Frontiers Essay

REVISITING EDWARD SAID'S *ORIENTALISM*

David Butz[*]

Department of Geography, Brock University, St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1

Abstract

Orientalism(1978), Edward Said's important and controversial study of the way the West has systematically (mis)represented the Orient for its own purposes, continues to be cited and actively debated sixteen years after its publication. This essay begins by summarising Said's central argument that Orientalism is a discursive formation in the Foucauldian sense, whose academic, imaginative and institutional aspects have functioned for two hundred years to naturalise the subordination of the Oriental 'other' they created. I then outline the long-term critical reception to this argument, by addressing five main critical questions: (a) to what extent does Said present Orientalism as a more unified and monolithic discourse than it actually was - or is - in practice?; (b) what are the implications of Said's attempt to demonstrate that 'the Orient' has no existence except as a creation of Orientalism, while at the same time insisting that Orientalist discourse systematically misrepresented the 'real Orient'?; (c) what are the implications of Said's decision not to address the responses to Orientalism of those peoples who were 'Orientalised'?; (d) if Orientalism is as totalising a discourse as Said seems to want to suggest, can he escape it sufficiently to formulate a truly oppositional critique?; and (e) what is the relationship between *Orientalism* and 'Orientalism in reverse'? The essay concludes with a brief discussion of Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), which he describes as a 'sequel' to *Orientalism*, and which I treat as an attempt, in part, to address some of the criticisms reviewed in earlier parts of the essay. I concentrate on three main themes of *Culture and Imperialism*: first, its attention to the close relationship between culture and imperialism; second, its detailed examination of subaltern responses to imperialism (and Orientalism); and third, its treatment of the role of critical intellectuals in describing and dismantling the structures of domination manifest in Orientalism and Imperialism.

The East is a career.

[Benjamin Disraeli, *Tancred*, 1848]

They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.
[Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852]

I saw a great deal of the Shingshalis during my two visits to their valleys, and I am afraid that, generally, they proved but a sorry lot [...] I found them unamiable to deal with, feckless, and shy of all endurance and enterprise [...] I have no love for the Shingshalis, very much the reverse, but I should be sorry to see any attempts to modernise them. They are happy and contented, surly, intractable, and quite untrustworthy. There is nothing to be gained by improving them.

[Reginald Schomberg, *Unknown Karakoram*, 1936]

When you return to your own world, you'll find yourself thinking back to these moments, while you stand among modern buildings, or drive your car. Not all that far away, someone is hunting for dinner with a poison dart, drying fish on a pointed stick, or listening to the rain fall on a grass hut. They've always been there. But now, you have too.

[Advertisement for *Faucett: The First Airline of Peru*, 1995]

The term "Orientalism" has been used more or less unproblematically for over two centuries to describe "the tradition of Occidental literary and scholarly interest in countries and peoples of the East" [Lowe, 1991, p. 3]. Edward Said's controversial book *Orientalism* [1978] was the first comprehensive attempt to map the discursive and ideological dimensions of this tradition, to expose it to careful critical evaluation, to "write back" against what has undoubtedly been one of the prime discursive formations of imperialism [but see Abdel-Malek, 1963]. Said's central argument is that Orientalism is much more than a field of scholarly investigation, although it is that. It is also "a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'", *as well as* "a corporate institution for dealing with 'the Orient'" [1978, p. 2-3]. Together these dimensions constitute — following Foucault — a discourse of knowledge and power that characterised a wide-ranging set of economic, social and political relations between Europe and its 'Oriental' colonies (and presently the US and its 'satellites'), and that functioned to naturalise the subordination of the colonial 'other' it created. My aim in the first section of the paper is to summarise these main strands of Said's argument. I will begin with a description of the central aspects of Orientalism I identified above, and then outline how they provide the foundations of Said's conception of Orientalism as a central discursive formation of imperialism. Said focuses almost exclusively on Britain and France's treatment of the Middle East and North Africa since the late eighteenth century. He concentrates mainly on a selection of literary and scholarly Orientalist texts, supplemented by frequent reference to travel literature and colonial administrative tracts.

There can be no doubt that the importance of *Orientalism* extends far beyond the narrow bounds of the historiography of Oriental studies. Scholars with interests ranging from cultural theory to development policy are still debating Said's thesis

sixteen years after its publication. The ambivalence of many commentaries, and the fact that *Orientalism* continues to be actively *debated* — and not just cited — suggests that the book is as important for its failings and omissions as it is for its achievements. My task in the second part of the paper is to summarise what appears — after sixteen years — to be the long-term critical reception of *Orientalism*. This is no easy task, given the plethora of commentaries that have been published; according to one source, more than sixty in Britain and the USA in the first two years after its publication [Mani and Frankenberg, 1985, p. 178]. I have made it somewhat simpler by ignoring those numerous and vocal reviewers who perceive colonialism as a generally good thing for the colonised, and who consequently regard Said's entire project as wrongheaded.

Although different disciplinary camps have gleaned different lessons from Said, most commentaries, whether sympathetic or not, focus on some combination of five main critical questions: (a) to what extent does Said present Orientalism as a more unified and monolithic discourse than it actually was — or is — in practice?; (b) what are the implications of Said's attempt to demonstrate that 'the Orient' has no existence except as a creation of Orientalism, while at the same time insisting that Orientalist discourse systematically misrepresented the 'real Orient'?; (c) what are the implications of Said's decision not to address the responses to Orientalism of those peoples who were 'Orientalised'?; (d) if Orientalism is as totalising a discourse as Said seems to want to suggest, can he escape it sufficiently to formulate a truly oppositional critique?; and (e) what is the relationship between *Orientalism* and 'Orientalism in reverse'?

These are difficult questions to address without acknowledging that *Orientalism* was a flawed and incomplete project. Still, most reviewers agree with Young [1990] in insisting on the book's enormous positive contribution. Despite his rigorous criticism of much of Said's argument, Young suggests two reasons why *Orientalism* "cannot be underestimated in its importance and in its effects" [1990, p. 126]. First, he says, the book almost single-handedly broke the proscription of "the literary-cultural establishment [...that...] declared the serious study of imperialism off limits" [Said, 1976, p. 38]. In so doing, *Orientalism* demonstrated conclusively that, in the context of discourses of Orientalism "Europe was always in a position of strength, not to say domination. There is no way of putting this euphemistically" [Said, 1978, p. 40]. The second, and related, contribution is more wide-ranging:

> much of the current pressure for the political, particularly in the US where there is no recent substantial tradition of political criticism, has followed from the work of Said. His injunction that criticism must be affiliated to the world of which it is a part has exercised a powerful moral pressure. It has also enabled those from minorities, whether categorised as racial, sexual, social or economic, to stake their critical work in relation to their own political positioning rather than feel obliged to assume the

transcendent values of the dominant discourse of criticism. [Young, 1990, p. 126]

Thus *Orientalism* is influential for the space it opened up, and the example it provided, for a radical critique of hegemonic cultural and political discourse.

