers’ *Greek Slave* marble statue, created in 1844 and displayed at London’s *Crystal Palace* in 1851 (this is actually a depiction of a Greek woman enslaved by Turkish captures). It is doubtful that Delacroix would have seen this exhibit, however, their similarities not only show a popular interest in Greek sculpture, but also a fascination with the Oriental male as dangerous (by pitying the imprisoned Greek slave), or as the Western male as hero and protector (by securing the Oriental female).
The non-west may have not been a physical threat to the West, but the Other is internally and necessarily always a threat simply because it is an Other, that which is different and untouchable. Since the male is continuously seeking out the Other, but never actually able to access or penetrate, the Other therefore becomes threatening. Since the female alone is enough of a threat to the castration of the male, let alone an entire section of the world (the non-west), reasonably, Europe must occupy for the sake of the Other, and for the sake of itself, lest it be considered weak. To not invade would be surrendering to the Other and forsaking the identity of the Self.

The act of violence, brought upon the territorial body of that which is deemed “the Orient,” is a defensive mechanism to the supposed threat that is contained within the Other. Ranjana Khanna suggests, “the concepts of self and being that came into existence in psychoanalysis were dependent on strife or violence … on the politics of colonial relations.” It would appear that the West was merely reactionary to the threat of the Other, however, since the threat did not exist in reality, there is no reaction, only action. The delusional peril that the Orient resounded for Europe was created by the West, who in turn attacked, overtook, and occupied the “menacing” non-west. Imaginary as the Orient may be, historically, imperialism did occur, and real people with real lives existed within colonial boundaries. The ideological body of knowledge affected the physical bodies of the colonized, thereby confusing fiction from truth. Orientalism was so completely internalized in the European that this fantasy changed the real world, further skewing the margins of reality and imaginary. Hence, false knowledge about an imaginary location turned into real violence upon real people.

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224 Khanna, 2.
Photography as a means for archiving difference can be more violent than painting because of its false connotations about capturing and processing reality. Photography is the ultimate medium for confusing the spaces of reality and fantasy. Visual culture not only created Orientalist ideas, but it also presented knowledge in a way that brought the Orient closer to a supposed reality.225 Additionally, the photographic frame itself “marks a provisional limit; its content refers to other contents outside the frame.”226 The body, too, works as an enclosed casing that is incomplete — its boundaries limited to desire, but expanded past the frame and onto the real world. The body of the Orient therefore functions as the physical being of the imagined “Oriental” woman, but also as the external language of the Father, who uses demand to verbalize unconscious desire.

The silence of the Orient is necessarily part of the male imperialist creation. The photograph is a visual means for quieting the Other by alienating reality from fantasy. The melancholia of the nude figures within the photograph “are not lonely, but voiceless.”227 In this silence, the non-westerner, and especially the woman, finds herself in a tense relationship with the imperialist, who seeks to advance the “unchanging” Orient by teaching (and ruling), but through violence and force, not through understanding.228 Language, (or lack thereof for the woman) is active in the realm of the man, and adheres to the castration of the female; her voice is yet another form of

225 Said, 94.
226 Kracauer, 264.
228 Spivak, 611.
absence. The imperialist is at first caught in between demand and desire (ego and superego, imaginary and symbolic, the fragmented Self and the Law of the Father) during the mirror phase, and during this time the language of demand, “I,” becomes audible and authoritative. As a repressed part of the unconscious, desire “speaks through demand.” Demand, in turn, only verbalizes that which is imaginary.

Because Lacan works within a social ideology, and not biological, he attributes masculinity and femininity to language as a social construction. Knowledge as a creation of language, speaks as a structured and controlled body. The imperialists who formulated this language therefore placed themselves into their own cocoon of fantasy, narrowing and temporarily closing off the “enlightened” intellectual capabilities that they so strongly believed in. This “unbroken arc of knowledge and power … forms the rim of the stage containing the Orient.” Just as the physical body of the female is confined within the social ideologies of the male, the territorial body of the Orient is used much in

229 Glazer, 73.
230 Grosz, 72. Need, or the Real, comes out of the Freudian biological concept of the id. These are the basic, instinctual needs that a child has, such as food and water. The child is dependent on others (mother) to obtain these real, physical objects. During the mirror phase, when the child breaks away from the (m)other, his needs transfer over to demand and desire, which also take the form of the imaginary and the symbolic. In this transition, demand takes the form of language (instead of the dependent child’s “cry”) and unlike need, demand can never be satisfied because the object in question is imaginary (much like desire). Here, Lacan reconstitutes Freud’s unconscious ego and superego in the form of desire. The only way in which demand can be satisfied is when the Self assimilates with the other, and in turn destroys the Self because of demand’s incomplete connection to otherness while the Self remains distanced from the other. When the child eventually becomes the Self in the mirror phase, desire takes over for demand. Desire is what drives the Law of the Father; it is the superego and the symbolic order. Desire is developed as a result of lack or absence of the Other. The object the Self desires moves away from the imaginary and linguistic, and on to “the desire of the other as its object.” It is repressed from articulation and “speaks through demand.” Lacan differentiates these three psychoanalytical orders from those of Freud by placing need and demand in the conscious, while desire rests in the unconscious. The mirror phase ends when the child recognizes desire, and begins to seek the phallus presumed to be found in the Other. Ibid, 59-66.

