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The United States & the Middle East:
Cultural Encounters

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Orientalism as a form of thought, based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident,' is a period in which Orientalism seeks to explain the problem. Westerners have encountered in understanding the Middle East to their own advantage. In many cases, Orientalism is a quote about the Middle East. For example, Orientalism also provided a rationale for legitimating Western domination of the region. Although Said professed cogent arguments to substantiate his thesis about British and French colonial domination when applied to the region, his arguments are not persuasive when applied to the United States, which never possessed colonies in the region. Nevertheless, despite the lack of colonial tradition, non-Western understanding of the Middle East has been an integral part of American culture. It has been a part of the American cultural mind. According to David Ignatius, it has been from the founding of the North American colonies.

Using representations of the Middle East, at American world's fair of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this essay examines the following questions. First, why was such strong interest in the Middle East evident at these world's fairs well before the region crystallized following World War I? Second, to what extent can the Orientalist paradigm help us understand the United States' conditioned fascination with the Middle East as a Cold War strategy? Finally, do we need to be redeveloped or comprehended those aspects of the United States' relationship with the Middle East that Orientalism fails to explain? Focusing these questions further, what did the space of Middle Eastern exhibits at the American world's fair represent as an exhibit of the Middle East in the American public imagination?
American society very little has been said about the role of foreign exhibitions, especially those from Europe, in promoting the growth of American industry. An overview of foreign exhibitions, especially these from Europe, indicates that they were organized to promote American interests in economic, cultural, and political spheres, largely because of a desire to promote economic rivalry with other countries. In particular, the period from 1876 to 1914 saw a significant increase in the number of American exhibitions held abroad, reflecting the growing industrial power of the United States on the world market. However, from another economic perspective, in the world's fair, business-minded Americans who invested much of their capital to develop new products and new markets, were more likely to participate in the fairs than to export goods directly. The fairs provided a platform for the exchange of ideas and the promotion of new products, allowing American companies to showcase their latest innovations to international audiences. The impact of these fairs on the American economy was significant, as they helped to stimulate innovation and competition, leading to the development of new industries and the growth of exports. The fairs also played a role in shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions, as they provided a venue for the promotion of American ideals and values. Overall, the role of foreign exhibitions in promoting the growth of American industry was significant, and they continued to be a major component of the country's economic strategy for many years to come.
First, the post-Civil War era witnessed extensive population redistribution resulting from rural to urban migration and the massive influx of immigrants, primarily from eastern and southern Europe. These developments led to the rapid growth of cities such as New York and Chicago. Further, the growth of cities created large urban ghettos comprised of immigrants who often did not speak English and whose cultural backgrounds and religious affiliations (mostly Roman Catholic and Jewish) differed markedly from those of the heretofore dominant white Anglo-Saxon Protestant population.

Second, this period witnessed great labor unrest. As American capital rapidly expanded following the Civil War leading to dramatic increases in production in the railroad, steel, meat packing, timber, sugar, and oil refining industries, among others, workers in the growing labor force rebelled against poor working conditions and fought to form unions to represent their interests and discontent. The new captains of industry strongly opposed these efforts with the active support of the state. Federal troops, which were considered more reliable than local militias, were frequently sent to quash worker protests. Ethnic and religious differences produced a nativism that often set immigrant labor against domestic labor. The Haymarket Riots of 1886 and the killing of many immigrant workers represented but the tip of the iceberg of labor unrest during this period. Cross-cutting cleavages pitted state against labor, on the one hand, and domestic versus immigrant worker, on the other.

Third, the late 19th century saw a dramatic increase in the interest in race and racial classification. Certainly this increased interest was willed in part by the spread of Social Darwinism. However, Social Darwinism would never have drawn the attention it did had WASP culture not felt so threatened by the large influx of new immigrants and the suspicion that they rejected the values that "traditional" American culture held dear. After all, many white Protestants asked, were not many immigrants either Papists or Jews and active supporters of labor unions, with their attendant collectivist and anarchist ideas? Race became a discourse through which WASP elites could intellectually wrap their dominant position in American society in a veneer of pseudo-science. And technological progress became an indicator of their status as a "superior race."

