SPECIAL ISSUE: EDWARD SAID: INTELLECTUAL, CULTURAL CRITIC, ACTIVIST

The corporate institution of mixed race: Indigeneity, discourse, and *Orientalism* in Aboriginal policy

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Contradiction in Aboriginal policy, especially the oscillation between assimilation and segregation, is often viewed as inconsequential. The suggestion has been that inconsistency is typical of governments and even expected of administrations that have little time, money, or motivation to be overly concerned with Aboriginal matters. However, I posit that ambiguity has meaning. I propose that utilising Said's concept of the corporate institution of Orientalism reveals a 'mixed-race' discourse in government records during the late 19th and early 20th centuries that in fact gives meaning to this contradictory nature. I examine the ways in which the texts of Aboriginal law and policy in Canada, the US, and Australia constitute a specific mixed-race discourse of ambivalence and ambiguity, in contrast to a racial discourse of certainty. Based on a discourse analysis of key policy texts, I conclude that ambiguity and ambivalence constitute part of a colonial structure based on racial binarisms where an absence of space for 'those in between' reflected the perceived transitional and transient nature of 'mixed-race' as a temporary category, and the impetus to eliminate it. This discourse is surprisingly similar and persistent across a broad span of time and space, suggesting that questions about racial mixing and the presence of mixed-ancestry Natives constituted a major determining factor in the shaping of Aboriginal law and policy in these three countries between 1850 and 1950.

Keywords: Aboriginal; mixed race; Metis; Canada; US; Australia; Aboriginal policy; Said; orientalism; hybridity

Introduction

Half-breeds are neither white men nor Indians, as expressed in their name; and the proper treatment of them is neither defined in the regulations, nor, perhaps, established by usage. If it is said that they are not Indians, and must therefore be

> treated as white men, it may more plausibly be said they are not white men, and ought therefore to be treated as Indians, as they unquestionably have been in almost all treaties containing stipulations in their favor.[1]

Ambivalence has always plagued Aboriginal policies, and nowhere was this more apparent than in failed and dubious attempts to divide Indigenous peoples by degrees of 'blood'. History is replete with examples of administrations claiming assimilation as its goal while it practiced the opposite: segregation, anti-miscegenation, apartheid, exclusion, ostracisation, and discrimination. Policy makers were infamously ambivalent, and at times even apathetic towards Indigenous affairs. Such behaviour has been reduced to the seeming lack of logic and cohesion of those policies, especially when viewed over time. In short, the contradictions and inherent tensions of Aboriginal policy have not been taken to have any meaning.

However, the ambivalence so apparent in the opening quotation and indeed throughout the archival record of Aboriginal policies in Canada, the US, and Australia is not inconsequential. Instead, it is telling in two particular ways. First, it demonstrates an inconsistency between the competing and overarching goal of assimilation and the practice of segregation, both evident in policy directives in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries throughout the British empire, but especially in Canada, the US, and Australia in the decades immediately prior to and following the turn of the century. Second, it reflects an ambiguity specifically towards and about individuals of mixed ancestry—that is, individuals of dual Indigenous and European heritage.[2] Administrators never quite knew how to classify those of mixed ancestry, or whether to apply a policy of assimilation or segregation to them. The ambivalence of policy, then, was implicitly rooted in unanswered questions about racial mixing and an ambivalence towards those of mixed-ancestry.

In this paper I contend that the contradictions in policy and the ambivalence towards mixed-ancestry Natives are related and significant matters. I explore this connection by applying Said's 'corporate institution' from *Orientalism* and by considering the role that Indigenous peoples of mixed-ancestry played in the development and execution of late-19th and early 20th century Aboriginal policy in Canada, the US, and Australia. I suggest that there is a body of mixed race discourse that can be gleaned from the legal and policy texts of colonialism related to the administration of Aboriginal Affairs. These texts spell out this ambiguity and reveal the ways in which mixed-ancestry Natives were at the centre of questions and debates over policy as officials struggled to negotiate what were believed to be the immutable categories of race against a frontier

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[1] C.A. Harris, Congressional Serious Set 349, H.doc. 229, 28 February 1839.
[2] The author explicitly acknowledges the offensive and problematic nature of the terminology used to refer to those discussed in this work. Mixed-ancestry Natives are and were not a cohesive group in any of the three countries under consideration here; consequently, there is no single term that could properly and accurately designate them. However, writing about this topic requires one. I have chosen to use 'mixed ancestry' over 'mixed race' in most cases, but have also used 'mixed-blood' for the US and 'Half-breed' for Canada. Where possible or necessary, I attempt to use the historically accurate term.

reality of hybridity.[3] Contrary to established historical interpretations that frame policies as assimilationist, I argue that this discourse reveals the impetus of policy as the elimination of racial ambiguity, either through assimilation as enfranchisement or segregation as continuing legal status. This point is demonstrated in the comparison of three case studies: scrip in Canada, competency in the US, and exemption in Australia. All three, while well-known in their national contexts, are not understood as part of a broader discourse of empire. Fundamentally, the archival record reveals a patterned and cohesive, albeit ambiguous, discourse that constitutes a transnational corporate institution of mixed race.

A discourse of assimilation?

The concept of 'mixed race' as a colonialist ideology has been under theorised, perhaps a result of the tendency to study Aboriginal issues separately from critical race theory, particularly in North America. It has also remained largely in the domain of a Foucault-inspired postcolonial genre where sex and sexuality are the lens for racial mixing. Works that highlighted the importance of race and gender in understanding the power dynamics of interracial unions identified these relationships as discourses of empire (McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 1995; Young, 1995). At the national level, Canadian, American, and Australian scholars have employed a similar lens in examining gender and racial mixing in their colonial contexts. In Canada, for instance, Adele Perry's *On the Edge of Empire* (2001) uncovers some of those previously unacknowledged interracial histories, focusing on the important role that mixed-race relationships had on the colonial frontier there. In Australia, a strong historiographical tradition in the same vein, such as Ann McGrath (2005), Katherine Ellinghaus (2006b), and Patricia Grimshaw (2002) examine the intersection of race and sex in critical analyses of colonialism. In all cases, and much in the gendered postcolonial tradition of the mid-1990s, 'mixed race' is a product of interracial sex in 'contact zones' (Pratt, 1992), resulting in an emphasis on the dynamics of those relationships as opposed to the individuals produced of those unions. Undeniably, there is an important gender element to race and mixed-race construction, evident even in the records discussed here. However, the focus on gender can veil other factors. This paper seeks to examine Aboriginal policy as a text of colonialism to uncover its discourse on mixed-race individuals, separate from reactions to interracial unions.