Said has not received his due in silence. Apart from numerous published interviews and short responses to specific reviews, he published an article titled "Orientalism Reconsidered" in 1985, and the book *Culture and Imperialism* in 1993. He describes the latter as "a sequel to *Orientalism*" [Said, 1993a, p. 13]. Said's strategy has been to extend his project by moving out from the Middle East to other parts of the colonised world, and to develop an emphasis on the reception of discourses of Orientalism and imperialism among the colonised, rather than to dwell on the specifics of individual critiques. In the paper's final section I outline the direction Said has taken, in these two works, in extending and re-invigorating his continuing critical project.·

Orientalism as a Discursive Formation

Said is careful not to define so wide-ranging a phenomenon as Orientalism. Rather he "qualifies and designates it from a variety of distinct and not always compatible standpoints" [Clifford, 1980, p. 208], none of which can be examined in isolation without failing to grasp one of its central characteristics: "the sheer knitted-together strength of Orientalist discourse", which accounts for its "redoubtable durability" [Said, 1978, p. 6]. Much of *Orientalism* is an attempt to describe, and trace the interrelationships among, three pivotal designations.

First, "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient [...] either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism", although in the contemporary period 'Oriental studies' or 'area studies' are more common terms [Said, 1978, p. 2]. This initial designation — Orientalism as the scholarly traditions, apparatus and knowledge of a group of academics and government experts who study the Orient — provides Said with most of his textual 'evidence', and connects his project to conventional commentaries on Orientalism and its history. On one level *Orientalism* is one more, albeit alternative, interpretation of the Orientalist canon. But Said differs from his predecessors in insisting that formal Orientalist knowledge cannot be separated from the relations of *power* which contextualise that knowledge, and in which it is implicated. The relationship between Orientalist knowledge and Orientalist power becomes clearer in the second and third ways that Said designates Orientalism: as a style of understanding both Europe and the Orient based on an immutable distinction between the two (imaginative Orientalism); and as a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient (institutional Orientalism).

Second, he argues that the academic Orientalist canon contributed to, and was sustained within, a widespread acceptance outside the academy of a set of

"ideological suppositions, images and fantasies about a region of the world called the Orient" — an "imaginative geography" — which essentialised an artificial dichotomy between the Orient and the Occident [Said, 1985, p. 2]. Accordingly, any writing which accepts "the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind', destiny, and so on" is Orientalist [Said, 1978, p. 2-3]. Orientalism, therefore, is nothing less than the systematic creation and representation — throughout European culture — of an 'Oriental other' which is essentially different from, and inferior to, a European opposite; what Gregory [1994a, p. 169-74] calls "dispossession through othering", and relates to the strategies of "dispossession through naming" and "dispossession through spatialising", described by Carter [1987] and Mitchell [1989]. Academic Orientalism gave this 'dispossession through othering' scientific authority, so that other forms of European cultural production could unselfconsciously represent the European as "rational, virtuous, mature, normal", and the Oriental as "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different"; the West as "rational, developed, humane, superior", and the Orient as "aberrant, undeveloped, inferior"" [Said, 1978, p. 40, 300; cf. Minear, 1980, p. 507]. In setting up this dichotomy, and describing its negative and positive poles, Orientalism created — Orientalised — the Orient, and its inferior relation to the West. Said insists that "Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him [sic] the relatively upper hand" [Said, 1978, p. 7]:

> we need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient, and the Orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate, but because it is not even trying to be accurate. What it is trying to do [...] is at one and the same time to characterise the Orient as alien and to incorporate it schematically on a theatrical stage whose audience, manager, and actors are *for* Europe, and only for Europe. [Said, 1978, p. 71; emphasis in original]

Orientalism as this particular dichotomising style of thought was important to Europe for two reasons. First, as the passage quoted above suggests, the creation of an inferior Oriental 'other' helped Europe shape its own post-Enlightenment self-conception. That is, "Europe defined itself through its representation of the Orient", as the Orient's polar opposite [Driver, 1992, p. 31]. Second, the immutable distinction forged between a glorious Europe and a degraded Orient, supported as it was by a weighty tradition of scholarship, facilitated from the late eighteenth century onward the development of "a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient — dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it" [Said, 1978, p. 3].

Said's third designation, therefore, is "Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient", manifest concretely in imperialism and colonialism [Said, 1978, p. 3]. Orientalism as a set of rules for representing the East to Europe, and as a body of expert knowledge of the Orient, prepared the way for Orientalism as an institution of imperial domination, and since at least the late eighteenth century the reality of that imperial domination permeated every aspect of what Said has called academic and imaginative Orientalism. Institutional Orientalism put the knowledge produced through the other designations to practice, and created the political conditions within which Orientalist knowledge could develop relatively uncontested: "the Orient was Orientalised not only because it was discovered to be 'Oriental' in all those ways considered common-place [...] but also because it *could be* — that is, submitted to being — *made* Oriental" by the relations of imperialism [Said, 1978, p. 6; emphasis in original].

The last chapter of *Orientalism* is devoted to demonstrating that this is as true of the contemporary American empire and its scholarly branch ('area studies') as it was of the former European empires and theirs. Said suggests that four characteristics of European institutional Orientalism were transplanted to America as Europe lost its colonies and the US gained its satellites: (a) the assertion of an absolute and systematic difference between a superior West and an inferior Orient; (b) a preference for abstractions about the Orient over direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities; (c) the assumption that the Orient is eternal, uniform and incapable of defining itself, and therefore must be (and can be) defined objectively and in highly generalised form by Western experts; and (d) the conviction that ultimately the Orient is something to be feared or to be controlled [Said, 1978, p. 300-1; cf. Schaar, 1979, p. 73].

On their own, none of Said's three central designations adequately explains the scope, strength, and durability of Orientalist authority. However, together they constitute a *discursive formation*, a conceptualisation which Said thinks does justice to Orientalism's formidable and pervasive influence. Discursive formations can be described briefly as "frameworks that embrace particular combinations of narratives, concepts, ideologies and signifying practices, each relevant to a particular realm of social action" [Barnes and Duncan, 1992, p. 8]. Thus, "knowledge is constructed according to a discursive field which creates a representation of the object of knowledge, its constitution and its limits; any writer has to conform to this in order to communicate, to be understood [...] to be accepted" [Driver, 1992, p. 126]. Discursive fields are hegemonic; they are constitutive of the conduct of day-to-day life, and central to the naturalisation of particular world views [Foucault, 1967], even as they are inevitably situated in "particular constellations of power and knowledge", which may be contested and negotiated [Gregory, 1994, p. 136].

Said argues that the three aspects with which he designates Orientalism — academic, imaginative and institutional — coalesced into a discursive formation sufficiently powerful that "the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action" [Said, 1978, p. 3], but rather a carefully regulated construction of Europe's

will to power. In this context, it is worth quoting at length from the introduction to *Orientalism*:

> Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious "Western" plot to hold down the "Oriental" world. It is rather a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it *is*, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is in no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political [...] power intellectual [...] power cultural [...] power moral [...] Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is — and does not simply represent — a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world. [Said, 1978, p. 12; emphasis in original]

It is within this context that we can understand each of the quotes reproduced at the beginning of the paper as manifesting and contributing to the continuing lineage of orientalist discourse, despite those quotes' obvious dissimilarities.

Critical Questions

My ambition in the previous section was to provide a preliminary sense of what Edward Said means by Orientalism; sufficient, I hope, to adequately contextualise the critical issues I raise below. I regret that in the space allowed I was unable to do full justice either to Said's nuanced elaborations of his central argument, or to the unrelenting quantity and diversity of evidence he offers in support of it. My aim in this second section is to briefly address five central critical questions that reviewers of *Orientalism* have raised and pondered. In so doing, I also attempt to provide a fuller sense of what Said thinks Orientalism is, and how it operates.