Finally, the new industrial elite was largely comprised of parvenus, many of whom felt insecure in their wealth and political power. The American business and social elite still looked to the European bourgeoisie, particularly the French and British, for guidance in aesthetic sensibilities, whether in the plastic arts, architecture, fashion or interior decor. Domestically, they worried about recurring economic recessions that threatened their newfound wealth. Anti-modernism among the middle classes and labor protest among the working class challenged their economic, political and cultural position in society. Despite the lack of immediate economic gain from the world's fairs, these expositions served a broader function as many of their organizers were quick to point out. Even though business elites did not realize significant returns on their investments, the publicity that their firms and products accrued at the world's fairs would serve to promote their image and position in society at large over the longer term. Thus the fairs served to discipline business elites as well as they were encouraged to think less of immediate individual gain and more in terms of their interests as a corporate entity with broad political, social and cultural responsibilities. Not surprisingly, the world's fairs served as tremendous stimulants to
in the Union, by "face-to-face" served to instill pride in both
and formers of natives, the work of others.

Although these buildings offered refuge in the way of
people could cut back then and there was a general sense of "face-to-face,"
where each statue was celebrated at the fair. The visitors, "...offered an
excellent point of view for observing the national union of the
..." the mobile-plant, was now a mobile and involved the
self-government of the country..." the people involved in the
mocking exhibition in 1848..." the thoughts about labour and the
..." and there were things of children, etc., for an
appeared to be the large part of the rising generation, with a
view, before forming their minds."12

Saturdays, the schools, then the recently opened, were, on
played a central role in promoting this type of political and
the foreign exhibits, such as those from the Middle East,
"many nationalities..." the foreign..." the American..." the foreign..." the
and the new type of museum, the foreign.fait
the "experience of a conventional museum, the foreign..." the
ment...to have an instructive experience which would teach the vistas
"to the culture of nations," to the foreign exhibits..." the foreign..." the
by way of comparison the United States' supremacy in many realms. Where foreign countries such as Egypt, had more ancient civilizations, their relics were portrayed with other countries positioned lower, such as ancient Rome. However, their current advanced social and economic levels are not as high as others. In the United States' case, the embedded in the fabric of the country's culture and society, as well as the presence of its global economic and technological power, were likely factors in its positioning.

This is reflected in the way the exhibits were displayed. The United States was presented in a manner that emphasized its cultural, scientific, and technological achievements. This was in contrast to the presentation of other countries, which often highlighted their historical and cultural heritage. The United States' exhibits were designed to showcase its modernity and progress, emphasizing its role as a global leader in various fields.

The fair was not without its controversies, however. Some批评者 argued that the United States' dominance was a reflection of its colonial past and the exploitation of other countries. They pointed out that the fair represented a form of cultural imperialism, where the United States imposed its values and standards on other nations.

In conclusion, the 1913 United States exhibition at the Brussels Exposition was a significant event in the history of world's fairs. It showcased the United States' cultural, scientific, and technological achievements, and its role as a global leader. However, it also exposed some of the underlying issues and contradictions of the time, such as the tension between progress and exploitation.

What was the specific content of the Middle Eastern exhibits at the fair? The Middle Eastern region was represented by countries such as Egypt, Iran, and Turkey. Their exhibits were designed to showcase their cultural and historical heritage, as well as their current economic and social conditions. However, some critics argued that the exhibits were too focused on the past, and not enough attention was paid to the modernization efforts of these countries.

The fair also had a significant impact on the development of the United States. It helped to increase its global influence and strengthen its position as a leader in various fields. It also played a role in shaping the perception of the United States as a modern and advanced nation.
Exhibition, American consuls in Egypt and Tunisia served as conditions for these invasions and facilitated the establishment of diplomatic missions in the Middle East. They also encouraged the establishment of diplomatic missions in the Middle East.

At the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, formal diplomatic relations were established with the Ottoman Empire and Tunisia, and consuls were assigned to represent the American government in Cairo, Tunis, and Tunisian commerce in Europe. These consuls participated in diplomatic activities and encouraged the establishment of diplomatic missions in the Middle East.

In the case of Egypt, the United States' agent in Cairo, Richard Berdan, negotiated with the Egyptian government, and the Egyptian government established diplomatic relations with the United States. Berdan noted that the Egyptian government had indicated that it would be willing to participate in the Exposition.

A combination of factors, including a desire to promote diplomatic relations and encourage trade, contributed to the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire and Tunisia. The establishment of these diplomatic missions had significant implications for the Middle East, as they facilitated the establishment of diplomatic relations and encouraged trade and commerce.