Alternately, an empirical analysis of 'mixed race' in Aboriginal policy generally concentrates on the exclusion and victimisation of mixed-ancestry Natives from official recognition as Indigenous peoples. A most recent example in Canada is Pamela Palmater's *Beyond Blood* (2011), where she argues that the Indian Act has resulted in the exclusion of individuals of mixed ancestry. In the US, Bruce Miller's *Invisible Indigenes* (2003) examines how previously fluid identities among Indigenous groups on the Pacific Northwest have been 'frozen' by federal policies, resulting in their exclusion from federal recognition. Henry Reynolds' *Nowhere People* (2008) provides an Australian example. He examines the attitudes and ideas behind Australian policies that targeted Aboriginal people of

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[3] 'Hybridity' is used here in accordance with Homi Bhabha, not to legitimate bio-racial categories (Bhabha 1994).

mixed ancestry, arguing that the result was the exclusion of mixed-race Aboriginal people from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society. Even taking into account the diverse national contexts of these works, the fundamental shared argument is largely based on the presumption that assimilation is the singular goal of policy, and perhaps even that it has met with success. While I agree wholeheartedly with the arguments being made and the relevance of the lived experience of policy, an exploration of alternative positions helps uncover what are contested and complex arrangements of 'mixed race'. In that vein, I posit that Aboriginal people of mixed ancestry were not wholly targeted for exclusion from legal recognition as Aboriginal peoples: indeed, some were *included* in legal definitions of Aboriginal, even in circumstances when those individuals attempted to initiate the process of enfranchisement. The impetus of the policy, then, was not solely to exclude or eliminate Indigenous identities, but to eliminate racial ambiguity. Consequently, administrators focused their efforts, failed as they were, on developing a set of criteria to decide if mixed-ancestry Natives were be classified as 'Aboriginal' or 'ordinary citizens'.

Re-reading policy

Despite some apparent differences, Aboriginal policy in all three countries was based on similar ideological premises: racial difference. Natives were viewed in opposition to Newcomers in the same manner that Orientalism created 'otherness' as a fixed and stable albeit imagined binary. On one side of that binary stood white citizens; on the other, Aboriginal wards considered incapable and unworthy of the responsibilities and privileges of citizens. Such popular beliefs were in line with post-Enlightenment scientific thought about race based on four widely held premises: first, humankind could be divided into categories; second, these categories were defined by physical attributes which served as racial markers; third, race was associated with social, cultural, and moral traits; and fourth, races could be stratified (Rattansi, 2007, p. 31). The widespread acceptance among scientists of these basic 'facts' about human difference quickly translated into what became the 'common sense' of racial thinking. These were, among the public as well as scientists, the accepted facts of human difference according to a white, British, colonial world.

This placed those of mixed raced in a precarious position. In the racial 'Settler-Aboriginal' binary that was born out of such thinking, there was no place for 'those in between' to officially exist except temporarily as a transitional category while awaiting assimilation or extinction, as popular 19th-century thought went (Brantlinger, 2003). Moreover, their mere presence complicated Aboriginal policies based on simplified beliefs in white superiority and Aboriginal inferiority. If 'mixed race' was a spectrum between two discrete categories, at what point could individuals clearly fit into one category or the other? Grappling with contradictory goals of assimilation and segregation, officials acted with ambivalence and ambiguity in attempting to answer this question. Consequently, mixed-ancestry Natives were targeted for elimination—either to be assimilated through policies of enfranchisement or segregated through continuing legal status as Aboriginals.

Because ideas about race and racial mixing are often implicit, unspoken, and assumed, Said's 'corporate institution' helps identify ideas and attitudes about

racial mixing in the context of a *discourse*. Said identifies three parts to his definition of Orientalism: its study; a style of thought; and the corporate institution. He qualifies the latter as something more "historically and materially defined" (Said, 1979, p. 3) than its study or style of thought. He says that, "Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it" (Said, 1979, p. 3). It is the West's attempt to manage and produce the Orient, to create its own authoritative position over it, and the process by which this happens. The corporate institution is, thus, the West's attempt to control and define the Orient as well as a body of discourse about it.

Likewise, I posit that there exists a corporate institution for dealing with mixed-ancestry Natives: policy makers made statements about them, authorised views of them, described them, taught about them, settled them, and ruled over them. This is particularly evident in Canada, the US, and Australia between the 1880s and 1920s (and even later in Australia) where otherwise varied and disparate timelines among these three countries intersect in revealing ways. It is the repeated, though failed, attempts of policy administrators to maintain control over those of 'mixed race' by eliminating it and re-establishing discrete racial categories—quite separately from the study of, or thought about, mixed race among post-Enlightenment scientists who spent considerable effort in examining the 'mixed-race problem' (Young, 1995). While Said's Orientalist discourse is ascertained from 19th-century literature, the corporate institution of mixed-race is discernible in the archives of Aboriginal departments and is implicit and embedded in a broader narrative about 'Aboriginals'. It is the common, everyday records of Aboriginal affairs that constitute its key texts: annual reports, government correspondence, legislation, house debates, and other official government reports related to the administration of Aboriginal Affairs. These records, used more often as context or background than as central historical evidence, in actuality offer a wealth of information as sources of discourse about the idea of mixed race. While their value must be extracted from 'between the lines', they reveal a consistent and patterned discourse about mixed race. It is both the qualitative and quantitative examination of the use of terms and their contexts that suggests the importance of the racially mixed to the direction of policy. After 1850, the increasing use of specific words, such as 'Half-breed' and 'Half-caste', or references to 'blood' or blood quantum, imply that attention to racial mixing rose, accordingly, in significance. That officials used these terms in vague and undefined ways, accompanied by vague and undefined policies, has veiled their importance, and in fact, the importance of ideas about mixed race to the development of Aboriginal policies and the broader processes of colonialism.

What happened from the latter decades of the 19th century onward throughout much of the colonial world, and especially in Canada, the US, and Australia, would signify this increasing importance. Starting shortly after the 1850s, administrative and legislative records demonstrated a rise in the number and frequency of comments about mixed-ancestry Natives. Officials in all three countries became increasingly concerned and even anxious over the presence of mixed-ancestry Natives among Aboriginals and increasingly uncertain about what to do with them. Questions plagued policy makers: Were mixed-ancestry Natives Aboriginal or white? Should they be assimilated or segregated? Would this population continue to increase, or would it disappear into either the Aboriginal

or white mainstream population? If governments had legal and humanitarian obligations to Aboriginal populations, then what were their obligations to mixed-ancestry Natives? At what point did these obligations end, if they even did exist? What role would blood quantum play in this decision? These were questions that continually resurfaced in Canada, the US, and Australia as officials attempted to negotiate the inherent contradictions of policies fundamentally based on flawed ideas of race. An example of policies of enfranchisement from each of these countries reflects this ambivalence about the status of mixed-ancestry Natives. As each case shows, officials were sometimes more concerned with fixing their racial status than they were in promoting assimilation.