Orientalism as a Monolithic Discourse

Many reviewers, even those most sympathetic to Said's project, have criticised him for overemphasising "the systematic and invariant nature of the Orientalist discourse" [Clifford, 1980, p. 207]. Most have been content to observe that in concentrating on British, French, and American treatments of the Middle East mainly since the early colonial era, he omits German Orientalism, Britain's interaction with India, European involvement in the Holy Land during the Crusades, and other sites of interaction which may suggest somewhat different discursive characteristics. While this is an important qualification to make, few see it as a disabling criticism. Indeed, Said acknowledges the restrictive choices he makes early in his introduction, and makes no secret of the limitations they impose. Numerous scholars have attempted to redress these limitations by applying Said's thesis in other colonial settings, especially British India, with interesting and fruitful results. For the most part their findings confirm the broad outlines of his argument. However, they also demonstrate that the workings of the academic, imaginative and institutional aspects of Orientalism, and the relationships among them, are more geographically and historically specific than Said implies [see Barker *et al.*, 1985; Blunt, 1994; Blunt and Rose, 1994; Inden, 1986; Jewitt, 1995; Lowe, 1991; Mills, 1991, 1994; Minear, 1980; Mitchell, 1988; Nadar, 1989; Pinney, 1989; cf. Gregory, 1994, p. 168-203].

Similarly, despite the great quantity of textual material he incorporates in his study, Said has been accused of selecting and interpreting his examples too carefully in support of what he conceives as the "sheer knitted-together strength of Orientalist discourse" [Said, 1978, p. 6]. This line of criticism ranges from Sivan's [1985, p. 134] ridiculous assertion that Said has no business describing the general dimensions of Orientalism until he has read all sixty thousand books written by Europeans about the Orient since 1800, to Clifford's more serious claim that Said's genealogy suffers by appearing "too openly tendentious" [Clifford, 1980, p. 215]. Following Foucault, Said uses the strategy of oppositional genealogy to radically de-legitimate the present. While it is appropriate for a genealogical history to be more selective than a conventional intellectual history, Clifford fears that too selective a gaze has weakened the force of Said's argument. In the same vein, Jewitt suggests that Orientalism, as Said conceives it, "is both too inclusive and not inclusive enough" [Jewitt, 1995, p. 68]. It is too inclusive "because it lumps together a series of Anglo-French commentaries on the Orient that share certain common assumptions, but which in other respects develop different voices, grammars, attitudes, and depictions of their so-called Others", and not inclusive enough because it sees Orientalism primarily as the discursive context for a territorial imperialism, and not also as a means by which "formally postcolonial governments and elites [...] define and discipline their 'own' (internal) others" [Jewitt, 1995, p. 68; but see Said, 1979].

These observations point to what I think is the most important criticism relating to the issue of whether Said presents too monolithic a conception of Orientalism:

that it leaves too little space for those scholars, writers, travellers, administrators, missionaries, citizens of Europe, whose participation in Orientalist discourse may have been ambivalent, or contradictory, or oppositional; who, in fact, may represent significant alternative currents within hegemonic Orientalism. Numerous recent studies — most of which acknowledge their debt to *Orientalism* — exemplify the extent to which an Orientalist discourse is more heterogeneous and polyvocal than Said allowed. Feminist scholars, for example, have foregrounded the contradictory subjectivities of European women travelling or residing in Europe's Oriental colonies, who found themselves at once repulsed by and complicit in various aspects of a highly masculinist Orientalist discourse and practice [see Mills, 1991, 1994; Blunt 1994; Blunt and Rose, 1994; Pratt, 1992]. Others have traced contradictory attitudes toward specific colonial policies, or particular groups of "Orientals" [cf. Inden, 1986]. Jewitt, in her study of British India's forest policies contrasts the "normalising, dominatory and paternalistic instincts of Orientalism" articulated in forest and tribal policy documents with "the celebratory or empathic aspects of Orientalism" evident in the work of several British anthropologists working among the tribal peoples in question [1995, p. 70]. My own research into colonial travel writing on what is now northern Pakistan reveals a similar distinction between normalising and celebratory strands of Orientalism [Butz, forthcoming].

This evident polyvocality within Orientalism prompted Lowe [1991] to reconceptualise Orientalism as *implicitly* heterogeneous and contradictory, and to assert:

> on the one hand, that orientalism consists of an uneven matrix of orientalist situations across different cultural and historical sites, and on the other, that each of these orientalisms is internally complex and unstable [...] Rather than suggesting that there is an evolution or development of a uniform notion of the Orient as Other from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, I argue precisely the opposite: although it may be possible to identify a variety of different models in which otherness is a structuring trope, these differences demonstrate that to discuss a discourse of otherness is to attempt to isolate and arrest an operation that is actually diverse, uneven and complicated. Even as I bracket the 'discourse of otherness' as a heuristic notion, my ultimate purpose is to present a series of observations that provides the basis for resisting and challenging the notion of a closed discourse that manages and colonises otherness. [Lowe, 1991, p. 5, 10]

In attacking Said's central notion of Europe's unitary 'Oriental other', Lowe's critique is deeper-rooted than those of others who have insisted on the heterogeneity of Orientalist discourse. She claims that Said's monolithic and historically-consistent "Oriental other" runs counter to Foucault's concept of a discursive formation, which is an "*irregular* series of regularities that produces objects of knowledge" [Lowe, 1991, p. 6; emphasis in original]. A critique of Orientalism as a discursive

conceptualisation, can only be redeemed, in her mind, by rejecting the essentialising binary opposition of Occident and Orient — 'other' and 'self' — as its main organising principle. For Pinney [1989], Foucault's notion of *normalisation* — the product of 'disciplinary power' — is the key to a revived critique of Orientalism. He demonstrates that some Orientalisms constitute the Oriental object not as a polar 'other', but rather as occupying a position of abnormality on a normal/abnormal continuum on which the educated white European male is most normal. Thus, Pinney advises "a recasting of Said's notion of the post 1800 Orient as an Other since normalisation entails the suppression of the Other through its incorporation within a normalising taxonomy in which the classifier is placed at the head, not as the Self, but as the *normal*" [Pinney, 1989, p. 148; emphasis in original].

The critical reformulations outlined above have extended and refined what many take to be Said's overly invariant and systematic conceptualisation of Orientalism. While agreeing that Orientalism is fruitfully conceived as a discursive formation, they demonstrate the multiplicity of Orientalisms that coalesce and compete within that formation. In so doing they make it more difficult to slot Marx, Flaubert and Lord Cromer into the same totalising framework, as Said attempts to do. None of this, however, is to deny the ultimate effect of Orientalism, whatever its shape, as a discourse that continuously asserts and manifests the right of the European to speak *for* the colonised.

'The Orient': Real or Imaginary?

Throughout *Orientalism* Said follows Foucault and other radical critics of representation in denying the existence of any "real Orient", indeed in conceiving "all reality as representations of representations" [Mani and Frankenberg, 1985, p. 186]. Thus, nowhere in *Orientalism* is Orientalist inauthenticity answered by Said's own version of Oriental authenticity. On the other hand, he is frequently led to argue "that a text or tradition distorts, dominates, or ignores some real or authentic feature of the Orient" [Clifford, 1980, p. 208], and in so doing, he seems to imply that there is "something called the Orient which leads its own life, quite separate from the imaginings of those who speak for it" [Pinney, 1989, p. 145].