231 Ibid, 65.
232 Ibid, 66.
233 Ibid, 131.
234 Said, 104.
the same way. Additionally, the Law of the Father, who formulates and maintains the body of knowledge that justifies violence and occupation of the non-west, traps himself within the boundaries of an unchanging circle of misunderstanding and prejudice. Thus, the body is a place that fits into the narrow gap of what was acceptable during the nineteenth century. It symbolizes the unchanging manifestations of the bourgeois male, as directed by the Self’s subconscious desire. Psychoanalysts, such as Lacan, may have been aware of the unjustness of such misogynistic principles (Lacan is either purposely or not unclear about his own beliefs), yet he did little to contradict Freud’s sexist and racist agenda. Delacroix’s nudes, as both symbols and creations of the imaginary Orient typify the constructs of delimiting the body into a system of knowledge and a confined vessel for desire and patriarchal control. Delacroix and even Lacan were merely playing into already established beliefs of male superiority towards anything that was considered Other, demarcating women and the non-west as vulnerable victims — bodies with no minds of their own.

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CHAPTER 3: ORIENTALIST VISION

Thus far I have discussed Orientalism and Eugène Delacroix’s photographs within an imperialist and patriarchal framework. This chapter explores how Delacroix’s images function as they exist inside France, and specifically Paris as the hub of French Orientalism and where Delacroix produced most of his work. As a Romantic painter, it is consistent that Delacroix’s photographs fit into the Romanticist canon as well. Therefore, these images must be looked at for the role they play in the experience of the Romantic male-artist.

Beyond the categorization of an artistic movement, the Romantic individual significantly enacts Jacques Lacan’s theory of the gaze. The gaze is a form of judgment performed by vision, which the viewer (as male) looks onto the object (usually female) in order to subdue and possess. The object in question is unaware that it is being watched, and thus becomes subject to the viewer’s desire (yet there is also a fear in the spectator of being seen). There is safety in distance, where the spectator remains uncontaminated by the object. The manmade image allows the male to gaze onto the printed object as an alternative way for obtaining power and control (the phallus in psychoanalysis). Where the imperialist attempts to conquer, The Romantic is responsible for exoticizing the Orient and occupying from a distance via the gaze.

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236 Said, 51.
238 Grosz, 79-80.
239 Ibid, 38.
240 Said, 118.
To understand how these photographs are not just Orientalist creations of imperialism, but Romanticist as well, it is imperative to look back onto the oeuvre of Delacroix and his contribution to the Romantic artistic movement. Romanticism is conceptually defined as fictive, contemporary, exotic, and passionate\(^{241}\) — all traits that can be seen in the paintings of Delacroix with *The Massacre at Chios* (1824, Fig. 21), or *Liberty Leading the People: July 28, 1830* (1831, Fig. 22), along with Delacroix’s contemporaries, such as Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) in *Raft of the Medusa* (1819, Fig. 23).\(^{242}\) Edward Said recalls that Orientalist painting began before the nineteenth century Romantic period, but that the “exotic locale” of the Orient stretched into the “genre tableau” of artists like Delacroix.\(^{243}\) The depiction of color over line and the loose brushstrokes also characterize Romanticism within painting;\(^{244}\) however, with the invention of photography, Delacroix’s artistic medium alters, yet his *style* can still be recognized in his nude odalisques, along with his male-female series of photographs. As noted in chapter one, the pose of the nude female in *Nude male seated forward, nude female kneeling backwards* (1854) echoes that of the positioning of the nude female in the right foreground of *The Death of Sardanapalus* (1827). The female nude’s repose in *Reclining female nude, nude male looks* (1854) is reflective of a typical reclining nude, but also carries the fluid movement of the reclining woman in *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment* (1834). Even the nude male in *Standing female nude, nude male sitting*

\(^{241}\) Eisenman, 55.


\(^{243}\) Said, 118.

\(^{244}\) Eisenman, 55.
supported by an arm (1854) resembles the partially covered reclining male in Delacroix’s Massacre at Chios (1824). Obviously the artist did not fluctuate much in his stylistic and compositional translation of painting to photography.

Beyond technique, the photographs suggest a strong use of imagination, and furthermore, the contemporary imagination. Since Delacroix was living and working in a time when French colonialism was at its peak, the use of Oriental iconography corresponded with popular ideologies and imperial enterprises of the nineteenth century.245 Like Géricault’s Raft of the Medusa (1819), which sentimentalized the tragic events of the shipwreck of the Medusa, intensely depicting the cannibalism, madness, and starvation that the thirteen survivors endured while lost at sea three years previous to the painting’s construction. While Delacroix does not historicize his odalisques or male-female series by way of a narrative, he still places the models in a specific time and place, in mid-nineteenth century France. Although the Oriental world is considered timeless, his choice in subject matter adheres to the current conditions of bourgeois society, where modernity was masked with the changeless Orient.

From chapters one and two, these particular photographs have evoked the imaginary within a photographic space because of their Orientalist affiliations, thereby adhering to the call of the exotic fantasy of nineteenth century Romanticism. With the acceptance that these photographs are indeed Orientalist as well as Romanticist, the goal of this chapter is to further analyze how the individual bourgeois male Romanticized the Orient in a way that is a priori affixed to the image of the photograph. Additionally, I wish to explore how the Oriental woman fits into the Parisian sphere of difference and

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pleasure, and how she enters the Western world as both woman and nonwestern through the Romanticized notion of visual stimulation by means of the gaze.

**Romantic Figures**

The nude female in Delacroix’s *Female Nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm* (1854), and *Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms raised* (1854) is automatically Romanticized by her positioning in an Oriental scene. This is in part due to the Romantic’s view on the Orient, not as imperialist agenda, but as a location for the individual male to place his desire and repressed pleasure sensations. As a symbol of sexual beauty, the Western idea of the odalisque is necessarily Romantic because it is based off of the imaginary. The odalisque by nature is placed within a domestic setting — that of the harem.²⁴⁶ The harem acts like the veil — it “delineates women’s private space.”²⁴⁷ It follows that the objects within the Orient (i.e. women) are emblematic of Orientalist ideology. Thus, the female is a source of fascination for the male viewer as an untouchable Other. By placing the odalisque in a domestic scene, she is both contained and limited to the Self’s (male-Westerner) ideas about the submissiveness of women, yet is distanced because she is non-western, and therefore available for sexual exploration, unlike the “civilized” women in France. She is not the straightforward embodiment of the wifely figure, the mother, or the whore.