Canada: Mixed-race ordinary citizens

In Canada, racial ambiguity would be a factor in the course of policy from 1850 onward, but was most apparent in those years around the turn of the century. While not a concern prior to mid-century, racial mixing increasingly shaped law and policy by Confederation in 1867 and more clearly by the 1880s. Implicitly, Aboriginal people of mixed ancestry became the targets of discrimination, albeit ambiguously at times. This was first evidenced by attempts to divide mixed-ancestry Natives in law as either status Indians, those recognised as 'Indian' under the Indian Act, or as 'Half-breeds', those of mixed ancestry without status, and then by enfranchising those of the latter. These attempts were not always successful, no doubt a result of the ambivalent nature of the race ideology that informed policy. But they were also unsuccessful because Aboriginal kinship patterns and decisions about identity and citizenship did not correlate with these racial categories. Nonetheless, by the first decades of the 20th century, Canada had succeeded in imposing a two-category system of legal identity: Indians and 'ordinary citizens'. By force or choice, mixed-ancestry Natives, including the Métis, would have to fit into one category or the other in the scheme of Canada's official order.[4]

The policy of scrip was a major site of mixed-race discourse in Canada. Like treaties, scrip was used to clear Aboriginal rights to the land and make way for settlement—a policy the British adhered to in North America. By virtue of their 'Aboriginal blood' officials recognised that individuals of mixed ancestry had a stake in the land. But unlike treaties, scrip was used to extinguish Metis title on an *individual* basis. Between 1870 and 1929, scrip coupons, redeemable for land or money, were granted to Metis applicants in western Canada in exchange for any Aboriginal claim to the land. While originally intended for those of mixed ancestry, it was extended in the 1880s to status Indians who would withdraw from the treaty. This would constitute one of the most enduring effects of the policy: not all Indian applicants would be granted scrip, but all individuals who were became 'ordinary citizens' without Aboriginal status.

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[4] The Métis is an Aboriginal culture group in North America, distinct from other First Nations. While the Métis acknowledge their dual European-Aboriginal ancestry, they do not necessarily consider themselves 'mixed race'. Furthermore, not all people of mixed ancestry are Métis. However, in law and popular imagination, both historically and contemporaneously, the two are often conflated.

That legacy may not have been evident at the time, but the uncertainties that accompanied these racial divisions were. The ambivalence of policy makers became apparent in their attempts to separate 'Indians' from 'Half-breeds', in both determining eligibility for scrip and for determining eligibility to withdraw from treaty to take scrip. It was an imagined line, an effort to differentiate groups by 'blood' rather than by culture, and proved to be bureaucratic chaos for policy officials who struggled with the underlying contradictions of how race and culture actually played out. Officials could rarely set in practice what they stated in policy, and treaties did not serve to demarcate racial boundaries as imagined. By the end of the 1880s, it became apparent that attempts to apply strict biological categories to legally separate Indians from 'Half-breeds' were both inaccurate and inefficient (Augustus 2005).

By the time treaties were negotiated in the northern regions, at the turn of the century, administrators were persistently confronted with the contradictions inherent in the clashes between racial categories and cultural identities. Treaties Eight, Ten and Eleven in 1899, 1906, and 1921, encompassing what is now the Northwest Territories and the northern prairie provinces, operated simultaneously with the scrip process. Scrip commissioners accompanied treaty commissioners and awarded scrip coupons on-site, or later in Treaty Ten, after receiving approval from the Minster of the Interior (Coates & Morrison, 1986). The evidence was increasingly difficult to ignore: the boundary between Indian and 'Half-breed' as racial categories was permeable to the point of being meaningless. As recent kinship studies have demonstrated, Aboriginal groups did not distinguish themselves along racial lines, and policy would never entirely succeed in undermining established patterns of self-ascription based on kinship and community (Devine, 2004; Innes, 2013; Macdougall, 2010). Administrators were thus forced to make some concessions, as reflected in a new policy that saw scrip and treaty commissions acting in conjunction.

Thus, a major change in perspective became evident by the 1890s. There was in many ways a reduction in the emphasis on 'blood', though the ambiguity about mixed race remained. Administrators began to look at status, either Indian or 'Half-breed', as one defined by an individual's relationship with the state. For instance, a letter from Commissioner McKenna in 1901 noted

> that every one, irrespective of the proportion of Indian blood which he may have, who enters treaty becomes an Indian in the eye of the law … and that when he is discharged from treaty he becomes an ordinary citizen of the country.[5]

Those who were in treaty, then, were to be deemed Indians no matter what their ancestry, while those who had taken scrip, or whose ancestors had taken scrip, were deemed 'Half-breeds'. Such was the case in the claim of Joseph Gaucher of Lesser Slave Lake who could not prove a 'mixed blood' ancestry, but who was granted scrip because his sisters had been.[6] Gradually, though not consistently, administrators were attempting to separate legal and racial designations as a solution to the 'mixed-race' problem.

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[5] Annex "A" to PC 1182, McKenna to Sifton, 6 June 1901. LAC RG D-II-1 Vol. 825 File 616753.
[6] McKenna to Sifton, 16 March 1901. LAC RG 15 D-II-1 Vol. 782 File 555680 part.

They were never entirely successful. Race and its accompanying ambivalence persisted in the debate between lifestyle and biology in determining eligibility for scrip. 'Mode of life', a vague and undefined descriptor of human difference in circulation among officials since at least the 1870s, was more frequently employed and manipulated in the later phases of the scrip policy in an attempt to negotiate the uncertainties of racial boundaries that policy necessitated. Despite the changing attitudes, the ambivalence about race continued and was reflected in a debate over 'blood' and lifestyle as officials grappled with racialisation outside of biological factors. McKenna articulated the problem in 1901 to Clifford Sifton, then Minister of Interior and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, acknowledging that "if we make an admixture of white blood a ground of discharging and giving scrip, it will be hard to close the issue of scrip for the great majority of those in treaty have white blood".[7] McKenna, like many other government officials, understood the realities of frontier hybridity, and perhaps even the problems of racial categorisation.

But ultimately, officials like McKenna were unable to conceive of any alternative and consistent means of determining eligibility for scrip that was not race-based. For instance, Indian Inspector Henry A. Conroy, a key official in those decisions, used a lifestyle criterion to grant scrip in 1905 to an applicant who, he stated, never lived the "Indian life".[8] Yet, in 1909, he granted an applicant scrip even though he "lives the Indian mode of life".[9] Neither the 'evidence' nor the 'Indian mode of life' was ever defined, and the latter was used to both grant and deny scrip to similar applications. As McKenna noted in a letter to Sifton in 1903, "it is difficult to draw any line between the modes of life"—as difficult as drawing any line between 'Indian' and 'Half-breed' where people in both categories frequently participated in similar traditional, subsistence, and mixed economies.[10] McKenna noted as much: he did not support the enfranchisement of 'Half-breeds' in the north, where in his opinion they lived lives not unlike those classified as Indians. In fact, he rejected a number of claims of those he thought to be "regarded as Indians", contrary to the recommendations of the Indian Inspector, to the sworn statements of applicants claiming a 'Half-breed' status, and despite what appeared to be widespread agreement that most everyone in the region was of mixed ancestry.[11] These decisions may not have been coherent or consistent in terms of creating or acknowledging identity, but they fundamentally facilitated the elimination of racial ambiguity.