At one level this contradiction can be treated as a necessary inconsistency, rather than as a serious flaw in Said's argument. Mani and Frankenberg suggest that Said "had little option but to adopt this contradictory stance: the book after all problematises a dominant discourse without the benefit of alternative descriptions of the same terrain" [1985, p. 186]. In their view the very existence of Orientalism is predicated on the existence of a real Orient, in the sense of a real geographical place populated with real people. Said has to acknowledge that living and complex reality. However, his task is not to articulate the real place and people, but rather to elaborate Orientalism, which created its own representation of the Orient. And which, through colonial rule, produced in many instances the reality it imagined. Mani and Frankenberg's implication is that Said is justified in denying any

correspondence between Orientalist representations and a real Orient, while at the same time acknowledging the existence of real people and places as the objects of Orientalist representation; the point is simply that "one does not look to Orientalism to learn about the Orient any more than one looks to discourses of racism to learn about peoples of colour" [Mani and Frankenberg, 1985, p. 186].

Other reviewers view Said's equivocal stance toward the existence of a 'real Orient' as a much more central problem. Clifford points out that Said's ambivalence "which sometimes becomes a confusion" is centrally located in his three designations of Orientalism [Clifford, 1980, p. 208]. Academic and institutional aspects of Orientalism both require some sort of interaction (scholarly or administrative) with something called the Orient. In imaginative Orientalism, which is arguably Said's central designation, "the Orient exists merely as the construct of a questionable mental operation" [Clifford, 1980, p. 208]. From the beginning, then, Said wants to have it both ways:

> on the one hand he suggests that Orientalism merely consists of a representation that has nothing to do with the 'real' Orient [...] looking instead for Orientalism's 'internal consistency' as a discursive object or field, while on the other hand he argues that its knowledge was put in the service of colonial conquest, occupation, and administration. This means that at a certain moment Orientalism as representation did have to encounter the 'actual' conditions of what was there, and that it showed itself effective at a material level as a form of power and control. [Young, 1990, p. 129]

For Young, *Orientalism* engages in two projects, the first concerned with Europe's invention and imaginative representation of the Orient, the second with the moment when that representation, and the scholarly apparatus surrounding it, became an instrument of colonial power with the potential to shape Oriental history [Young, 1990]. The critical issue becomes how to articulate the relationship between Orientalism as *separate* from 'Oriental reality', and Orientalism as *implicated* in 'Oriental reality'. Said does this by finally distinguishing, two-thirds of the way into the book, between a "latent" and unchanging Orientalism of classical scholarship imaginatively constructing its object, and a "present, modern, manifest Orient[alism] articulated by travellers, pilgrims, statesmen" [Said, 1978, p. 223]. Said concludes that "what the scholarly Orientalist defined as the 'essential' Orient was sometimes contradicted, but in many cases was confirmed, when the Orient became an actual administrative obligation" [Said, 1978, p. 223]. Young denies that this manoeuvre succeeds in solving the original theoretical problem of how a representation that has nothing to do with its object could be used effectively to control and dominate that object. Similarly, if there is no true Orient to be represented, how can Orientalism be accused of producing a misrepresentation? According to Young, Said attempts to get around this issue by claiming not that

Orientalism misrepresents the Orient, but rather that it misrepresents 'the human'. Said condemns Orientalism for attempting to eliminate humanistic values, and complains that "Orientalist reality is both antihuman and persistent" [Said, 1978, p. 110, 44]. The problem with this is that "the idea of human which Said opposes to the Western representation of the Orient is itself derived from the Western humanist tradition [...] That anti-humanist Orientalism was the product of a humanist culture suggests a complexity that Said seems unwilling to address" [Young, 1990, p. 131].

The criticisms of Young and Clifford are difficult to ignore. In the end it seems that any effort to develop a comprehensive theory of Orientalism needs to consider more fully than Said does (a) the existence of a 'real' object of representation, and (b) the relationship between Orientalist representations and this Oriental object of representation. Said's steadfast refusal to develop such a theory in *Orientalism* indicates his discomfort with the way he has treated these points.

The Response of the 'Orientalised'

As we have seen, *Orientalism* was primarily concerned with tracing how the West constructed and represented the Orient through Orientalism, and *not* with any 'real' or 'true' Orient. As a result, Said deliberately avoided exploring Orientalism's reception among the populations it claimed to represent (although *Orientalism*, written as it was by a Palestinian American, is itself a response by one of the represented). Since the publication of Said's book, numerous scholars have endeavoured to provide insight into this 'other' side of Orientalism, partly in response to *Orientalism*. Particularly noteworthy are the considerable Subaltern Studies, postcolonial studies, and quotidian resistance literatures. Most reviewers have been content to accept Said's self-imposed limitation, and feel that it has been amply addressed in these other literatures. In this section I will concentrate on the criticisms of the few who maintain that avoiding any consideration of Orientalism's reception among its objects undermines Said's attempt to understand and describe Orientalism. Three strands of criticism stand out as particularly prescient.

First, by not including any sense of the Orient's response to Orientalism, Said offers nothing substantive to contradict Orientalism's assertion that the Orient was a passive, silent, unresisting site, open for representation by the West. In this sense, *Orientalism* resembles the Orientalist texts it critiques, by using an imaginary Orient as a vehicle for talking, once again, about Europe. This casts doubts on Said's ability to escape the discourse he is critiquing.

Second, Said's avoidance of 'indigenous' or internal extensions and adaptations of Orientalist discourse and practice permits him a more monolithic and totalising conceptualisation of Orientalism than may be justified, in the same way as does his neglect of German Orientalism, or British Orientalist treatments of India, or alternative currents within hegemonic Orientalist discourse. Jewitt points out that one of the "virtues of Said's reworking of Foucault's theory of power, is that it has

suggested how discourses that are Orientalist in style can continue long after the collapse of formal empires" [Jewitt, 1995, p. 77]. While Said demonstrates that amply in his treatment of present day American 'area studies' [see Said, 1981], and others have hinted at it with reference to international development, Jewitt regrets that he does not consider the extent to which postcolonial elites — and indigenous colonial elites — perpetuated and refined Orientalist discourses to represent their own internal 'others' [see also Mani and Frankenberg, 1985, p. 177]. Not only does Said miss an opportunity to strengthen his conceptualisation, he also side-steps an opportunity to recognise that Orientalism is less monolithic than he supposes. Internal Orientalist discourses are almost certainly more ambivalent and contradictory than the dominant one emphasised by Said, and necessarily rely less on an imaginative geography which dichotomises East and West, Occidental 'same' and Oriental 'other'.