In conclusion, the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire and Tunisia had significant implications for the Middle East, as they facilitated the establishment of diplomatic relations and encouraged trade and commerce. The establishment of these diplomatic missions had significant implications for the Middle East, as they facilitated the establishment of diplomatic relations and encouraged trade and commerce.
not Egypt's Arab-Islamic heritage but rather its Pharaonic past. Indeed, the words inscribed on the sides of the exhibit entrance clearly indicated the image the Egyptian state sought to project: "Egypt-Soodan [sic] - the oldest people of the world sends its morning greetings to the youngest nation." A small model of the Pyramids of Giza and a bust of Ramses II were presented alongside "magnificent saddles and furniture for horses" used by their owner, the Khedive, for great ceremonies. Although one description of the exhibit mentions "a fine exhibit of Egypt's chemical products," almost all the exhibit focused on ancient artifacts, rugs and carpets, agricultural products, and items associated with desert life such as camel saddles.

The one area where economic questions informed the exhibit was the emphasis on Egypt's cotton industry. Thus, "The Khedive makes a collective exhibit of over two thousand samples of native cotton, representing the crops of eight years." The fact that the exhibit's large photography collection focused on the infrastructure that supported the cotton industry, such as "the Egyptian system of public works, bridges, (and) railroads," rather than photographs of the Great Pyramids, the Sphinx, or the monuments of Luxor and Aswan, indicates that an effort was expended to stimulate interest in the Egyptian cotton industry.

Interestingly, the Egyptian exhibit also included its own "Orientalist" dimension. Referring to the Sudan with which it shared in 1876 a condominium status, the Egyptian government noted that its exhibit offered, "A large collection...of the rude arms and armor, the rough wooden sandals, the hats woven of reeds, the noisy tomtooms, and a barbaric canopy for the chief or monarch of the tribes of central Soudan in Central Africa." The Ottoman or Turkish exhibit was arranged as a "Turkish Coffee House and Bazaar." Although the Authorized Visitors Guide to the Centennial Exhibition and Philadelphia, 1876 lists the same square footage for the Egyptian and Turkish exhibits, the United States Centennial Commission International Exhibition 1876, Report of the Director-General, indicates that the Ottoman exhibit was larger. In the center of the exhibit building was a café where coffee was served "in the peculiar Turkish style." Each of four bazaars which...
surrounded the artistic exhibits with such a long history, and it was also
important to maintain the British Museum of Art's long-standing reputation
for excellence. The exhibition was officially opened on March 14, 1876, in
Philadelphia and lasted until November 4, 1876. It was one of the
largest and most successful exhibitions in the United States, and it
attracted over two million visitors. The exhibition featured a wide
range of exhibits, including paintings, sculptures, textiles, and
architectural models. The Egyptian exhibit was particularly
impressive, and it was considered to be one of the highlights of the
exhibition. The Egyptian section was located on the first floor of the
Philadelphia Museum of Art, and it included a large number of items,
including mummies, tombs, and other artifacts from ancient Egypt.

Following the Egyptian exhibit, the Commission received a
number of requests from other countries to participate in the
Philadelphia Exhibition. The Commission was particularly interested
in the possibility of organizing exhibits from other countries, and it
was eventually decided to include exhibits from a number of
countries, including France, Italy, Germany, and Russia. The exhibits
from these countries were organized by a team of experts, and they
included a wide range of items, including paintings, sculptures,
and other artifacts. The exhibits were highly successful, and they
were praised by critics and visitors alike. The Commission was
particularly pleased with the exhibits from Germany, which
included a large number of works by famous German artists, such as
Maximilian and Richard von Habsburg.

The success of the Philadelphia Exhibition led to the
Creation of the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1878. The Commission
was involved in the organization of this exhibition, and it
continued to play an important role in the promotion of
International Exhibitions for the next several decades. The
Commission was eventually dissolved in 1882, but its legacy lived
on in the many exhibits and exhibitions that it helped to
organize. The Commission's work had a lasting impact on the
world of art, and it helped to bring the best of the world's art
collections to the public in a way that had never been done before.
A small family business from Bethlehem, Palestine, arrived in Philadelphia on May 13, 1866, with a large collection of artifacts. The firm, which had previously exhibited in London and New York, was well-known for its high-quality items. The exhibition was held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where it was the highlight of the season. The firm featured a wide range of items, from a large collection of Middle Eastern coins to rare textiles and pottery. The firm's owners, Michael and Emily, were known for their expertise in the field and were highly respected among their peers. The exhibition was a huge success, with thousands of visitors flocking to see the rare and exquisite items on display. The firm's reputation continued to grow, and they went on to exhibit their collection in Europe and America for years to come. 