The implicit acknowledgement that race or blood quantum did not equate to either cultural or legal status, however, did little to affect how policy was implemented. The ambiguity of racial classifications and attempts to draw a line between 'Indians' and 'Half-breeds' demanded the department's continual review of individual cases that perplexed decision-makers and exposed the underlying problems of racial classification. No one rule could encompass all the possibilities they would encounter. Moreover, there was little agreement among policy officials about how individuals of mixed ancestry should be categorised, nor was there any understanding, stated or practiced, that assimilation was the best or

[7] McKenna to Sifton, 16 March 1901. LAC RG 15 D-II-1 Vol. 782 File 555680 part.
[8] N.O. Cote to Minister, 4 April 1905. LAC RG 15 D-II-1 Vol. 782 File 555680 part.
[9] Conroy to Minister, 9 January 1909. LAC RG 15 D-II-1 Vol. 782 File 555680 part.
[10] Conroy to Minister, 9 January 1909. LAC RG 15 D-II-1 Vol. 782 File 555680 pa.
[11] Conroy to Minister, 9 January 1909. LAC RG 15 D-II-1 Vol. 782 File 555680 pa.

only solution. Instead, racial categories and attempts to impose a binary were continually re-applied and imposed over a mixed and changing population who did not use the same racial criteria to define themselves.

The US: The competency of 'blood'

Meanwhile, in the US, the introduction of the allotment policy in 1887 initiated similar ambiguous practices. Allotment proposed to subdivide tribal lands into individual plots, thus dissolving tribal politics and the reservation system. Successful applicants would eventually become ordinary citizens without Native status, generally after a probation period after which their 'progress' would be evaluated. This marked a major change in the status of mixed-ancestry Natives, specifically as federal administrators increasingly appropriated control over tribal membership and applied race-based notions of identity and belonging. This would affect individuals of mixed ancestry in two ways: first, in determining their tribal status, and thus, eligibility for allotment; and second, in whether or not their title to that allotment and their enfranchisement would be immediate or subject to a probation period and later review. It was especially in determining the award of citizenship and title after allotment was awarded, referred to as 'competency commissions', which revealed the central role that mixed-ancestry Natives played in defining racial categories.

Competency was a legal status conferred upon Native Americans who were deemed capable of managing their own affairs, and thus, granted the full rights of citizenship (McDonnell, 1980, p. 23).[12] If an allottee was deemed "competent and capable of managing his or her own affairs", he or she could accordingly have that period reduced or waived entirely.[13] Officially, competency commissions were introduced in 1913 under Frank Knight Lane, Secretary of the Interior, though decisions were generally made upon the recommendation of the local Indian agent.[14] Unofficially, competency as a determinant of allotment eligibility had been practiced since at least the 1890s. Officials had already been incorporating the idea of competency as they debated the value of blood quantum in determining allotment eligibility, US citizenship, and tribal membership. As a House of Representatives Report noted in 1896, "Indians having only one-quarter of Indian blood ought to be able to assume the responsibility of citizenship and bear some of its burdens equally with their white neighbours".[15] Indeed, contempt often accompanied the observation of 'too-white' Indians, an indicator that the 'mixed race problem' was as much about maintaining 'white purity' as it was about more pragmatic considerations. The positions outlined in the report did not go uncontested and were the subject of

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[12] In practice, competency did not have as clear a standard, and there was no consensus about what factors should be considered. For instance, officials debated the validity of using education as a deciding factor in Classification of the Chippewa Indians of Minnesota, House Committee on Indian Affairs, 70th Congress, 1st session, 21 March 1928.
[13] 1906 Burke Act, 8 May 1906. [H. R. 11946.] | [Public, No. 149.] 34 Stat., 182.
[14] Senate Document 445, Hearings on Bills relating to Crow Reservation 1 April 1908, 60th Congress, 1st session.
[15] Confirming title of mixed-blood Indians to lands. Committee of the Whole House. House; Committee on Indian Affairs. House. House Report No. 2276, 54th Congress, 1st session, 6 June 1896.

lengthy discussions. Commissioner D. M Browning wrote in the same year about his objections to the removal of restrictions on title for mixed-ancestry Native allotments. He believed that "there are many others, mixed bloods as well as full bloods, to whom the issuance of such patents would be extremely unwise, and who would receive no permanent benefit from the land thus allotted them".[16] He accordingly recommended keeping the 25-year probation in place where the US government would retain title. Browning's was the minority opinion, though. In the end, the prevailing view regarding low blood quantum won out. The committee deemed that:

> a mixed blood Indian having one-quarter or less Indian blood in his veins is quite as competent to perform the duties of citizenship intelligently as many white men, and that the percentage of incompetency among the Indian tribes of one-quarter Indian blood or less is not greater than that to be found among a like number of white persons.[17]

More formal competency commissions also predated their official start. In 1910, for example, a competency commission had been established on the Omaha reservation in Nebraska (Clow, 1985). Thus, the perceived connection between competency and blood quantum was part of the racial thinking that comprised Aboriginal policy, especially in a post-treaty era where land pressures highlighted questions of entitlement (Otis, 1973; Washburn, 1975). As would become increasingly evident, there was a link between competency and blood quantum. But while a lower Indian blood quantum was, for most officials, reason enough to be considered competent, a higher one meant a continuing Indian status and the wardship that went with it. The broader policy of allotment was providing a means of eliminating racial ambiguity.

Thus, the 1913 Lane commission only codified an existing practice and articulated assumptions already held about a racial hierarchy. It also established a precedent: determining competency via blood quantum immediately became a popular method of determining the racial status of those of mixed ancestry. Soon after Lane's introduction, a 1916 Senate recommendation removed restrictions on mixed-race Quapaw allottees in Oklahoma.[18] Another policy of broader application in 1917 declared that all Indians of half or less blood quantum would be deemed competent and receive patents to their land (Prucha, 2000, p. 213). This thinking was reiterated by Indian Commissioner Cato Sells corroborated this interpretation in his 1917 annual report when he declared that "it is almost an axiom that an Indian who has a larger proportion of white blood than Indian partakes more of the characteristics of the former than of the latter. In thought and action, so far as the business world is concerned, he approximates more closely to the white blood ancestry".[19] While Sells probably did not have a consensus of opinion, his words demonstrated an emerging pattern in policy: it was increasingly more acceptable and necessary to deem mixed-ancestry Natives

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[16] Confirming title of mixed-blood Indians to lands. Committee of the Whole House. House; Committee on Indian Affairs. House. House Report No. 2276, 54th Congress, 1st session, 6 June 1896.

[17] Mr. Allen, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, Senate Report No. 969, to accompany S. 3051 [no title], 18 May 1896, 54th Congress, 1st Session.

[18] Removal of Restrictions, Quapaw, 1916. Senate Report No. 193. 64th Congress, 1st Session.

[19] *Annual Report of Indian Affairs*, 1917.

competent by sheer virtue of their white blood. In fact, though, the 'competency' certificate, like Australia's exemption and Canada's scrip policies, did little to clarify that ever-elusive line between racially defined legal categories. Instead, it further reflected the ambivalence and ambiguity toward those mixed-ancestry Natives who were applying for allotment—or having it forced upon them, as the case might have been.

Australia: Exempting ambivalence

In Australia legal identity was regulated by state-level legislation, commonly known as protection acts. Ambiguity was apparent in the confused legal clauses attempting to separately define Aboriginals and 'Half-castes', a derogatory term for mixed-race Aboriginal people. These attempts were matched only by the futile efforts to control miscegenation through the regulation of marriage, sexual activity, and labour, all of which were exercises in segregation. This was in stark contrast to the country's purported goal of assimilation, especially for mixed-ancestry Aboriginals. Throughout much of the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries education programs were used to separate mixed-ancestry children from their Aboriginal communities in preparation for assimilation into the dominant one. Domestic and low-skill labour training was part of this program, and would eventually find many mixed-ancestry Aboriginals contracted out to work in mainstream society, either in individual homes or in Australian industry such as ranching and pearling. Ironically, these industries would provide sites for further racial mixing, placing officials in a quandary: to meet the labour demands of a new Australia, to respond to humanitarian concerns to 'protect' Aboriginals, or to assimilate mixed-ancestry Aboriginals into mainstream society.