The third critical strand is related, but more complex. Said relies heavily on Foucault's notion of discourse, and Gramsci's treatment of hegemony: "it is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and strength that I have been speaking about so far" [Said, 1978, p. 7]. As Lowe points out, Foucault's discourse and Gramsci's hegemony both incorporate the expectation, even necessity, of resistance:

> Foucauldian method is likewise concerned with the productive function of discursive controls and exclusions; paradoxically, discursive means of appropriation and policing are accompanied by *articulations of responses* to these prohibitions, which are themselves enunciations of categories being policed. In this sense [for example] we might understand certain forms of African nationalism as responses generated, in part, from positions policed and excluded by racism or colonialism. [Lowe, 1991, p. 12; emphasis added]

> When a hegemony representing the interests of a dominant group exists, it is always in the context of resistance from, and compromises with, 'subaltern' groups. Orientalism, then, as a formation that figures the domination of one group by another, never achieves static domination; orientalism, as an expression of colonialism, exists always amid resistance from subaltern or emergent spaces on the discursive terrain. [Lowe, 1991, p. 17-18]

Subaltern groups, those responsible for indigenous resistance to the hegemony of Orientalist discourse, are by definition not monolithic or unified. That is, they "do not constitute a fixed, unified force of a single character" [Lowe, 1991, p. 18]. Following from Foucault and Gramsci, hegemonic discourses — such as Orientalism — are always deflecting, but also incorporating, absorbing and responding to, this divergent array of subaltern resistance. To the extent that subaltern response and

resistance to a hegemonic discourse is never completely unified and monolithic, neither are the discursive articulations that respond to these responses and resistances. Discourse and resistance are implicit in one another, and both are necessarily unstable and polyvocal. This line of reasoning has three implications for Said's *Orientalism*. First, Said misses a chance to present a strong theoretical condemnation of Orientalism's construction of a unitary 'other' when he decides not to emphasise polyvocal subaltern resistance to hegemonic discourse. Second, his conceptualisation of Orientalist discourse is incomplete, because he does not demonstrate how resistance to discourse is implicit in the reproduction of that discourse. Third, he fails to recognise that a discursive understanding of Orientalism precludes, on theoretical grounds, his conceptualisation of a strong polar dichotomy between European subject and Oriental object, because to "conform to binary difference is inevitably to corroborate the logic of domination, to underdevelop the spaces in discourse that destabilise the hegemony of dominant formations" [Lowe, 1991, p. 24].

Opposing a Totalising Discourse

One of *Orientalism*'s central arguments is that despite its scope and complexity Orientalism is a unified, coherent, and monolithic discourse that has articulated an essentialising representation of the Orient for over two hundred years. Said condemns Orientalism as a misrepresentation, which moreover, has had the effect of creating a dehumanising distinction between a Western subject, and an Oriental object of representation. He criticises Orientalism for creating an eternal unchanging platonic vision of the Orient: in it "human history [...] is subordinated to an essentialist, idealist conception of Occident and Orient" [Said, 1978, p. 246; cf. Young, 1990, p. 128]. Claiming that all essentialising visions are dehumanising, Said refuses to offer an alternative to Orientalism; to provide an alternative "would be to accept the existence of the very thing in dispute" [Young, 1990, p. 127]. However, Said falls victim to his own criticism, by arguing that "as a discursive construction, Orientalism is characterised by an 'essence' that has remained 'unchanged'" [Young, 1990, p. 128]. Young sees this contradiction in Said's thinking as symptomatic of a larger problem:

> According to the logic of Said's own argument, any account of 'Orientalism' as an object, discursive or otherwise, will both repeat the essentialism that he condemns and, more problematically, will itself create a representation that cannot be identical to the object it identifies. In other words, Said's account will be no truer to Orientalism than Orientalism is to the actual Orient, assuming there could ever be such a thing. [Young, 1990, p. 128.]

The problem can be expressed in two ways: first, how does a scholar such as Said represent Orientalism without essentialising it as an object; and second, considering the central complicity of intellectuals in Orientalist discourse, how does Said himself maintain a critical distance from his object? To the extent that Said addresses these problems he relies rather lamely — and problematically — on humanistic notions of "an ethic of fidelity to experience, of methodological self-consciousness, together with the common enterprise of promoting the human community" to escape the essentialist, dichotomous, dehumanising structure so characteristic of Orientalism [Young, 1990, p. 132; cf. Said, 1978, p. 326-8].

This retreat into "existential standards of 'human encounter' and vague recommendations of 'personal, authentic, sympathetic, humanistic knowledge'" [Clifford, 1980, p. 210] as a way to escape the terms of his own critique is less than convincing, because of the complicity of humanistic thinking in Orientalism as a project. First, the very Orientalist representations he condemns were legitimised — indeed made possible — by a tradition of liberal humanism that celebrated the potential for careful and empathetic researchers to know their objects. Second, a great deal of Orientalist knowledge, especially in the last century, was manufactured by anthropologists and other field researchers whose recourse to humanism was similar to Said's. Third, Said uses categories such as 'experience' and 'the human' unproblematically, despite the sustained critical interrogation these categories have received in recent decades, not least by Foucault.

Said's conceptualisation of discourse clearly derives from Foucault. However, in emphasising 'the human' as a legitimate category, and in asserting the potential for individual experience and self-consciousness to afford a critical theoretical base, Said rejects Foucault's de-emphasis of individual agency [Said, 1978, p. 23]. This gets him into a structure/agency dilemma. On the one hand, his description of Orientalism as a hegemonic discursive formation, and his insistence that virtually all European scholars, writers and statesmen were subsumed in it, clearly suggests a strong notion of system and historical determination. After all, he portrays individuals whom he admires greatly, like Marx, Massignon and Conrad, as ultimately unable to escape it. On the other hand, his own ability to criticise and change Orientalism relies on a notion of autonomous individual agency (as does his insistence that Orientalism can be analysed by looking at singularly important writings and authors). Said's position is that the individual can oppose the totalising culture with a consciousness derived from experience. But then "how has that consciousness or experience been produced outside that culture if it is indeed totalising?" [Young, 1990, p. 137]. That is a central question that Said does not confront in *Orientalism*, and, Driver suggests, is unable to confront because of his ambivalent stance toward humanism:

> On the one hand, the argument of *Orientalism* amounts to a passionate restatement of the values of liberal humanism; by exposing the consequences of Orientalism, the critic is able to build new and less

oppressive visions of the oriental other. On the other hand, however, *Orientalism* undermines the very foundations on which (Western) humanism is built; namely the power of the enlightened self to speak the truth of the Other in the name of science. [Driver, 1992, p. 32]

Orientalism and '*Orientalism in Reverse*'

Several Middle Eastern scholars observe that by switching a few words, like Occident for Orient, and West for East, Said's description of Orientalism becomes a fairly close description of a dominant discourse of the Arab world, which they call 'Orientalism in reverse' [see Jalal al-'Azm, 1981; Sivan, 1985]. Jalal al-'Azm and Sivan provide evidence that Arab nationalists and Islamic revivalists dichotomise Europe and the Middle East in a way that glorifies the latter at the expense of the former; that speak of Islam's civilising mission; that privilege "language, texts, philology and allied subjects" as means to "prove the ontological superiority of the Arab mind" [Jalal al-'Azm, 1981, p. 20], and so on, in typical (reverse) Orientalist fashion. I want to pursue briefly two ways that this 'Orientalism in reverse' has affected the critical reception of *Orientalism*.

First, numerous critics have found in 'reverse Orientalism' some evidence for their suspicion that Orientalism is merely Europe's version of a universal tendency for cultures to create discrete others, to identify them as essentially different, and to represent them as lesser in ways that have little to do with their reality. If that is the case, these critics ask, then why all the fuss about Orientalism? This line of criticism makes the mistake of separating knowledge from power in Said's conceptualisation of Orientalist discourse. Said willingly entertains the possibility that cultures may not be able to represent other cultures except in dichotomous, essentialising terms. What makes Orientalism unique, and terrible, is its success in forging an alliance of knowledge with power in ways that further Western culture's "own political and economic interests at the expense of others" [Mani and Frankenberg, 1985, p. 188]. I agree with Mani and Frankenberg when they conclude that "until this world-historical context changes it does not make sense to speak of a 'reverse Orientalism'" [1985, p. 187].