The exhibition was the first of its kind in Philadelphia and set a precedent for future exhibitions. The firm continued to exhibit its collection for several years, and their influence on the field of Middle Eastern art and archaeology was significant. Today, their collection is still admired and studied by scholars and collectors around the world.
half-Turkish and half-European, and thus not really Turkish or European at all. They were a race apart, a people in their own right. The Egyptians, on the other hand, were more like ourselves - a people with whom we could identify. The Greeks, too, had a certain affinity with us - they were also a nation of farmers and sailors. The Turks, however, were different - they were a people who had been conquered by us and were subject to our rule. The Russians, too, were a people who were not really ours - they were a nation of farmers and fishermen, but they were not a people who we could identify with. The Persians, too, were a people who were not really ours - they were a nation of farmers and fishermen, but they were not a people who we could identify with.
manner in which white Americans were supposed to view the world.

View of the Midway Plaisance - 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition

Despite the passage of less than 20 years, the differences between the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago and the 1876 Philadelphia Exhibition in Chicago and the 1876 Philadelphia Exhibition were striking. These differences also manifested themselves in the manner in which Middle Easterners were portrayed at the respective exhibitions. Part of the differences in presentation and content can be explained by the different social structures of the two cities and the business elites that dominated them and part of the differences can be explained by the tremendous development of American capitalism and technology during the last quarter of the 19th century. Philadelphia was a very established city in 1876 with a well defined elite. It did not have an identity problem and was not experiencing dramatic social change. The organizers of the Exhibition did not follow any particularly innovative strategies aside from presenting impressive exhibits of American technology such as the Carlucci Engine.

The Chicago Exposition provided great contrasts in decorum and spirituality, as represented in the so-called White City section of the exposition, and the Barnumesque or "honky tonk" section of the fair exemplified by the exhibits of the Midway Plaisance. Whereas the Philadelphia Centennial Commission had discouraged non-authorized exhibitors, street vendors and anything that would detract from the decorum and propriety of the fair, going so far as to burn stalls and stands set up just outside the fair grounds, the organizers of the Chicago Exposition encouraged a much more dichotomous approach to mounting a world's fair. Visitors entered the Exposition at the beginning of the Midway Plaisance moving eastward towards Lake Michigan through a maze of foreign exhibits, side shows, and past a giant Ferris wheel before arriving at the White City which was set on the lake itself. This choreographed "journey" by which the visitor moved from pleasure to more serious and higher spiritual level was part of the idea of fair organizers that the visitor's experience should be an educational one. The placement of foreign exhibits in the Plaisance clearly symbolized their lesser status within the Exposition's overall structure. As one commentator cynically noted, "Most of the denizens of Midway Plaisance care little for the formalities or niceties of speech. They 'size' you up for what amount of 'dust' you may be good for and act accordingly...They have not come thousands of miles merely to add a picturesque feature to this wonderful exhibit. Almost all of them are professional traveling showmen, who pitch their tents in whatever portion of the globe offers the greatest inducement in hard cash. All the profuse explanations that they are here by the special permission of Sultan this or
Emperor that is both." Interestingly, after describing how the Chinese try and cheat you out of money, the commentator goes on to select examples from the Middle East to drive home his point that the Midway is an exotic and somewhat disreputable area: "The visitor is free to admire and take his pick of any of the manifold entertainments offered on both sides. You may drift into a Soudanese theater and witness a dance that will deprive you of a peaceful night's rest for months to come. The Algerian village offers equally great temptations in the way of dances with and without names."

