

For my art history graduate seminar on the imperialism of historiography, I decided to analyze *National Geographic*'s photographs of nude non-Western women, in relation to the historical presentations of the Orient during the age of imperialism. Even though I am familiar with Orientalist paintings and postcards, I was less knowledgeable of the literature related to *National Geographic*. I first encountered academic considerations of the photographs in *National Geographic* in an introductory course in cultural anthropology, and decided to email my past professor, Dr. Alan Klima. I contacted my previous instructor to discuss my research proposal, and inquire upon whether any helpful published works came to mind. Professor Klima recommended *Reading National Geographic*, which I was familiar with due to my previous course enrollment, and introduced me to his colleague, Professor Tarek Elhaik. Professor Elhaik suggested *Photography and Anthropology*, a title that I was unfamiliar with before his recommendation. I found it to be incredibly helpful reaching out to other professors at UC Davis, because my research was cross-disciplinary.

After I figured out where to start looking for literature related to *National Geographic* and photographs of non-Western women, I then sought the advice of my professor, Dr. Talinn Grigor, regarding the philosophical theories my paper need. While I was familiar with books related to orientalism due to my previous research topics, I was unsure of popular literature that considered the general misconception that photographs capture reality. Professor Grigor introduced me to Susan Sontag's *On Photography* and Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*. By speaking to experts in their field, I believe I was able to gain more insight than if I exclusively consulted search databases.

Upon obtaining the recommended books through the UC Davis University Library and Interlibrary Loan, I paged through the works cited pages to look for other literature related to

photographs of non-Western women. When I found an article that sounded promising, I would search for it on WorldCat and JSTOR, and repeat the cycle of perusing through the footnotes, and works cited pages to find more publications that may be of interest. Online, I would also look under the subjects the books were filed under to discover more related literature. While looking for the books in the library, I would also take notice of the titles surrounding the books I found online to see if they would also be helpful in my research. By looking outside of the works recommended by my professors and used by other authors, I obtained more titles that allowed me to consider other aspects and develop my own ideas. Even though I found specific titles in the bibliographies of other books, I also kept an open mind when searching for them by continuing to look through the subject categories the books were listed under, and the titles physically shelved within their proximity.

While perusing my sources, I considered their credibility by researching the authors, who were largely professors and experts in their respective fields. I noted and disregarded proposed ideas that I found were contradictory to other authors and did not provide sufficient support on their own. I also considered the viewpoint the authors were writing from, especially in relations to Donna Haraway's situated knowledges, and how their political, social, and historical standpoints shape their academic discourses. Lastly, I deliberated the relevance of the books I borrowed; some of the titles that covered Orientalist paintings became irrelevant as I found myself gravitating towards Orientalist photographs as a comparison.

Eventually, I found enough literature containing contemporary photographs of non-Western women, Orientalist paintings and postcards, and philosophical theories relating to photographic images. I had to rely on numerous publications to support my argument, because many of the books I had consulted were specific to a certain idea, and did not have a large

enough scope. I then began uniting these theories to support my own thesis that *National Geographic* is a contemporary continuation of nineteenth-century Orientalist photographs that impose a racial hierarchy.