Second, those who first described 'Orientalism in reverse' criticise *Orientalism* for fuelling the anti-modern movements that rely on such a discursive strategy. Sivan [1985] articulates this line of criticism most forcefully. He begins by suggesting that "a book like *Orientalism*, endowed with the prestige of the author's Western academic credentials, lends itself easily to an all-embracing smear of the West and glorification of the East (or Islam)" [Sivan, 1985, p. 141]. Accordingly, by articulating the Orientalist dichotomy between Orient and Occident, and by 'demonising' the West for its representation and treatment of the Middle East, Said is said to fuel Islamic fundamentalism, and undermine the efforts of "Arab secularist thinkers" to foster "receptivity to modernity" among Arabs [Sivan, 1985, p. 141]. The result is that *Orientalism* encourages Arabs to conform to Orientalist

stereotypes, even as it fosters 'reverse Orientalism'. Sivan and the Arab reviewers he speaks for are — not surprisingly — particularly incensed by Said's suggestion that "the accommodation between the [Arab] intellectual class and the new imperialism might very well be accounted one of the special triumphs of Orientalism" [Said, 1978, p. 322]. They see this as a direct attempt to undermine Arab scholars' efforts to critically assess Arab and Islamic history from within, and thus force Arabs to remain passive to Western representations of the Orient. Sivan suggests that "Arab reviewers are all the more saddened by the fact that it *seemed* as though Said was one of them, a secularist and a modernist [...] unlike Said, Arab liberal and leftist intellectuals face up to realities, do not indulge in wishful thinking, and do not strike out the influence of the Islamic past" [Sivan, 1985, p. 152; emphasis in original]. Said responds to these criticisms as follows:

> there has been a comic effort by some Arab nationalists to see the Orientalist controversy as an imperial plot to enhance American control over the Arab world. According to this implausible scenario, the critics of Orientalism are not anti-imperialists at all, but covert agents of imperialism. The logical conclusion from this is that the best way to attack imperialism is not to say anything critical about it. At this point I concede that we have left reality for a world of illogic and derangement. [Said, 1985, p. 9]

I am inclined to agree with the content, if not necessarily the tone, of Said's rebuttal.

Beyond Orientalism

It should be clear from the previous sections that Said's *Orientalism* is not the last word in the critique of Orientalism. Nor has Said ever treated it as such. He followed *Orientalism* almost immediately with *The Question of Palestine* [1979], an attempt "to describe what has been hidden beneath the surface of Western views of the Orient — in this case, the Palestinian national struggle for self-determination" [Said, 1979, p. x], and *Covering Islam* [1981], which provides a detailed examination of Orientalism at work in Western media coverage of Islam since the early seventies. In 1985 he published "Orientalism Reconsidered", an article which clarifies and briefly extends certain aspects of his project. Much of the content of "Orientalism Reconsidered" anticipates Said's project in *Culture and Imperialism* [1993], which is to "expand the arguments of the earlier book [*Orientalism*] to describe a more general pattern of relationships between the modern metropolitan West and its overseas territories" [Said, 1993b, p. xi]. In this final section of the paper I attempt to sketch the dimensions of Said's latest instalments in his ongoing critical project. I should note that as Said does not respond directly to his critics, neither will I organise my summary comments of his latest works into categories defined by the critical questions raised above. Nevertheless, I hope this section can

be read in part as a summary of Said's response to some of the issues discussed earlier in the paper.

In "Orientalism Reconsidered" and *Culture and Imperialism* Said continues to focus on British, French and American imperialism since the late eighteenth century. However, he does three things that he does not do in *Orientalism*. First, he shifts his focus away from the Middle East to other parts of the world "where there was a major Western investment, whether through empire or direct colonialism or some combination of both, as in the case of India" [Said, 1993a, p. 14]. In expanding his horizons to include India, Africa, the Caribbean and Australia, he moves from Orientalism *per se*, to engage a discussion of the relationship between culture and imperialism more generally. Second, he incorporates a detailed examination of subaltern responses to Orientalism and imperialism; what he describes as "the great culture of resistance that emerged in response to imperialism and go into what in the 20th century is called 'nationalism'" [Said, 1993a, p. 14]. Third, he discusses in more detail than in *Orientalism* the role of critical intellectuals in describing and dismantling the structures of domination manifest in Orientalism and imperialism. I will discuss each of these aspects of Said's latest works in turn.

Orientalism and Imperialism

Said's conceptualisation of Orientalism starts with Orientalism's conventional definition as an area of scholarly interest and knowledge, and expands from there to incorporate an imaginative and an institutional dimension. In *Culture and Imperialism* he shifts his focus from Orientalism and the Middle East *per se*, to the relationship between culture and European imperialism more generally. In so doing he downplays the academic dimension of Orientalism, and focuses more specifically on the interrelations of the imaginative and institutional dimensions.

The title of the book's first chapter "Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories" refers both to the inevitable hybridity of the historical and cultural experiences of the metropolis and its imperial possessions (what Pratt [1992] calls 'transculturation'), and to the complicity of imaginative culture and imperial administration in one another: imperial centre and periphery are overlapping, as are culture and imperial administration. One of the objectives of *Culture and Imperialism* is to demonstrate that these two sets of entanglements are also implicated in each other, as follows. Imperialism, almost by definition, is the union of at least two separate (but still overlapping) histories into a single several-sided history, in which the centre has a specific dominant position and the periphery has a specific subordinate role. Thus, imperialism ensures cultural and historical hybridity, but requires that it be articulated in ways that naturalise the imperial relationship. It is helpful to imperialism if a cultural discourse is maintained that (a) asserts the very different historical and cultural trajectories of the dominant and subordinate parties until the time of imperialism, (b) assumes that an essential cultural and historical difference still exists between the dominant and subordinate

parties, (c) implies the one-way flow of cultural benefit from imperial centre to imperial periphery, and therefore (d) naturalises, in cultural terms, the imperial condition, and the power relations implicit in it. Said provides detailed analyses of a variety of texts — mainly novels — that relate to, or simply assume, an overseas empire, to substantiate the prevalence of a cultural formation that "presumed the permanent primacy of the imperial power" [Said, 1993b:199]. In so doing he demonstrates that these texts reveal, to the critical eye, the formidable complicity of literature and other cultural productions in the maintenance of empire. This complicity was necessary to maintain even the idea that England, for example, could "hold India for three hundred years at a distance of eight or nine thousand miles from its own shores, with 100,000 people" [Said, 1993a, p. 14]. Or, to phrase it differently, it was needed to establish the notion "that we are there because India requires us, that these are territories and peoples who beseech domination from us and that, as Kipling demonstrates in some of his work, without the English India would fall into ruin" [Said, 1993a, p. 14].