Nevertheless, the Midway Pleasure offered visitors a view of the Middle East never before seen in the United States. The most popular exhibit by far was the "Street of Cairo." Conceived by Max Herz, the chief architect of Khedive Isma'il, the Cairo scene was not meant to represent any particular street but a composite of urban architectural styles. The exhibit was largely a replica of the Rue de Caire at the 1889 Paris Exhibition only larger.24 One hundred and eighty Egyptians came to populate the "street" and were sent by the Cairene firm of Raphael and Benyakar which held the concessions for the fifty stores. The exhibit was managed by the firm of Arthur H. Smythe of Columbus, Ohio. The exhibit included a replica of the mosque of Sultan Qayt Bey, the home of a former wealthy Cairene merchant, and a "theater devoted to the sword dances, candle dances, and the other gymnastics indulged in by Cairo dancers which are weird and indecipherable." In the theater's auditorium, dancing girls either reclined on "rich divans" on stage or in dressing rooms where they, "Adjourn to smoke cigarettes or to take a leisurely pull at nargileh, of which form of smoking the Egyptian dancing girl is a devotee. The exhibit also included Soudanese, Nubians, donkeys and camels, Cairene barbers who daily offered their services and the Khedive's chief photographer, who did a lively business selling photographs of the exhibit."

Coverplate, "Cairo Street Waltz" - 1893 World's Columbian Exposition

The dancing girls in the Midway, both at the "Street of Cairo," at the adjacent "Algerian Village," and at the "Persian Palace of Eros," caused great scandal. Commenting on the Egyptian spectacle performed by, "an Arabian beauty known as 'Little Egypt,'" one commentator noted, "No ordinary Western woman looked on these performances with anything but horror, and at one time it was a matter of serious debate in the councils of the Exposition whether the customs of the
Representations of the Middle East

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the depiction of the Middle East was often stereotypical and negative, influenced by Western colonialism and perceptions of the region as exotic and primitive. The 1878 World's Fair in Philadelphia featured an exhibit that showcased the culture and history of the Middle East, aiming to dispel some of these stereotypes. However, the exhibit was criticized for its portrayal of Arabs and the region as backward and uncivilized.

In the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, the Middle East was represented once again, but this time with a more nuanced approach. The Egyptian Pavilion was particularly noteworthy, with its grand architecture and cultural displays. It was designed to showcase the richness and diversity of Egyptian culture, aiming to provide a more accurate and positive representation of the region.

The success of the 1933 exhibit led to the creation of the permanent United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1945, which continues to promote cross-cultural understanding and respect for diversity. The role of world fairs in promoting cultural exchange and understanding has been ongoing, albeit with varying degrees of success and impact.
additions to its costs. Whereas in 1876, the Rhode Island firm of
George Carlin had been the only American manufacturer of
exposition machinery, by 1893 60 such firms had joined the ranks of foreign
manufacturers. Because competition in Congress among
manufacturers was intense, the bill was finally passed in 1893.

The most important of the new foreign firms was the
Chicago-based National Engineering Company, which was
appointed to build the exposition, but the construction was
slow and the exposition opened on October 28, 1893, after
the end of the second trimester. The cost was $5 million, but
the city of Chicago contributed only $1.5 million, and the
federal government provided $3 million. The remaining
$3 million was raised through loans and bonds.

The Columbian Exposition included a diverse array of exhibits,
including a World's Fair, a World's Industrial and Cotton
Exposition, a World's Agricultural and Horticultural
Exposition, and a World's Art and Architectural Exhibition.
The exposition also featured a World's Laboratory, which
included a World's Health Laboratory, a World's Agricultural
Laboratory, and a World's Art Laboratory.

The expo was a huge success, with over 27 million visitors
every day and over 35 million visitors in total. The
exposition was closed on October 30, 1893, and the
buildings were torn down. The fairgrounds were turned
into a park, which is now known as Grant Park.
Twain’s Innocents Abroad. Here the Orient became the world of fantasy, escapism, irrationality, and the unexpected. As Lears has suggested, escapism was part of the anti-modern impulses of the urban middle classes who lamented the loss of the rurally based myth situated in the Republican ideal of the self-reliant citizen. With the increasing regimentation of middle class life as Americans moved from self-sufficient agriculture to urban white and blue collar employment with its attendant time clocks and industrial discipline, the Middle East was a realm of fantasy in which the populace could escape the tedium of daily life.33

Yet the organization and content of the Columbian Exposition also needs to be understood in the context of Chicago’s social structure which was a heterogeneous mix of European ethnic groups and African-Americans who had migrated from the South after the Civil War.44 It was a frontier city which had experienced a tremendous population increase after the Civil War, growing from 500,000 inhabitants in 1880 to more than a million in 1890.45 The greater concern with “race” and the “sliding scale of humanity,” i.e., the need to organize the world’s peoples according to their alleged civilization development, reflected a city that had not yet found its cultural and social anchor. The circus-like quality of the Midway Plaisance and the brash emphasis on grandeur and technology were all part of the city’s view of itself as a growing metropolis poised to conquer still further markets, especially to the West, but with a need to assert at the same time the legitimacy of the parvenu business elite which included the Swifts, Pullmans, Wackers, McCormicks and others. That the Orientalist paradigm offers little or no conceptual space to accommodate this type of argument represents an important theoretical shortcoming.