Much as in Canada, separating mixed-ancestry Aboriginals from those considered 'full blood' underwrote the direction policy would take. The policy of exemption worked in concert with the legal definitions in protection acts to fix the status of mixed-ancestry Aboriginal peoples. Under this policy, eligible applicants were exempted from the terms of the protection act and granted full citizenship rights. Like most policies of this nature, it had a dual nature: on the one hand, it lifted certain legal restrictions from Aboriginal peoples subject to the tutelage of protection actions, allowing them the freedoms that were accorded to citizens; on the other hand, it disconnected them from their own communities, resulting in what were often detrimental cultural, social, and psychological consequences (Wickes, 2008). But while the exemption policy was indeed a process of legal elimination and paternalistic control, as has frequently been argued (Ellinghaus, 2007; Huggonson, 1990), it also demonstrated the ambiguous nature of racial identification and the ambivalence officials felt about 'mixed-race' Aboriginal people. Like the policies of scrip and competency, Aboriginal peoples of mixed descent were most likely to receive exemption.

While most states administered their own exemption programs, and did so under their own authority, they were remarkably similar.[20] Queensland was the first to enact such a clause in its 1897 protection act, granting authority to the Minister to issue a certificate of exemption to any 'Half-caste' he deemed eligible. Western Australia followed suit in 1905, though exemptions could be granted to

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[20] Only Victoria and Tasmania did not administer an exemption program.

Aboriginals as well as 'Half-castes'. South Australia's 1911 act provided a similar clause, though it, too, allowed Aboriginals to receive an exemption. They all required applicants to demonstrate some degree of 'civilisation' which might be proven through education, employment, or lifestyle. Additionally, they all also required the applicant to sever his or her tie with Aboriginal family and friends. By consequence, the individual would no longer be allowed to live on a reserve or camp. Some states accepted only so-called 'Half-caste' applicants, while others considered 'full' Aboriginals as well. Exemption was also generally extended to those fully employed who did not reside on the reserve, and to females who were married to a non-Aboriginal, thus targeting those already considered to be on the path to assimilation.[21]

Rules did little to rectify the underlying contradictions of racial thinking. Officials frequently displayed ambivalence toward the policy and the implementation of these criteria. For instance, the practice of a woman taking on her husband's status was ignored where other factors, at the discretion of an individual administrator, might be deemed more important. An example in Western Australia demonstrates this. Alred Eudes, a man of Aboriginal descent, applied for an exemption. The Chief Protector did not require him, as a so-called 'quadroon', to receive exemption, since, under the law, he was not considered Aboriginal. Yet, his 'Half-caste' wife was considered Aboriginal under the law, and so was required to go through the process of applying for exemption.[22] Although by law she should have taken on the status of her husband, Aboriginal Affairs considered her Aboriginal. If assimilation was indeed the actual goal of policy, as often stated, then officials would have taken such opportunities. Instead, officials were unwilling to facilitate assimilation without closer inspection, particularly in a climate where 'controlled integration' was fundamental to maintaining white purity. Indeed, the discrepancies between the letter of policy and the practice of it were often signals of ambiguity about race.

Another significant way in which the exemption policy demonstrated ambivalence towards 'mixed-race' Aboriginal people was in its reasoning for rejection. One of the more common considerations was the purchase of alcohol, which those under protection acts were prohibited from purchasing. This prohibition became increasingly contentious especially as mixed-race Aboriginal people moved into towns and cities and joined the labour force. For instance, one 1912 application for exemption by a 'Half-caste' was denied because the Chief Protector believed the exemption "would undoubtedly be abused in the direction of supplying Aborigines with liquor, which would be against the public peace, and a source of annoyance to many Europeans living in the vicinity where natives are camped".[23] The 'Half-castes' who applied for these exemptions were understandably offended. As their protests indicated, they associated the freedom to purchase alcohol and have a drink at the local establishment after work as part of the male workforce culture and a sign of their acceptance into mainstream society. Officials were highly concerned that mixed-race Aboriginal people would purchase alcohol, either for themselves or for Aboriginals in camps or stations.

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[21] *The Aborigines Act* (SA), 1911, sec. 19.
[22] R. Cornwell, Commissioner of Police to Deputy Chief Protector of Aborigines, 7 January 1924. SRO WA, 1326 item 1923/2670.
[23] Chief Protector of Aborigines, 5 March 1912, to Under Secretary, Colonial Secretary's department. SRO WA 651 File 95/12.

Thus, the connections between alcohol, morality, sexuality, and racial mixing comprised a matrix of reasoning in regard to policy and how officials made decisions about 'Half-caste' identity. However, no one seemed to notice that mixed-race Aboriginal people applying for exemption were expected to live up to moral standards that exceeded that of their white counterparts. Again, the commitment to assimilation often assigned to policy was not actually observed.

Another situation in the Northern Territory demonstrated continuing ambivalence. Three Alice Springs 'Half-castes' who had all served in the Army Labour Corps during World War II had applied for exemptions and were denied. Again, the reasoning was the purchase and consumption of alcohol. The Director of Native Affairs felt that "it was not fair to subject them to temptations above their level".[24] That is, even though 'Half-castes' were considered eligible to contribute to the war efforts of their country, they were not granted the privileges of daily life, such as a drink with their comrades. This was in part an extension of concerns about Alice Springs, and what was seen as its 'moral demise' due to the number of "unseemly Half-castes" there.[25] The large presence of 'mixed-race' Aboriginal people was considered problematic, but the combination of that with drinking and gambling made it necessary to interfere. It was recommended by the director that these three be moved away from Alice Springs to a more northern location. In short, the Director of Native Affairs recommended segregation as a means of dealing with the so-called 'native problem'—not the assimilationist drive understood to steer policy initiatives, at least for those of mixed ancestry.

The discourse of mixed-race

The similarities among these otherwise different policies demonstrate the transnational nature of ideas about race and identify a discernible mixed-race discourse. The impetus to impose a racial binary on the colonial situation manifested as justifications for citizenship or 'enfranchisement' in all three countries under consideration here. But, also in each case, how to categorise individuals of mixed ancestry generated an ambiguity and ambivalence which reflected the inherent flaw of racial thinking and the failed attempts to observe and regulate racial categories. Indeed, eligibility for scrip, competency, and exemption were all premised on imagined stable legal definitions of 'Aboriginal' and the colonial racial binary that accompanied them, but were continually undermined by 'racial mixing'. Administrators in all three countries were, again and again, faced with decisions about racial ascription that could not produce a consistent response. However, that did not stop them from attempting to maintain racial categories by inscribing them into law and policy.