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²⁴⁶ Ibid, 10. A harem is the women’s quarters of a home (usually for family members), but in the Orientalist imagination, the harem is a place reserved for women, where the sultan keeps his wives and concubines.
²⁴⁷ DeRoo, 164.
In the visual arts, the nude secures the man’s desire for the prostitute, while playing the part of the virgin.\(^{248}\) As director, the artist may place the body of the whore (the model-prostitute in reality) with the attributes of the virgin (such as depictions of Venus), rendering her as chaste. The model in *Female Nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm* (1854) is erotically fetishized by covering her genitalia with a cloth.\(^{249}\) The odalisque as such is “a virgin who experiences a sexual awakening,” as demonstrated by her partial undress.\(^{250}\) Alternatively, since women of the Orient were already believed to be sexually tainted, the (Oriental) attributes of the whore veil the (either virginal or promiscuous) female body, disallowing the woman to extend beyond the object fantasy. The Oriental woman is the perfect device in which to safely make the exchange between the restrained, civilized, European virgin (the French prostitute does not yet “exist” in academic painting) and the distanced, unrestricted, non-western seducer. The imperialist male is not afraid of the Oriental female because he does not value or respond to her judgment.\(^{251}\) As an inferior woman from an inferior territory, he has full permission to her sexuality. This entitlement is based off of the man’s desire for the Other, and reassured by the social constructs of patriarchal society.

Instead she is produced to be a hybrid of Oriental prostitute, yet also untouched. She is seen as tainted because she is Oriental, but also accepted because of her erotic

\(^{248}\) Freud separates the man’s desire for the woman into the pure-virgin, and the seducer-whore. The virginal woman is “noble, honorable … an externalized ego-ideal,” a narcissistic position in which the man wishes to imitate. Any position in which the woman appears to have power is false, as the man seeks the traits he sees within himself. The whore, on the other hand, allows the man to “fully indulge his sexual desires because he believes he is in no danger of being judged by her.” The mother takes on both roles as virgin and whore because she is seen as “sexless,” but also as “unfaithful” because of her sexual ties with the father. Grosz, 129.

\(^{249}\) DelPlato, 270.

\(^{250}\) Ibid.

\(^{251}\) Grosz, 129.
disguise and imaginary self. Pushing her figure into the far off land of the Orient safely distances her and makes her impurity manageable. As an eroticized Other, the odalisque is a form of visual stimulation that gives the artist the freewill to depict a nude that conforms to strict French beliefs about female propriety (as seen by placing her in an interior setting), while exercising the male’s right to sexualize her body.\textsuperscript{252} This separate-attainment is accomplished with the male gaze.

In \textit{Female Nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm} (1854), the viewer’s eye focuses on her breasts and torso as the central apex of the photographic plane. As a kind of portrait, her head and face are very small and insignificant next to her body. Even the patterned pillows and sheets take up more special area than her face. It is clear where Delacroix wanted the spectator’s eye to go, and what was important for him as an artist, or perhaps more specifically, as a male artist. It is unclear whether she looks straight into the camera (a mediator for the gaze, as discussed in chapter one) or not. Nevertheless, she appeals to a look of sexual haughtiness that \textit{seems} to put her in control. Direct or offset, her particular gaze entices the viewer, asking him to step inside her field of vision. On the surface, she plays the role of the seductress, the odalisque. As a prostitute it would have been improper to watch, but as a mysterious plaything of the Orient, she is safe, acceptable, distanced. She is certainly not a proto-\textit{Olympia} (Édouard Manet, 1863, Fig. 24) because she is disguised as Oriental and because her gaze is secondary and small compared to the remainder of the picture plane.

The Romantic is an imperialist by way of overtaking the female body for one’s own desire, yet autonomous from the colonizer because the Romantic’s fantasies about

\textsuperscript{252} Nochlin, 42.
the Orient stay within the image. Unlike the imperialist, there is no physical occupation of the real, for the Romantic’s world exists purely on an imaginary level. He may travel to the Near East and experience the Orient as the colonizer has arranged it, but even when abroad he remains in the West; his body may be elsewhere, but his head constructs the East that his fantasies have already designed for him — he sees what he wants to see, what he expects to see. Additionally, during his trip to Morocco in 1832, Delacroix qualified the East as picturesque and a place for painters, reassuring himself of the sentimental imagination of the Oriental scene.\textsuperscript{253} For men like Delacroix, the Orient is predetermined as a place of seduction and pleasure, and it is seen in this way as reality.\textsuperscript{254} Thus, the symbolic odalisque becomes truth to the male spectator.

As Europe grew increasingly industrialized and mechanical, it follows that artists, such as Delacroix, who encouraged change, yet respected traditional values and artistic practices would gain some anxiety over the rapidity of the progressing West.\textsuperscript{255} To Romantics who sought to escape modernity, the Orient was an accessible and culturally different site where change was \textit{not} occurring.\textsuperscript{256} The male viewer could use imagery to occupy the sexual space of the Oriental female without ever leaving Europe.\textsuperscript{257} Of course, change was happening in the East as Western imperialists were using this occupied land to expand European industry and control.\textsuperscript{258} Nonetheless, for the Romantic, this exotic location was a perfect device in which to run away from anxiety

\textsuperscript{253} Ibid, 51-52.  
\textsuperscript{254} Ibid, 42.  
\textsuperscript{255} Ibid, 36.  
\textsuperscript{256} Ibid, 35.  
\textsuperscript{257} Said, 190.  
\textsuperscript{258} Nochlin, 36.
and explore unconscious desires. The East was a place for Delacroix to unlock his personal fantasies and repressed feelings of anxiety.²⁵⁹