At the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, organized to assure the United States’ Latin American partners after the Spanish-American War that they had nothing to fear from their neighbor to the north, overt ideas of race and linear progress dominated its organization.46 In one sense, this emphasis reflected the evolution of American world’s fairs themselves and the fact that Buffalo, like Chicago and St. Louis, the venue of the next great fair, was still a frontier city. It too lacked the historical depth of Philadelphia, Boston, or New York. Its organizers sought to use the fair as a vehicle for disciplining the middle and working classes. On the one hand, great emphasis was again placed on technology. If the Chicago Exposition had foregrounded its whiteness and purity which assured its forward march towards progress, the Pan-American Exposition stressed its position as the “Rainbow City” given its architects’ focus on color and extensive electrical lighting of its buildings. The Ethnology Building, for example, boasted a red tile roof and light yellow walls.

However, the most important event to structure the Exposition was the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the United States’ acquisition of colonies. The presence of large numbers of Filipino tribesmen at the fair was of course no coincidence. Not only did the fair seek to assert the United States’ role as an arriviste imperial power but its role in imposing a Pax Americana on the world. Themes of aggression and world peace which had been evident at the Columbian Exposition, e.g., the overt hostility towards non-Westerners such as tribesmen from Dahomey as opposed to the World Parliament of Religions, were much more pronounced at the Buffalo fair. Nevertheless, despite the focus on the United States’ emerging imperial interests in the Western Hemisphere, “traditional” exhibits such as those from the Middle East were not neglected. As the Official Catalogue and
Exhibit on the other hand, stressed the continued perception of the Middle East as linked to the Holy Land. This occasion of a grandeur about Jerusalem on the day China was celebrated. The first of this renovation of the concept of the Middle East's commercial and cultural exchange, and a turning point in the nation's history.

Exhibit given impetus into the Middle East as a comprehensive and theoretical treatment of the area, not only by Orientalism, but also by a number of factors, including the Middle East's potential as a source of wealth and influence. Despite the initial skepticism of the attendees, the Middle East exhibit was such a success that the exposition was able to continue for several months, with increasing numbers of visitors and coverage in the media.

On the West Coast, the Midway, known as the Pan-American Exposition, was at its height. The Midway, which included the famous Midway Gardens, was a major attraction at the exposition. The Midway Gardens, especially the Aztec Temple, were popular among visitors, who marveled at the elaborate and colorful displays. The Midway was also the site of many cultural events, including music concerts and dance performances.

Although more records in this area are needed, it is clear that the expositions in the United States of America, especially the Midway, had a significant influence on the perception of the Middle East. The exhibitions not only showcased the beauty and diversity of the region, but also helped to promote a more positive image of the Middle East, which had been tarnished by years of conflict and political instability.

One of the most interesting aspects of these expositions was their influence on the art scene. The works of many artists, both in the United States and abroad, were inspired by the expositions, and their art reflects the themes and motifs that were popular at the time. The influence of the Midway and other expositions on the art scene can still be seen today, in the works of many modern artists who continue to draw inspiration from the Middle East.
By far the largest of the four exhibitions considered here was the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, which the City of St. Louis organized to celebrate the centenary of the Louisiana Purchase. The fair, held at Jefferson's old home, was so large and grand that it surpassed by far the Cotton States Fair, which took place in 1876. The fair was a great success, and its popularity grew each year. By the time it closed in 1904, it had attracted over 15 million visitors.

The fair was held in the heart of St. Louis, and the city was transformed into a vast fairground. The exhibits were arranged in a series of large buildings, called "buildings," that housed the various displays. The most popular exhibit was the Egyptian exhibit, which featured a large replica of the Pyramids of Giza. The fair also included a large Chinese exhibit, which featured a replica of the Great Wall of China. The fair was a great success, and it helped to establish St. Louis as a major center of commerce and industry.