But the entanglement of culture and empire is more complex. In order to maintain its own notions of purity, essential difference, and superiority, the imperial centre's cultural establishment has to sustain this discourse while also *nurturing the illusion* that its cultural productions are totally uninvolved in the politics of empire. Said maintains that until very recently cultural critics, and the literary establishment in general, managed this contradiction by treating literature as if it had nothing to do with politics:

> Most professional humanists [...] are unable to make the connection between the prolonged and sordid cruelty of practices such as slavery, colonialist and racial oppression, and imperial subjugation on the one hand, and the poetry, fiction, philosophy of the society that engages in these practices on the other. One of the difficult truths I discovered in working on this book is how very few of the British or French artists whom I admire took issue with the notion of 'subject' or 'inferior' races so prevalent among officials who practiced those ideas as a matter of course in ruling India or Algeria. They were widely accepted notions, and they helped fuel the imperial acquisition of territories in Africa throughout the nineteenth century. In thinking of Carlyle or Ruskin, or even Dickens and Thakeray, critics have often, I believe, relegated these writers' ideas about colonial expansion, inferior races, or 'niggers' to a very different department from that of culture, culture being the elevated area of activity in which they 'truly' belong and in which they did their 'really' important work. [Said, 1993b, p. xiv]

According to Said, with the exception of a few rebels, this conceit by the metropolitan cultural establishment — that the culture they produced had nothing to do with the politics of empire — only began to change "when the natives themselves

in the colonies began to revolt and made it very difficult for these ideas to remain unchallenged" [Said, 1993a, p. 15]. That observation takes me to the second aspect of Said's recent work that I want to consider: his treatment of subaltern responses to the culture of imperialism.

Subaltern Responses

In *Culture and Imperialism* Said develops a long and complex discussion of subaltern cultural resistance to imperialism. Here, I will concentrate on a brief discussion of three of its main aspects: first, the cultural overlap between subaltern resistance and European opposition to imperialism; second, what he calls "the three great topics in decolonialising cultural resistance" [Said, 1993b, p. 215]; and third, his comments on nationalism, nativism and liberation.

In keeping with his central theme of cultural and historical hybridity, Said states that his purpose in discussing subaltern responses "is to sketch the interacting experience that links imperialisers to the imperialised" [Said, 1993b, p. 194]. He concentrates most on the period since World War Two: "the emergence of almost a hundred new decolonised post-colonial states after 1945 is not a neutral fact, but one to which, in discussions of it, scholars, historians, activists have been either for or against", whatever their position within imperialism [Said, 1993b, p. 194]. Thus, while Said's primary interest is with subaltern peoples, his discussion is structured around the argument that the battle between empire and subaltern resistance to empire was fought on overlapping cultural terrain, which included increasing European opposition to empire:

> even in the contentiousness of struggle, imperialism and its opponents fought over the same terrain, contested the same history. Certainly they overlapped where French-educated Algerians or Vietnamese, British-educated East or West Indians, Arabs, and Africans confronted their imperial masters. *Opposition* to empire in London and Paris was affected by *resistance* offered in Delhi and Algiers. [Similarly] without metropolitan doubts and opposition, the character, idiom, and the very structure of native resistance to imperialism would have been different [Said, 1993b, p. 199; emphasis added].

This is not to deny that most subaltern populations had *always* resisted imperialism, or to make the claim — too often made — that "exclusively Western ideas of freedom led the fight against colonial rule" [Said, 1993b, p. 199]. Quite the opposite. In a section titled "the Voyage In and the Emergence of Opposition", Said argues that serious opposition in the metropolis emerged only after intellectuals from the colonies 'taught' Europeans to use Western languages, intellectual techniques and paradigms to oppose imperialism. By the 'voyage in' he means

the work of intellectuals from the colonial or peripheral regions who wrote in an 'imperial' language, who felt themselves organically related to the mass resistance to empire, and who set themselves the revisionist, critical task of dealing frontally with the metropolitan culture, using the techniques, discourses, and weapons of scholarship and criticism once reserved exclusively for the European. Their work is, on its merits, only apparently dependent (and by no means parasitic) on mainstream Western discourses; the result of its originality and creativity has been the transformation of the very terrain of the disciplines. [Said, 1993b, p. 243]

He identifies three characteristics of this 'voyage in': the work of these expatriate colonial authors usually represents the extension of decolonising mass movements from the colonies into the metropolis; it concerns "the same areas of experience, culture, history, and tradition hitherto commanded unilaterally by the metropolitan centre"; and it represents an "unresolved contradiction or discrepancy within metropolitan culture, which through co-optation, dilution, and avoidance partly acknowledges and partly refuses the effort" [Said, 1993b, p. 244]. The works of such authors as C.L.R. James, Ranajit Guha, and Salman Rushdie manifest the cultural hybridity of metropolis and periphery, while the ambivalence with which their 'voyage in' has been received in the metropolis indicates the discomfort with which the metropolis acknowledges such hybridity.

Having established that European opposition and subaltern resistance to imperialism were culturally entangled, Said endeavours to describe the dimensions and limits of their mutual understanding. He concludes, following Fanon, that unlike natives, European opponents of imperialism stopped short of recognising that empire "cannot *give* [the imperialised] their freedom, but must be forced to yield it as the result of a protracted political, cultural, and sometimes military struggle that becomes more, not less adversarial as time goes on" [Said, 1993b, p. 207; emphasis in original].

Some sense of Said's understanding of subaltern responses to imperialism can be gleaned from his identification of "three great topics [of] decolonising cultural resistance" [Said, 1993b, p. 215-217]. These can be understood as roughly chronological. The first is an insistence on the right to articulate the community's history whole, coherently, integrally; to use a national language to express a national culture; to use such things as resistance stories, folktales, epic poetry, slave narratives, spiritual autobiographies, and prison memoirs to oppose the imperial centre's "monumental histories, official discourses, and panoptic quasi-scientific viewpoint" [Said, 1993b, p. 215]. Said suggests that this indigenous national history formed the foundation of the main national independence parties. Second, is the notion that resistance is an alternative way of understanding human history, and not just a reaction to imperialism. A major part of this reconceptualisation is the 'voyage in' discussed above; the effort "to enter into the discourse of Europe and the West, to mix with it, transform it, to make it acknowledge marginalised or suppressed or

forgotten histories" [Said, 1993b, p. 216]. As such, resistance attempts to break down the barriers between cultures so meticulously erected by imperialism and Orientalism. Third, Said observes a move "away from separatist nationalism toward a more integrative view of human community and human liberation" [Said, 1993b, p. 216]. This final theme of decolonising cultural resistance leads Said into a long discussion of nationalism, nativism, and liberation.

Said is critical of a separatist nationalism, but is careful to separate his critique from those of many Western intellectuals who are broadly opposed to the idea that formerly subject people could be suited or entitled to the same kind of nationalisms as the more developed Europeans. Rather, Said critiques separatist nationalism from the perspective that it has a history of essentialising a national culture, evading and avoiding economic disparity and social injustice, and consolidating the dominance of national elites. In short, it too often takes a chauvinistic and authoritarian stance that reproduces structures of imperial domination at a national scale. Nor does Said see nativism as a solution to this quandary. In valorising some set of native essences, nativism may allow the articulation of a nationalism that diverges from the dominant statist model, but to "accept nativism is to accept the consequences of imperialism, the racial, religious, and political divisions imposed by imperialism itself"; it is to assert that there are essential and unbroachable distinctions among cultures [Said, 1993b, p. 229]. Said holds out much more promise for what he identifies as a consistent critical intellectual strain within nationalist movements; a strain that rejects separatist nationalism and nativism in favour of a liberation movement that emphasises "the larger, more generous human realities of community *among* cultures, peoples, and societies" [Said, 1993b, p. 217]. He follows Fanon in asserting "that unless national consciousness at its moment of success was somehow changed into a social consciousness, the future would hold not liberation but an extension of imperialism" [Said, 1993b, p. 267]. Said's lengthy discussion of the role of critical intellectuals revolves around the question of how they can contribute culturally to this process of liberation.