An interesting effect is produced with Delacroix’s nude *odalisques* and the photograph. Here, the Romantic fantasy of a timeless, changeless Orient is combined with the modern technology of the camera.²⁶⁰ Insofar as technique, the Romantic painting is partially defined by its painterly style, something that is obviously absent from the imitative nature of the photograph.²⁶¹ Yet, Delacroix and Durieu’s choice of the calotype method uses wax to polish the paper negative, which creates a cloudy or dreamlike effect in the image.²⁶² This is why the light in the photographs fades to the outside, giving the appearance of blurred vision. I believe that Delacroix’s use of the calotype was not an arbitrary choice, but a way for him to qualify his painterly style onto a mimetic image.²⁶³

The photographic Realism that many early photographers sought to capture is rejected by Delacroix with the inclusion of the Romantic figure and “painterly” quality of the photograph.²⁶⁴ This responds to the artist’s desire to use photography as a tool for painting, a “dictionary” of sorts, yet it also allows the photographs to stand on their own

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 42.
²⁶⁰ Ibid, 36.
²⁶¹ Eisenman, 55.
²⁶² Roy Fulkinger, *The Formative Decades: Photography in Great Britain, 1839-1920* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 161. The calotype was developed by Henry Fox Talbot in 1840. The process begins with a piece of paper sensitized with silver nitrate and potassium iodide. The image is then produced in a gallic acid and silver nitrate mixture, and fixed with a solution of heavy metals. The image is then waxed. The negatives were often contact-printed in sunlight on salted paper to produce a positive. Calotypes were also very reproducible.
²⁶³ Hannoosh, 84. Delacroix thought the calotype to be inferior to the daguerreotype, but he appreciated the calotype’s lack of detail and precision.
²⁶⁴ Nochlin, 39.
as artistic and conceptual pieces.\textsuperscript{265} However, Delacroix agreed with his peer and critic, Charles Baudelaire, that photography was indeed \textit{not} art (as discussed in chapter one).\textsuperscript{266} He saw photography as an experimentation and a medium for the artist to \textit{think} about art.\textsuperscript{267} Nonetheless, it is clear that artist-photographers, such as Delacroix, “imitated traditional art, not fresh reality.”\textsuperscript{268} They adhered to the tastes and style of “academic idealism of Ingres and his school,” though as previously discussed, Delacroix breaks away from conformity as well.\textsuperscript{269} Apart from technique, the content of the photographs are open to interpretation, and therefore not simply instruments, but art. They speak of historical and political colonial enterprises, along with societal ideologies on gender and difference. Delacroix’s images are not and \textit{must not} be vacuumed into a narrow window of medium as implement, disregarding the significant messages about Delacroix and nineteenth century French identity that each photograph has to offer.

\textbf{The Pleasurable Eye}

As were the majority of artistic models, Delacroix’s nudes were most likely prostitutes in reality.\textsuperscript{270} The term \textit{professional} here functions as both model and whore, typically one in the same in the nineteenth century, yet portrayed otherwise on canvas or paper. The sitter for \textit{Female Nude sitting on a couch, her head supported by an arm} (1854), and \textit{Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms raised} (1854) is unknown, and judging from her lack of agency, her positioning as a sensual odalisque, her decision to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[	extsuperscript{265}] Freund, 80.
\item[	extsuperscript{266}] Ibid, 78-80.
\item[	extsuperscript{267}] Hannoosh, 82.
\item[	extsuperscript{268}] Kracauer, 248.
\item[	extsuperscript{269}] Ibid.
\item[	extsuperscript{270}] Nochlin, 44.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
pose for an amateur photographer, and of course her nudity (which defies social propriety), one may conclude that she was indeed a prostitute. Her pale skin and physiognomical features tell the viewer that she is probably European as well.\textsuperscript{271} Delacroix’s choice to place this model in an Oriental setting is a way to disguise her identity as an unwanted, disrespected \textit{creature} of the Parisian underground, and to transform her into an object of chaste pleasure for the male viewer. Additionally, and less importantly, she is also a form of cheap labor that serves his (the artist in general) artistic \textit{and} sexual needs.\textsuperscript{272}

In Paris, where prostitution was a highly popular venture among the bourgeoisie, yet hidden at the same time, visual culture acted as a way to temporarily satisfy the sexual energy of the male. The nude female, and Delacroix’s odalisque, is a ghost of a women. She is only a fragmented bit of body, born out of misogynistic ideologies, with no personality or individuality. She is prostitute and model, although Delacroix’s pair of odalisques are masked by the artist’s inclusion of Oriental fabrics and cushions. Even to name her as Prostitute-Model is to characterize her too close to home — she \textit{must} be a distanced Other (female non-westerner), an odalisque for the artist to successfully and safely render her.\textsuperscript{273} The nude odalisque represents the compromising position of womanhood as seen by a patriarchal society. She is only defined by her sexuality, and not by her presence as an autonomous, independent \textit{person} with agency. Prostitution is a contradictory profession, ironically created and used by the same group who chastises it.

The viewer has a choice to see her as the safe, metaphorical odalisque, or as a literal and

\textsuperscript{271} See chapter two for more on the physiognomy of Delacroix’s models.
\textsuperscript{272} Nochlin, 42.
\textsuperscript{273} Ibid, 43.
bold marker of sexual exploitation. The nineteenth century male necessarily chooses the former gaze, the truth being too shameful and shocking to recognize.

The *gaze* is a controversial and debated topic that on the one hand creates judgment and brings indignity to the object upon which it is directed, yet according to Linda Williams it is also a natural and bodily function of human need and does not merely seek to objectify.\(^{274}\) The gaze is meant to evoke pleasure and desire within the Self. The act of looking is one that cannot be whittled down to simply one conceptual explanation or the other; rather, the gaze is a complex and dynamic system of pleasure. However, the fixed image (and especially the female nude) is the foremost reliable object upon which the gaze is to be practiced. In pornography the gaze may have a more intuitive intention, but for the masked nude (Delacroix’s odalisque), the gaze encompasses centuries of artistic practice over the fixation of the female body.