The fair was a great success, and it helped to establish St. Louis as a major center of commerce and industry. The fair was also a great boost to the city's economy, and it helped to attract new businesses and investors. As a result, St. Louis continued to grow and prosper, and it remains one of the leading cities in the United States today.
Cairo Street - 1904 St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition

Perhaps the most impressive accomplishment of the organizers of the St. Louis Exposition regarding the Middle East was to construct a complete replica of the Old City of Jerusalem. This was reproduced with great pride in many stereoscope photographs of the time and seems to have been one of the star attractions of the Exposition. Along with the martial arts that were strongly emphasized at the St. Louis Exposition reflecting the new cult of masculinity, the "construction" of Jerusalem seems to have part of the fair organizers' efforts to Jerusalem-Mosque of Omar - 1904 St. Louis Louisiana Purchase make certain that religion, American Protestantism in particular, was never far from focus and always linked to the United State's role as a Christian civilizing power. Nevertheless, the painting in the Fine Arts Building by the well-known American artist, Elihu Vedder, entitled, "The Questioner of the Sphinx," seems to summarize the experience of America's contact with the Middle East during the four expositions in question, namely that it could not be comprehended by the West.

Jerusalem-Mosque of Omar - 1904 St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition

What does this survey of the four world's fair expositions tell us about Orientalism? First, it points to the fact that Oriental attitudes were part of American culture well before the United States became a global power intimately involved in the economic and political affairs of the Middle East. Second, it cautions us not to see perceptions of the Middle East as cut from the same cloth but rather at changing over time. With the development of travel to the Middle East following the Civil War, and the spread of photography, the focus on the Holy Land remained salient to be sure, but increasingly the Middle East acquired a cultural space distinct from a site as the origin of the Christian religion and Judeo-Christian heritage. The Chicago, Buffalo and St. Louis fairs in particular seem to have set the stage for the emergence of a large genre of films after the turn of the century that focused on the Middle East portrayed as a realm of fantasy. Third, the exhibits from the Middle East, whether organized by
nations or by individual entrepreneurs, were complicated in the aims of the exposition. The cooperation between "core" and "periphery" outlined by Sahlins and Scott as too often neglected. The cooperation of Orientalism as formulated by Edward Said is too often disregarded. The cooperation of Orientalism as formulated by Edward Said is too often disregarded.

Apart from the source of amusement, the American visitors to the Fair included Angeleno, who were primarily middle and working-class. The Americans enjoyed a sense of belonging to the dominant role in society. The fair was a means of showcasing the commercial and artistic potential of the Middle East.

Under the leadership of the Middle East, participation in the fair was intended to help their subjects in any meaningful way but rather represented a vehicle to achieve greater recognition in the West. In short, these exhibitors were the dominant states which controlled them.

Mired in the demands of the Fair, the success of Orientalism must be viewed as multi-dimensional and dialectical. Orientalism was not only a means of reasserting the West's cultural superiority over the East, but also of promoting the East's cultural identity. This dual nature of Orientalism allowed for a complex interplay of power and resistance, which is evident throughout the Fair.

It is not surprising that the fairs included exhibits representing the Middle East, for example the 1933 Chicago World's Fair and the 1964 New York World's Fair. Often, these exhibits focused on the target markets and those with the most extensive interest in the Middle East.

In conclusion, the fairs provided an opportunity for the Middle East to showcase its cultural achievements to the world. While this opportunity was not without challenges, the Middle Eastern exhibits managed to achieve a significant degree of recognition and influence, contributing to the ongoing debate about the role of Orientalism in shaping perceptions of the Middle East.
before them striking examples of the difficulties with which we must contend in any international competition. November 11, 1876.

8 It was not a coincidence that during the same period that world's fairs were being organized, business elites were actively involved in establishing art museums in major American cities and building the largest ones ever constructed in the United States according to European architectural styles. Some of the most prominent museums were the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Chicago Art Institute, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Cincinnati Museum of Art. Palatial residences ranged from the Vanderbilt mansion in New York City to the summer mansions in Newport, Rhode Island, and the Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina.


10 At the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, special attention was paid to bringing Filipino tribemen to the fair to justify the United States mission civilisatrice following the seizure of the country during Spanish-American War.


13 Thus at the close of the Centennial Exposition the _New York Times_ opined on November 11, 1876 that, "The Exposition has had a good effect in keeping alive the patriotism of the people...we have been made more proud of our country. It is certain that an increased respect for the capabilities, history, and institutions of the Republic will be among the fruits of the Exposition that has closed."