These policies also demonstrate that Aboriginal people of mixed-ancestry were at the heart of the dual, contradictory policies of assimilation and segregation. While governments in all three countries certainly oscillated between these two policies over time, they also displayed ambiguity about whether those of mixed-

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[24] G. Sweeney, Director of Native Affairs, Western Australia, to the Administrator, 26 October 1942. NLA Chinnery Manuscript, MS 766, Box 20, series 8, folder 28.
[25] G. Sweeney, Director of Native Affairs, Western Australia, to the Administrator, 26 October 1942. NLA Chinnery Manuscript, MS 766, Box 20, series 8, folder 28.

ancestry should be assimilated into mainstream population or segregated from it. All three policies considered here—scrip, competency, and exemption—have been categorised as policies of assimilation, but the execution of the policies themselves does not demonstrate that level of coherence, clarity, or commitment to assimilation. While assimilation was the purported goal of Aboriginal policies, it was never enforced with the same conviction it professed. At the heart of the ambivalence were unanswered questions about mixed-ancestry Natives: where they belonged and how they would consequently be administered, resulting in ambivalence between assimilation and segregation. The definitions of mixed-ancestry Natives in these policies were ambiguous; thus, so were eligibility for enfranchisement and government obligations to them. These questions and others revolving around individuals of mixed ancestry plagued government officials for decades between the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

The cases discussed here point to an important distinction between the discourse of race and the discourse of *mixed*-race, and in identifying meaning in the ambiguity of policy. Unlike the ambiguous and ambivalent mixed-race discourse, the discourse of race is based on certainty, clear boundaries, and observable difference. While 19th-century science and the practice of Aboriginal policy debated the merits and demerits of racial mixing without consensus or resolution, the idea of race was understood as much less problematic. In contrast, *mixed*-race undermined the fundamental tenets of race and lacked the same 'common sense' foundation upon which the prevailing racial essentialism was based. On the one hand, the idea of 'mixed-race' relied on the idea of race: 'mixing' could occur only among initially discrete entities. But on the other, it stood in opposition to those categories in an era of monoracial ascriptions, tied into notions of 'white purity' and racial privilege that were woven into legal identities and citizenship. It undermined the ordered belief that race was premised upon and conceptually destabilised it. If human difference was to be measured by distinct, even immutable categories, how could mixing be negotiated? It not only presented pragmatic considerations, like questions about citizenship and legal identity, it also presented some irresolvable and fundamental epistemological questions about British ideas of human difference.

The lack of consensus and common sense assumptions about those of mixed-race, though, evokes the very essence of a perceptible and uniquely *mixed*-race discourse. In fact, it is the patterned absence of clear and articulate definitions that suggest more is at work, particularly for an administrative regime that was fixated on developing legal definitions of Aboriginals—by their very nature, fixed and unambiguous. It is especially the failure to define those of mixed ancestry and their eligibility for citizenship that such a discourse becomes apparent. Indeed, the discourse of mixed-race suggests that policy makers and government officials were unsure about the meaning, implications, and possibilities of racial mixing. They were equally unsure about where to categorise people of mixed ancestry—a significant factor in the continually unfolding place of legal identity in Aboriginal lives. The attempt to impose these categories in the context of colonialism—a 'hybrid' space in defiance of categories (Bhabha 1994)—only served to undermine the process of racial categorisation and expose its inherent flaws. Embedded in the 'corporate institution of Orientalism', then, is the corporate institution of mixed race.

Conclusion

In examining Aboriginal policy with an eye to mixed-ancestry Natives, the ways in which these otherwise very different policies in very different countries overlap becomes apparent. In Canada, the US, and Australia, the presence of mixed-ancestry Aboriginals in a colonial world order based on racial binaries produced ambiguity and ambivalence, and officials struggled to find a place for them in law and policy, and indeed, in their own personal paradigms shaped by 19th-century racial thinking. From a 'western' perspective, all of the varied and various peoples that had encountered each other over centuries of British colonialism could (or should) be understood in terms of clear-cut and immutable categories. That much was clear. But the implications when those categories overlapped, mixed, blurred, and intersected were not.

The mixed-race discourse uncovered here suggests that the elimination of racial ambiguity, and the uncertainty felt towards mixed-ancestry Natives were also major driving forces of Aboriginal policy. Historians have previously given credit to fiscal considerations, humanitarian considerations, public demands, goals of nation-building, and other pragmatic considerations in the direction and determination of Aboriginal policy. Undoubtedly, all of these factors played a significant role in the development and execution of Aboriginal policy. But if we re-examine what we thought were such well-known and understood Aboriginal policies in the light of mixed-race discourse, we find an additional element. Looking at policy through this lens demonstrates how assimilation was perhaps not the sole goal of administrators. Instead, a second concurrent but conflicting goal might also be understood as the elimination of racial ambiguity—a goal quite different from assimilation, and one which explains the contradictions of Aboriginal policy. This goal becomes visible by applying Said's corporate institution and through a re-evaluation of those everyday texts of colonialism as records which reveal a discourse of mixed race.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: EDWARD SAID—INTELLECTUAL, CULTURAL CRITIC, ACTIVIST

Dancing the East in the West: Orientalism, feminism, and belly dance

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Belly dance is a popular form of exotic dance in the West. Women are drawn to this dance which is marketed as offering access to an 'ancient' and 'timeless' culture that is an alternative to Western cerebralism and material pursuits. However, from the point of view of critical second–wave feminist and Orientalism scholars, belly dance is interpreted as rife with oppressive tropes of Orientalism. What can account for the discrepancy between the social scientific literature's denouncement of belly dance and its current popularity? The visual focus of gaze theory has contributed to the neglect of embodiment in these accounts. The body, which ought to be central to any research on dance, has been curiously absent in the critical literature. My ethnography and interviews with belly dancers lead me to argue that second–wave feminist and Orientalism scholars' reliance on gaze theory limits their ability to fully capture and appreciate the lived experience of belly dance. Dancers' interpretations draw on systems of meaning that neither of these schools of thought would expect. My participants experience empowerment through the corporeal, sensual and liberatory aspects of the dance that redress societal messages about the female body. They experience the gaze as a reciprocal relationship where positive energy is gained through the flow of power between subjects. Finally, my participants express certain discomforts around Orientalism and appropriation and have implemented strategies to negotiate these perceived tensions. The relationship between belly dancers' bodies, subjectivities and cultural discourses is explored to provide a nuanced account of this practice.

Keywords: orientalism, feminism, gaze theory, belly dance, embodiment, ethnography

Introduction

Belly dance is a popular form of exotic dance in the West. Many women are drawn to this dance form which is marketed as offering access to an 'ancient' and 'timeless' culture that is an alternative to Western cerebralism and material pursuits (Dox, 2007). Belly dance communities are flourishing in urban centres and on-line, while websites devoted to the dance's history, technique, and costuming are emerging in abundance. Academic evaluations of belly dancing, however, have been less than favourable. Scholars adhering to a second-wave feminist perspective, which "takes as its starting point the politics of representation" (Humm, 1997, p. 197), argue that due to its use of revealing costumes and highly sensualised movements, belly dancing objectifies and oppresses female dancers (Koritz, 1997; Savigliano, 1995; Shay, 2005). Meanwhile, Orientalism literature (Dox, 2006; Said, 1978; Savigliano, 1995; Shay & Sellers-Young, 2005) criticises contemporary belly dance for its disassociation from its roots in North Africa and the Middle East and its stereotypes of mysteriously veiled women and harem settings. Thus, these scholars argue that contrary to popular understanding, a history of Orientalism, appropriation, and exoticisation informs contemporary belly dance practices.