Williams redefines the gaze in photography as not just dealing with the optic, visual senses, but as a “very real stimulation of the (male) body via the image-machine.”\(^{275}\) She observes that the masculine fetishization and objectification of the female body is a simplified explanation of the other bodily sensations one feels when viewing erotic photography.\(^{276}\) Williams is notably making commentary on nineteenth century pornographic images, used for the purpose of sexual engagement via not just the eye, but touch as well. However, Delacroix’s photographs do not differ entirely from the

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\(^{274}\) See Williams, “Corporealized Observers: Visual Pornographies and the ‘Carnal Density of Vision’,” *Fugitive Images*.

\(^{275}\) Ibid, 19. Parentheses in original.

\(^{276}\) Ibid, 5.
“carnal appeal” of realism that pornography offers.\textsuperscript{277} The question of whether or not these and other nudes could be considered pornography is one that has been and will be debated for many years. Nonetheless, the similarities are remarkable between images like \textit{Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms raised} (1854) and an anonymous stereoscopic photograph dating to 1855 (Fig. 25) that undoubtedly belongs to the pornographic genre. Compared to other pornographic images, where one or more models are actively participating in coitus or otherwise, this anonymous stereoscope is incredibly passive. The woman is not actually engaging in sexual intercourse with a partner — she is casually posing for an erotic portrait. This differentiates her from other “types” of erotic imagery, but still places her within that canon because of her explicit exhibition of her genitalia. In both the anonymous photograph and Delacroix’s \textit{Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms raised} (1854), an entirely nude female sits frontally, exposing her genitalia. The background is bare, but both are surrounded by drapery. The only differences between the two is that the viewer of the anonymous photograph has a clearer view of the sitter’s genitalia, who is squatting with her arms crossed, legs partially open, while the nude in Delacroix’s photograph is reclining in a typical academic pose. The other difference is that Delacroix is portraying an odalisque. Thus, despite their stylistic and gestural similarities, the exotic drapery in Delacroix’s scene, along with her academically acceptable positioning puts her in a category closer to art and not porn.

However, if Delacroix did not consider his photographs to be art, and they were also not considered to be pornography, it would appear that there is no one concrete way to classify these items. The debate over art, pornography, and photography reflect the

\textsuperscript{277} Ibid, 4.
complicated dilemma in which artists like Delacroix found themselves in a rapidly changing society. The nude female was an image that the artist could hold on to with certainty — its meaning solid and secure. Yet, the nude was changing along with industrialization and colonization. Nine years after Delacroix’s photographic experimentation, the prostitute-model would be recognized by Édouard Manet (1832-1883) in his revolutionizing display of prostitution in *Olympia* (1863), much to the outrage of critics.

The problem with a purely feminist interpretation of the male gaze, Williams points out, is the homogenization of the male as a passive looker, based on “Western idealism” and “masculine identification.” While this explanation is still viable, it is limiting because the spectator is also an active participant of the gaze, and such “dirty pictures” are part of modern reality of the nineteenth century, expanding vision from real, French brothel life to the fixed image. Her argument questions the misogynistic view on the gaze, stating that nothing is ever physically possessed by looking, and that the relationship between erotic imagery and the viewer is one of man and machine. Yet, I would argue that when comparing a pornographic image, such as the anonymous stereoscope to Delacroix’s odalisque, the hypocrisy of the French bourgeois is one that cannot be ignored, and one that creates the judgment Lacan’s *gaze* procures. The gaze is both a reflection of reality and modernity, apart from physical possession that Williams’ stands for, but it also allows for male misogynistic views on women in both Western and nonwestern societies. If the male believes he is in control of the Other sex, and assures

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278 Ibid, 5.
279 Ibid, 11.
280 Ibid, 14.
himself of his entitlement, then that is irrevocably misogynistic. To the bourgeoisie of Paris, the image of the prostitute along with the physical entity of the whore was condemned in public, yet was a popularized and widely used commodity item among those who utilized the prostitute for her abilities as a sexual receptacle. The prostitute was a piece of everyday life for many Parisian males, but continuously denounced and censured by those same men. The gaze is thus both metaphorical as it produces ideology, and visceral as a sensational form of desire.

The Oriental mask that Delacroix adorns his model with in *Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms raised* (1854) is one that molds the ideologies of the male spectator, still leaving her as an object of visual pleasure without the critical implications of the erotic photograph. The problem in the nineteenth century is not that the male desires to look — sexuality is after all a natural part of life encouraged by physical attraction to a body. The problem lies in the patriarchal powers that be, who deny women the autonomy and sexual freedom awarded to the male. In pornography as well as in art, the ghost figure of woman is much more complicated than just a form of visual stimulation; it is a repetitious emblem of Western male domination, not just over the image, but over the entire spectrum of the colonized world.

Delacroix’s artistic photographic nude was not made for the intention of male ejaculation or auto-stimulation, therefore for the academic nude the feminist interpretation of the gaze as a fetishistic pretense holds firm. The vague figural and stylistic differences and the vast similarities between *Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms raised* (1854) and the 1855 anonymous stereoscopic photograph need to be
addressed in order to understand how Delacroix’s photography functioned in nineteenth century France. The odalisque’s Oriental mask conceptually hiding her outward eroticism is significant to the changing views on academic nudes, literally exposed by the invention of photography.  