Critical Intellectuals and Liberation from Imperialism

In "Orientalism Reconsidered", Said begins his discussion of the role of intellectuals by linking Orientalism and historicism. He says that one of the legacies of Orientalism — and one of its epistemological foundations — was the notion that there was one human history uniting humanity, and that it "culminated in or was observed from the vantage point of Europe, or the West" [Said, 1985, p. 10]. Anything not documented by Europe was 'lost' to history, until later recuperated by new Western social sciences; thus Wolf's [1982] designation of 'people without history'. The 'world history' perspective has attempted to reincorporate those lost histories, but without developing:

an epistemological critique of the connection between the development of a historicism which has expanded and developed enough to include antithetical attitudes such as ideologies of western imperialism and critiques of imperialism, on the one hand, and, on the other, the actual practice of imperialism by which the accumulation of territories and population, the control of economies and the incorporation and homogenisation of histories are maintained. [Said, 1985, p. 11]

The task of critical intellectuals is to find alternative paths to "the unitary field ruled hitherto by Orientalism, historicism and what could be called essential universalism" [Said, 1985, p. 11]. For Said, the liberationist strain within anti-imperialist movements points the way to three characteristics of such an alternative path. First, history should be conceived in a way that views Western and non-Western experiences contrapuntally, as belonging together because they are connected by imperialism. A contrapuntal approach's emphasis on the overlapping and intertwined histories of different peoples provides an alternative to "a politics of blame and to the even more destructive politics of confrontation and hostility" [Said, 1993b, p. 18, 278]. To work effectively, contrapuntal history must address a plurality of audiences and constituencies, and to work from "a decentred consciousness, not less reflective and critical for being decentred, for the most part non- and in some cases anti-totalising and anti-systemic" [Said, 1985, p. 14]. Rather than appealing to a common centre of authority, it seeks a common ground of assembly among decentred 'truths'. Second, critical intellectuals should nurture "an imaginative, even utopian vision which reconceives emancipatory (as opposed to confining) theory and performance"[(Said, 1993b, p. 279]; a vision which is "*against* the grain, deconstructive, utopian" [Said, 1985, p. 14; emphasis in original]. This means that intellectual cultural endeavours must strive toward the end of dominating coercive visions of knowledge, such as Orientalism. They must be "uniformly and programmatically libertarian" in that they are "not based on the finality and closure of antiquarian or curatorial knowledge, but on investigative open analysis, even though it might be seen that analysis of this sort — frequently difficult and abtruse — are in the final count paradoxically quietistic" [Said, 1985, p. 14]. Third, and consequently, critical endeavours of the sort Said imagines would invest neither in established institutions and causes nor "new authorities, doctrines and encoded orthodoxies", but rather nurture what he calls "a particular sort of nomadic, migratory, and anti-narrative energy" [Said, 1993b, p. 279], which is consciously secular, marginal and oppositional. Following Bhabha, Said suggests that the most evocative symbol of the liberationist intellectual project he advocates is the migrant:

It is no exaggeration to say that liberation as an intellectual mission, born in the resistance and opposition to the confinements and ravages of imperialism, has now shifted from the settled, established and domesticated dynamics of culture to its unhoused, decentred, and exilic energies *whose*

incarnation today is the migrant, and whose consciousness is that of the intellectual and artist in exile, the political figure between domains, between forms, between home, and between languages. [Said, 1993b, p. 332; emphasis added]

Said concludes "Orientalism Reconsidered" by suggesting that the liberationist project he describes has two sets of implications for the intellectual division of labour. First, a commitment to decentred and marginal positions means that there is no single sovereign intellectual stance which can speak for everyone; no cadre of experts who speak for us all. Second, an emphasis on counterpoint, migration and the hybridity of culture recommends the avoidance of what Said calls a "double kind of possessive exclusivism":

the sense of being an excluding insider by virtue of experience (only women can write for and about women, and only literature that treats women or Orientals well is good literature), and second, being an excluding insider by virtue of method (only marxists, anti-Orientalists, feminists can write about economics, Orientalism, women's literature). [Said, 1985, p. 15]

Conclusion

The central theme of *Orientalism* is that Orientalism, in all its dimensions, constructs and naturalises an essential dichotomy between a dominant West and its subordinate Oriental 'other', which is essential to the maintenance of empire. The central theme of *Culture and Imperialism* is that metropolitan literary culture has played a crucial role in naturalising a set of dichotomous imperial relations, even as that literary culture — and resistance cultures in the colonies — exemplify a cultural hybridity that gives the lie to such a dichotomous view of the world. That change in emphasis —*from* how essential difference is constructed and maintained *to* how, even in attempting to construct that difference, culture demonstrates its inevitable hybridity — can be read as an indirect response to some of the criticisms of *Orientalism*.

In *Culture and Imperialism* Said broadens — and in some ways narrows — his topical focus from Orientalism to imperialism, and broadens his geographical scope to include the entire imperial world. In so doing, he answers those critics who complained that *Orientalism* generalised too much from too specific an instance. Perhaps because he has included more, both topically and geographically, within his field of interest, Said seems to recognise in *Culture and Imperialism* that the discourses he wishes to describe are less monolithic, more heterogeneous, than he was willing to concede in *Orientalism*.

By including a lengthy discussion of subaltern cultural responses to imperialism in *Culture and Imperialism*, Said addresses several criticisms of the earlier book,

apart from the obvious one that *Orientalism* did not include a discussion of such responses. He acknowledges, and emphasises, the existence of a 'real Orient' (and India and Africa), and demonstrates that they were (partially) a creation of Orientalism and imperialism, just as Europe was (partially) a creation of Orientalism and imperialism, because both of those 'isms' are transcultural discourses; they exist in the interaction of cultures. His discussions of the relationships among dominant cultural discourses of imperialism in Europe, somewhat ambivalent European opposition to imperialism, and native cultural resistance to empire, especially through what he calls the 'voyage in', suggests again a less totalising and more contradictory discursive formation than he allows in *Orientalism*. It is not entirely clear whether this new emphasis on the heterogeneity of discourse represents for Said a partial rethinking of Orientalism, or merely an articulation of what he sees as one of the differences between the specific historical discourses of Orientalism and a more general and varied culture of imperialism.

Finally, Said's detailed comments on the role of critical intellectuals in both understanding imperialism and developing a libertarian cultural response to it partially address the question, raised by critics of *Orientalism*, of how to formulate a truly oppositional critique to a hegemonic discourse. His recommendation that intellectuals adopt the marginal, decentred, non-totalising stance of the migrant, neither inside nor outside, suggests that for him oppositional critique does not depend on escaping the discourse sufficiently to work from outside it. He sees liberationist critique as originating not from outside the discourse, but rather from a position on its margins, a position from which to 'voyage in', against the grain, to the heart of the discourse. In a hybrid world, itself largely the product of imperialism, there is no position outside the discourse. But an implication of a hybrid world, I think, is that we can all adopt a marginal position from which to 'voyage in'.

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