In fact, only sparse and speculative records are available from prior to the 19th century that depict the dance, its origins and its social roles (Deagon, 1998). Therefore, it is nearly impossible to say with confidence what 'traditional' belly dance looked like or how it was practiced. The first belly dancers appeared in the west during the Chicago World Fairs of 1893, a series of exhibitions meant to parade the conquests of Western imperialism. Western audiences interpreted the dancers, who wore pantaloons and vests and made sharp pelvic movements and body gyrations, as unattractive, lascivious and vulgar, having read these movements as communicating an overt and potentially threatening sexuality (Shay, 2008, p. 128).

It was only after the dance underwent a process of Orientalisation and exoticisation that it became aesthetically pleasing to Western audiences (Shay, 2008, p. 131). Inspired by 18th and 19th century Orientalist writings and art in which women were depicted as large-breasted, scantily-clad, and overtly sexualised performers, existing to entertain and seduce men in harem settings (MacMaster & Lewis, 1998, p. 123; Said, 1978, p. 207), Maud Allen, Ruth St. Dennis and Loie Fuller, and other modern dancers of the early 20th century offered westernised interpretations of belly dancing (Shay & Sellers-Young, 2005, p. 7). These dancers, wearing bejeweled bras and head pieces, modeled their movement on bodily posturing of Eastern dance, incorporating more arm movement and wrist twists while steering clear of accentuating the hips (Shay, 2008, p. 7). Such Western interpretations of belly dance—today known as 'cabaret' style—became popular and were taken up by Egyptian dancers aiming to please Western tourists and upper class residents whose tastes were formed in relation to European and American dictates. Thus, Shay (2008, p. 128) argues contemporary belly dance represents a conceptual break from its Egyptian origins and constitutes an almost entirely new, Orientalised and auto-exoticised dance genre that retains only fragments of the earlier belly dance aesthetic.

Orientalism and second–wave feminist theorists interpret this history as problematic due to its appropriative nature, and condemn the structuring of belly

dance to please heterosexual male and colonial gazes. To inform their analysis of belly dance, both schools have relied mainly on theories of the gaze which describe our awareness of being looked at and evaluated through particular frameworks, male or colonial, that are indicative of unequal power relations between men and women or white West and racialised 'Other', respectively. Each form of the gaze privileges its own perspective about the criteria by which the objects of the gaze are to be judged. Gaze theorists understand these evaluations to lead individuals to live their lives as objects that at any moment could be subjected to a gaze, and to continually adjust their appearance and behaviour accordingly (Bartky, 1988; Foucault, 1995; King, 2004; Mulvey, 1975; Said, 1978; Savigliano, 1995).

Yet, on the ground, the number of women taking-up belly dance professionally or as a form of serious leisure (Stebbins, 2001) has been increasing since the 1970s (Keft-Kennedy, 2013, p. 68). What can account for the discrepancy between the social scientific literature's denouncement of belly dance and its current popularity among women? My interviews with belly dancers lead me to argue that the reliance on gaze theory by scholars adhering to Said's construction of Orientalism and second-wave feminists limits their ability to fully capture and appreciate lived experience. As Manning (1997) discusses, gaze theory has been criticised for making subjects passive, altogether stripping them of agency. In interpreting dance, feminists and scholars of Orientalism who use gaze theory regard "dance as text", taking a postmodern vantage point from which movements, costuming, and choreography are analyzed for meaning (Wainright, Williams, & Turner, 2006, p. 536), and in particular for how dance represents and (re)produces power relations (Wright & Dreyfus, 1998, p. 95). In so doing, they overlook the experiential aspect of dance; just as readers do not passively consume texts (as Radway's (1983) study of women reading romance novels has shown), dancers do not passively dance. Rather, they bring their life histories and social positions to the process of experiencing, interpreting, and using it in their daily lives. In this paper, I use ethnography and interviews to argue against the position that the only legitimate interpretation of the practice of belly dance is that dancers are unreflective pawns of the gaze who have 'drunk the Kool-Aid' of sexism and Orientalism and dance to 'exotically' appeal to men. Dancers' own interpretations, it turns out, sprawl beyond what feminist and Orientalist perspectives can contain, enabling third-wave or 'post' feminist subjectivities.

Methods

I draw on data collected through semi-structured interviews with women from Arabesque Academy and The Dark Side Studio, two popular belly dance studios in downtown Toronto. These studios were selected purposively to facilitate collection of data on the issues pertinent to my topic: the gaze, Orientalism, feminism, and embodiment. Each studio is owned and operated by a white Canadian female artistic director, and both studentships are almost exclusively female and from diverse racialised backgrounds, with the majority being white.

Studying both Arabesque Academy and The Dark Side Studio permits comparisons due to their different philosophies, aesthetics, and dance styles. Founded in 1987, Arabesque Academy defines its style of belly dance on its

promotional material as a "shameless display of femininity" (Arabesque, 2013). The academy prides itself on being an ambassador of Middle Eastern dance, music and history in Canada. It focuses on teaching traditional styles of dance from Egypt and Syria, along with folklore styles such as Saudi Arabian Khaleeji, in which long jeweled dresses are used as props. In contrast, The Dark Side Studio defines itself as "modern belly dance for modern women" and emphasises non-traditional forms of belly dance, using modern and techno dance music (The Dark Side Studio, 2013). The two main variants taught at The Dark Side are tribal and tribal fusion. Tribal belly dance focuses on snake-like movements of the arms, head and upper body, coupled with popping and locking of joints and muscles as dictated by the beats of the music. Tribal fusion, meanwhile, combines foundational belly dance movements with an array of other dance styles including Indian and Flamenco.

For the purpose of this paper, I have selected an interview with one participant from each school to analyze in depth. A 46 year-old stay-at-home mother of two teenagers, Lorraine began taking belly dance classes 12 years ago at a community centre and switched to Arabesque in 2010 to pursue the dance more seriously. Elena is a 28-year-old freelance writer/editor who began taking belly dance through her university's recreational program offerings in 2003. She switched to The Dark Side Studio in 2009.

Analysis: The accoutrements of belly dance

The décor of both Arabesque Academy and The Dark Side Studio are built upon Orientalist imagining. Deep, jewel tones such as ruby and turquoise colour the walls of both studios, which are hung with gold-spangled fabrics and framed photos of iconic belly dancers. Veils are strewn over chairs or left hung on the walls, inviting dancers to dance with them. Often, groups of women are found chatting before classes, most with their shirts rolled up to show their bellies and wearing silky hip scarves, some jingling with coins.