The Non-western Model

There is another photographic sitter, who does not have the pale skin of Europe’s brothel model, but rather bares the mark of the exotic, unknown world of the Orient. The non-western model is often portrayed in nineteenth century postcards and studio portraits as an example of otherness. Early photographs depicting (mainly women) from the Orient, Africa (“the dark continent”), and from the French colonies in Oceana were widely distributed throughout Europe as a means to separate themselves from difference, and to “safely live out exotic fantasies.” Either for the tourist market or for a particular client, the photographer would pose a non-European model in a way suitable to “their native environment” and sell as a commodity item. Often these portraits were nude or sexual in nature. Postcards, like Young Moorish Woman and Kabyle Woman (Fig. 26), and Young Moorish Woman (Fig. 27), both dating to the late nineteenth century, and portraying the same partially nude woman, circulated throughout France and “introduced eroticism into social exchange” These kinds of studio portraits, turned tourist item, increased racism and misunderstanding of different cultures by claiming to

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281 Ibid, 3-4. Williams begins her discussion on pornography and the gaze by addressing Baudelaire’s distaste for the obscenity of photography, made to light by the realism of the photograph.
283 DeRoo, 160, 168.
284 Graham-Brown, 40.
285 Ibid.
286 DeRoo, 167.
originate from a particular French colony (some did and others did not), while also reflecting “truth” of how the natives looked and behaved.²⁸⁷

Delacroix’s nude female in the male-female series is very unusual in that Delacroix and Durieu created Orientalist images like *Nude male and female facing forward* (1854) or *Nude male and female sitting in profile* (1854, Fig. 28) that were for private purposes (since they were never sold, or put on exhibition in a Salon or otherwise), and not for mass distribution. These photographs do not fit into a category of kitsch, nor are they case studies of race and culture (as noted in chapter two). Delacroix was not interested in the Orient for its commoditization or for scientific purposes, but for his genuine curiosity and fascination of that which was different, which also appealed to his Romantic vision. This could secure Delacroix’s positioning as a Romantic artist who often sought to represent real “Oriental” figures, like the women in *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment* (1834), who were indeed Moroccan.²⁸⁸ His photographic female nude also differs from the typical postcards and studio portraits because she is unadorned and “natural.” The lack of faux scenery enhances the reality for Delacroix, unlike for many of his Orientalist contemporaries. However, Delacroix was most likely aware of the circulation of such postcards as mentioned above, and like those studio portraits, he excludes a detailed background in both his male-female series and pair of odalisques, while closely cropping and enframing each figure to disavowal any particular time, geographical location, or outside context.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 160.
²⁸⁸ The *Women of Algiers* is discussed further in chapter two.
²⁸⁹ DeRoo, 162.
The non-western Other is rarely seen as the main figure in Orientalist paintings. When a dark male or female character is depicted in painting he or she is either a symbol of the treacherous, foreboding Orient, or takes a secondary role as servant, slave, sexual omen, or a technical device in which to enhance the whiteness of the central figure.\textsuperscript{290}

The modest back pose of the nude white female in Jean-Léon Gérôme’s \textit{Moorish Bath} (ca. 1880, Fig. 29) is in harsh contrast to the frontal, partially nude depiction of the black servant, whose unfeminine body is rectified by the passivity of the white figure.\textsuperscript{291}

However, in photography the desire to depict a woman who was of a non-western ethnicity was much more popular and sought after. If photography was designed to capture “reality,” then the imaginary input of a white model in an exotic setting could discredit the accuracy of the photographic medium for many artists and viewers. Additionally, the selling of the photographic item would require that the model be Oriental (even if in reality she was not). Here, the reproducibility of the photograph is key in the commoditization and quick distribution of Orientalist ideals.\textsuperscript{292} Racism could literally be sold through the general public, as both fantasy and scientific truth. Since Delacroix did not distribute his photographs, the same argument cannot be necessarily made in the case of the male-female series or the pair of odalisque images. He may not have sold his photographs on the market, but Delacroix is still utilizing the Orientalist platform for prescribing difference, even if it is in a personal setting. He is using

\textsuperscript{290} Nochlin, 49.

\textsuperscript{291} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{292} Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility” Donald Preziosi, ed., \textit{The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology} (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2009), 436. Although Benjamin does not discuss Orientalism in this significant essay, he does point to the rapid reproducibility that photography provides in the modernization of Western society.
popularized photographic imagery, along with past depictions of the Other in painting to develop his own hybrid of Orientalist ideology. The white odalisque in an Oriental setting adheres to the traditional use of the masked female nude, while the female in his male-female series is exposed in a display of the Spectacle as reality. All are privatized, yet perpetuate the long standing domination of the Western male over the non-western female.

Typically a model from the Near East was difficult to procure. In his journals, Delacroix briefly observes the seclusion of “Oriental” women, and their confinement to the house.293 For the second generation of Muslim women, isolation from the public circle was “the defining feature of feminine moral excellence.”294 According to Asma Afsaruddin, this was a way for the men to prevent change and maintain control by restricting women to the household.295 Thus, Muslim women from the Near East were sometimes forbidden to be photographed, as this was a form of vanity.296 Yet, many Muslim, and especially Jewish women did pose for photographers, as each region and culture adhered to different rules and restrictions on women as publicly open figures.297 Even though the name and exact origin of Delacroix’s nude female in the male-female series is unknown, we do know that she was photographed in a studio in Paris.298

293 Harrison, 87. (Entry: Tangier, 28 April 1832.)
295 Ibid, 43.
296 Graham-Brown, 62.
297 Ibid.
Often photographers would set up studios in Middle East, but many remained in Europe. Although there are hardly any records available, those women who did venture to Europe and pose were usually from non-Muslim and impoverished communities. They, like the European model may have been paid for sexual favors or similar endeavors. Nonetheless, Muslim women would have never been exposed in public as they were portrayed in postcards and studio photographs. However, Sarah Graham-Brown suggests that even though it is assumed that women from the Arab world (especially those who practiced Islam) were invisible in the public spectrum, and therefore any female who unveiled herself was to be considered “disreputable,” that in fact there was no straightforward rule to covering, uncovering, or posing for pictures. Whatever the history of each sitter, the artist had the freedom and ability to position and dress his model in any way he pleased. Rebecca J. DeRoo discusses nineteenth century postcards from Algeria in her essay, “Colonial Collecting,” and states, “ethnic type categories take individual subjects and their clothing to represent traits of an entire race. This labeling by work and ethnicity erases social interaction, turning Algerian society into an ahistorical series of categories served up for novelty and local color.” In *Arabian Woman with the Yashmak* (late nineteenth century, Fig. 30), a veiled woman sits frontally, completely covered except for her eyes and exposed breasts. The title of the photograph suggests she is Turkish (as the *yashmak* is worn in Turkey), but in fact she is

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299 Graham-Brown, 39.
300 Ibid, 63.
301 Ibid.
302 DeRoo, 167.
303 Graham-Brown, 65.
304 DeRoo, 162.
wearing a burqa from Egypt, therefore concluding that she is also certainly not Arabian.\textsuperscript{305} Thus, there appears to be no consistency or need for truth in such depictions of Middle Eastern women. Like the white odalisque, the Oriental model was rarely the same in real life as she appeared in the finished photograph.\textsuperscript{306}

Delacroix, like most artists of his time, manipulated the pose and appearance of his models in order to create a new vision. This vision was truth for Delacroix, even though it was a clear manifestation of his own imagination. Upon his visit to Morocco, Delacroix commented on the absence of the figure in “Oriental” art, calling it a “weakness of the Orientals’ own vision.”\textsuperscript{307} Thus, the male gaze that is absent in Islamic art, which historically does not portray the human figure, is “compensated” for by the Western male gaze.\textsuperscript{308} The inclusion of Near Eastern women in photography was one that adapted art into a ground of a reality that for the Westerner was not the mythology of the nude Venus, but the “truth” to be found in the Other. The gaze could penetrate through the taboo of the Oriental veil by pairing an “Oriental” female with “Oriental” costume, where the artist could decide what to expose and what to cover.\textsuperscript{309}

The female in Delacroix’s nude male-female series is stripped of her clothing, leaving nothing but bare flesh. This kind of exotic nude is referred to as the \textit{nuda naturalis}, who represents “the primal state of humanity.”\textsuperscript{310} The male, on the other hand, is nude in most of the images, but by recalling Williams’ theory that the gaze is more of a

\textsuperscript{305} Graham-Brown, 119.
\textsuperscript{306} Ibid, 63.
\textsuperscript{307} Nochlin, 52.
\textsuperscript{308} Graham-Brown, 61-62.
\textsuperscript{309} Ibid, 135.
\textsuperscript{310} Ibid, 138.
carnal, bodily sensation, and not just a visual one, along with identifying him as the reflection in the mirror phase as rehearsed in chapter one, while keeping in mind that the photographic viewer is male, places him not as a primal being himself, but as a representation of the male id, or state of the Real in Lacanian psychoanalysis (since the native is presumed to be trapped in this primal state already). While she is a picture of the East, as previously defined by her physiognomy in chapter two, he is the unconscious of the male. She is what he desires, but before he attempts to enter the realm of the Other, the male viewer must first access his primordial instincts (instincts that the uncivilized natives are thought to possess), or the “pleasure-seeking id.” Additionally, one way for Delacroix to escape modernity was to create an image of the ideal man, not as an object of desire, but in the state of who Delacroix himself wants to become (unconsciously, not physically). For Delacroix, the “Oriental” was blissfully ignorant of progress, remarking in his journals that the Frenchman is continuously restless, and that the Moors “are closer to nature in a thousand ways.” Delacroix backhandedly respects the people of Morocco, as his view on their culture is one of both awe and ignorance. This can be seen in the photograph entitled, Nude male and female facing forward (1854), where the nude male reenacts a scene of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s noble savage. He is accessing his “primal” side in order to fulfill his fantasies about the “Oriental” woman, who he can only “touch” through the male model and his own vision. Delacroix copes with his anxieties by obtaining the Other through the reflection in the image as a way to maintain patriarchal power.

311 Grosz, 59. The Real and need are interchangeable in Lacanian psychoanalysis.  
313 Harrison, 88. (Journal Entry: Tangier, 28 April 1832)
The artist’s vision is one that has both celebrated and criticized the academic, political, and social higher powers. Delacroix does show a level of social conformity in his photographs by adhering to traditional subject matter seen in academic nude paintings. However, by using a highly debated and new technology, Delacroix’s vision is expanded beyond the surface of artistic practice, and on to a platform of innovation and creativity. Photography for Delacroix was an experiment, yet the viewer can see the careful choices and placement of each figural object in every single photograph. Delacroix’s gaze, along with the viewer’s, can only be defined by the imagery he produces, and therefore the meanings he constructs out of the visual field. There is an undeniable personal touch to Delacroix’s photographs, but the Orientalist ideologies that Delacroix not only maintains, but creates, live on through the contemporary. The gaze is the most crucial implement for stimulating the senses by way of the eye (and, as Williams suggests, the body). Thus, the Western or non-western nude is manifested out of vision, which both directs and controls the principles of a patriarchal nineteenth century France.
CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to unfold the many subliminal layers of Delacroix’s photographs as markers of imperialist and Romanticist ideologies. Through the post-colonial work of Edward Said and the psychoanalytical-feminist reading of Elizabeth Grosz, Delacroix’s photographic work has been analyzed in the context of how his photographs function as producers of Orientalist ideologies in nineteenth century, French bourgeois society through vision, knowledge, materiality, and how the gaze works to create the material images in which this thesis investigates. By conceptualizing these photographs, I have delved much further than previous scholarship, which primarily dismissed any theorization of Delacroix’s photographic exploration. I sought to recognize these images not simply as tools for drawing and painting, as Delacroix himself claimed — for that is merely one external explanation for these unusual works that only defines the very surface of the photographs. Instead it is crucial that these photographs stand on their own, as material and visual devices for understanding the complex and critical structures surrounding not only photography, but the Orientalist enterprises on which these images both rely and in turn re-create.

Delacroix’s own fascination with photography is complex and contradictory, and as shown by his journals, he can neither fully come to grips with the new technology, nor reject it entirely. In fact, as mentioned in chapter one, he embraces photography as a tool for exercising artistic inspiration, yet denies the camera’s ability to capture spiritual imagination found in painting, thus concluding that photography is not art. Nonetheless, as shown by his pair of odalisques, Female nude sitting on a couch, her head supported
by an arm (1854), and Female nude sitting on a couch, her arms raised (1854), Delacroix set up a scene that is decorated with attributes from the Orient, while presenting to the viewer a traditionally academic (reclining) nude female. The photographic quality of the calotype was most likely chosen to make the photograph appear dream-like, therefore adhering to Delacroix’s style as a Romanticist painter. Additionally, since this pair of photographs, along with the male-female series are Orientalist (as demonstrated throughout chapters one and two), and therefore part of the imperial imagination, they do indeed belong in the artistic canon, despite Delacroix and other critics, such as Baudelaire’s arguments to the contrary. As a fictional geopolitical site, the Orient is necessarily a priori constructed out of the imperialist imagination, thus any material object created out of that imaginary is a result of (male) desire and fantasy.

Delacroix was working in the midst of the colonial age, when violence and occupation was justified by false beliefs that the populations constituting the Orient were uncivilized, weak, and passive (i.e. feminized). This mentality motivated imperialists to cross European boundaries for the purpose of containing the body of the Orient, while maintaining power over that which was considered to be inferior. Just as the female body was controlled by patriarchal powers, the Orient as inherently feminine was an extension of that jurisdiction that was not only territorial, but representative of an entire population of (homogenized) peoples — the ultimate body.

The physical body of the “Oriental” (female), along with the territorial body of the Orient played a crucial role in the development of the Spectacle, and in particular, the photographic Spectacle. As a new apparatus for rendering naturalistic images (and
therefore “truth” in some circles), the camera was used to archive that which was considered different, unusual, and deviant (i.e. the Other). Thus, the photograph was vital in producing racist and sexist beliefs as performed by the (female and non-western) nude, and visualized by the male-artist, or director-audience. The Orientalist Spectacle was a way for the West, or Self, to take command over the non-west, or Other, in a performative act of misogynistic and imperialistic domination. By containing difference, the Self is able to identify with the Other, while maintaining a safe distance. This plays out in Lacanian psychoanalysis, where the male is apprehensive of female “lack,” yet desires her at the same time. He is afraid she will “castrate” him by her absence, like the “dangers” of the Orient, but he seeks to obtain her (phallus) nonetheless.314

Although Lacan perpetuates misogyny in his psychoanalytical theories by prescribing power to men, thus disallowing woman to have autonomy, agency, or individuality, he does mark difference in gendering based off the male’s confrontation of the possibility of castration, which relies on the absence or presence of the male sexual organ.315 This gives men the ability to “acquire a social and speaking position.”316 Throughout his lectures, Lacan remains ambiguous towards his views on women, but as a patriarchally dominated psychology, psychoanalysis is used in continuum with the Western tradition of white, male power over female (white or otherwise). Lacanian psychoanalysis as adapted by Grosz in a feminist context is shown in the critical analysis of Delacroix’s photographs to cohere to nineteenth century notions of sexual superiority.

314 See chapter one for further reading.
315 Grosz, 148.
316 Ibid.
Due to the essential feminized gendering of the Orient, Lacanian psychoanalysis has proven to be consistent in post-colonial discourse as well. Psychoanalysis has been utilized as a psychological means for oppressing the Other (i.e. the female and non-west). Ranjana Khanna notes that psychoanalysis indisputably “represents the spirit of its times,” and Freud should not be disregarded as a colonist. His founding theories produced and maintained imperialistic and misogynistic ideals, even through to Lacan’s era in the mid-twentieth century (and continuing today). She also states that the term Orientalism needs to be reconceptualized in cultural studies to include a feminist methodology, which would produce a “responsible” investigation of colonialism. The contemporary intellectual has the opportunity to analyze works, such as those by Delacroix, and not only remark on the problematic ideologies, but instate new methodologies that rectify such issues as Orientalism.

The question of Orientalism is one that Said claims are still relevant today. As demonstrated by the United States military interference in the Middle East, even in 2011, imperialism appears to remain a crucial part of Western existence. Militaristic, political, and religious attitudes formulate much of the current imperial experience between the United States and the Middle East. The easy accessibility and distribution of imagery also plays a crucial role in shaping modern Orientalism — just as Delacroix’s photographs both connected and divided the East and West by bringing the Orient into European boundaries, while archiving its eroticism (which today would be archiving its

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317 Khanna, 26.
318 Ibid.
319 Ibid., 16.
320 Said, xxi.
violence). Susan Buck-Morss points to the “global information networks,” and “how political imagination might be effectively transformed because of them.”

Although on a greater scale, the globalization of imagery came about with the invention of photography, where anyone could gain access to the world beyond the West through the “unmistakable” eye of the camera lens. Thus, the ideologies of the nineteenth century eventually leave the realm of the studio, and in the late twentieth century, enter onto a digital platform where reality and fiction are skewed. Delacroix’s photographs are therefore not to be dismissed as tools for drawing, but as markers of a colonial archive, which both created and were created out of the Spectacle. His contribution to the Orientalist ideologies of the nineteenth century are crucial to understanding the context in which these images were produced, and why they are relevant to today’s political and ideological practices.


322 Sekula, 375. Sekula states that the archive was invented out of photography, which enabled racism throughout the world.
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