While gaze scholars might assume that these women are thoroughly engaged with fantasies of the Orient, I suggest that a reliance on symbolic interpretations of belly dance leads such scholars to project incomplete meanings of the practice onto participants' experiences. Dancers enjoy and relate to belly dance in ways scholars would not anticipate. For example, Orientalist theorists would criticise the wearing of hip-scarves which they would see as artifacts that allow women to indulge in a fabricated fantasy of embodying an exoticised 'Other'. However, when asked about why she enjoys her hip-scarf, Lorraine offers a reason these theorists could not have expected:

> I just feel like it's a big arrow saying 'look here! (points to her hips) This is what it's about'. And I find that that's the empowering part because that's the powerful part of me, you know … Even when I'm dancing and I'm looking in the mirror: I think that's why I lose my arms so much because I'm always looking at my hips…for me that's my centre. These [hips] are powerful weapons. These things carry life inside them; these things have done a lot. And I just find it's my most, it's a very womanly feature; and I find I feel very powerful being able to use them in a womanly way. You know what I mean? … It's just, you know, it's enthralling; this is life-giving here.

As Lorraine speaks, she fists her hands, sticks out her index fingers, and places her hands on her hips: the effect is to imply that this area of her body is endowed with invisible "magic wands", a term she herself is about to use. Moving her hips to make the "wands" sway, she cites:

> It is, because this is, you know, only women have this ability. And also too, I think, having a child and growing it and the birth part of it really makes you feel your ultimate womanness…It's like you're like, 'wow, I'm a factory man'. Look what I'm capable of. And it is, there's a connection to it right and I think that's kind of where it's like waving your magic wand.

Thus, the meaning of the hip scarf to dancers can differ from the interpretations that second–wave feminists and Orientalists would assume. For Lorraine, the hip scarf is important due to the embodied connection it forges with her hips, a part of her body she has felt a strong affinity towards ever since the birth of her children. The hip scarf stands to highlight and draw both her attention and the attention of others to the part of her body that she finds most powerful.

Critical scholars would be even more suspicious of the common use of the veil in belly dance than of hip-scarves. As Yeğenoğlu (1998, p. 39) notes, the "veil is one of those tropes through which Western fantasies of penetration into the mysteries of the Orient and access to the interiority of the other are fantasmatically achieved". The veil is not simply an item of clothing derived from particular cultural practices, in the West, the veil symbolises "otherness" (Ahmed, 2002, p. 60; Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p. 41). Images of veiled women epitomise Western feminist notions of the oppressive and backward practices of the Middle East (Eltahawy, 2010, as cited in Franklin, 2013) and the Orientalist notion of the veil as conveying mystique and cloaking sensuality (Yeğenoğlu, 1998). But Elena's account of why she "loves" the veil offers another interpretation:

> I think I've always liked big swishy capes to play with so now I had a big swishy veil to play with. When veil is done well, it's spectacularly beautiful, it really is. The dancer managing to keep this big partner really, this exploding piece of fabric up in the air, it can look so beautiful and so ethereal.

Elena finds the veil beautiful for its movement and for the show of skill involved as using it as a prop. She considers it to be a dance "partner", implying that both she and the veil are active agents partaking in the dance together, and this perspective is more closely tied to the arguments put forth by scholars adhering to a post-feminist perspective who posit that the cultural significance of the veil is more complicated than feminists critical of veil dressing connote. Post-feminist scholars suggest that the veil is used by women in their everyday lives for their own purposes, such as in acts of resistance to repressive laws in both the West (such as the 'Burqa-Bans' debated throughout the European Union and enacted in France and Belgium) and Middle East (Ahmed, 2011; Göle, 2002; Sreberny & Khiabany, 2010), and that veil use should be seen as complex and fluid, occupying the spaces between conformity, repression, and agency (Franklin, 2013). Therefore, the meaning of Lorraine and Elena's use of these objects reflects post-feminist subjectivities: neither the hip scarf nor the veil are being used by my respondents to engage in the colonial or sexist fantasies that feminist or Orientalist gaze scholars might predict. Instead, my respondents use

of these objects challenge us to reconsider the role of agency and its implications for autonomy and choice.

There is more to the gaze than meets the eye

For critical feminist and Orientalist gaze scholars, the gaze is a relentlessly oppressive force that pacifies subjects, often making them complicit in their own subjugation (Bartky, 1988; Foucault, 1995; King, 2004; Mulvey, 1975; Savigliano, 1995). However, my participants suggest that there are pleasurable functions of the gaze. Lorraine spoke of her enjoyment and a sense of empowerment in her ability to control the gaze:

> It's empowering. Because, like, for example, doing a solo show even at a small party, whether, you know, it's a small audience or intimate setting, it's so empowering when you realise the control you have. And it's just taking that control back. You know, it's not about thinking you're all that and being out there, you know. It's just that everybody is looking at me; I'm being cheered for; there's smiles on their faces. Like, that resonates back and I just suck it up like a sponge because I feel good. It's like yes! … Your adrenaline is pumping and you're all hyper, and you're all excited and I think that is the empowering part. It's, you did it; you owned it; you commanded it; and you left them wanting more, you know. So, it's just being, you know, knowing that you're, you're a woman and women are powerful. And to learn that and to be able to grasp that is, is pretty important.

Here, Lorraine expresses that she actively uses the gaze for her own enjoyment, obtaining a sense of power and pride in her self as a woman that aligns her experience with the ideals of third-wave feminists. She controls and draws encouragement from the gaze as opposed to feeling subjected to it. Importantly, she does not distinguish men from women, both of whom would typically attend the studio shows or festival performances at which she dances; the male gaze is not what preoccupies her. Finally, her increasing use of the pronoun "you" as the excerpt progresses implicitly draws me in as a listener who surely shares her perspective, as though any reasonable dancer in the same position would feel the same (Timor and Landau, 1998).

For Elena, however, the form of pleasure received has less to do with controlling the gaze than with escaping or subverting it altogether.

> Everyone thinks that's a strange thing, that someone who is shy would also be a performer, but I don't think I'm the only one. For a lot of shy people, (pause) in day to day conversation, I'm always worried 'am I talking too much? Am I taking up too much space? Am I putting myself out there too much? Am I stomping other people and I don't realise it?' but performing, it's a definite 'No! I'm supposed to be up here. I know where my boundaries lie here'.

In her daily life, although she codes it as an experience of gender-neutral shy "people", Elena experiences what might be interpreted as a repressive conception of femininity in which women ought to be unobtrusive and compliant, leading her to question "taking up too much space", both physically and socially. The expectations associated with performing enable Elena to contest acceptable boundaries of public—or public female—behaviour, and the stage provides her

with a platform from which to move beyond such norms. The benefits are further elucidated by the following example:

> In the studio when we're practicing, I'm just constantly critiquing myself like 'Get that elbow up there, get energy in the fingers, what the fuck does energy in the fingers mean? I don't know but make the fingers look better'. It's just constant issues like 'Make your posture look better. Oh God my stomach'. Everything is just terrible. But when I'm performing it's like 'Well, this is it! You either make it work, or you don't'.

Here, Elena outlines what Foucault (1995) and Bartky (1988) describe as the internalisation of the gaze. Dancing in studio, Elena turns the gaze on herself, thus challenging the possibility of the popular mantra encouraging individuals to 'dance like no one's watching'. In an opinion that would seem paradoxical to gaze researchers, it is with an audience that Elena finds respite; knowing she has to make her performance work allows her to stop criticising her body and instead connect with it pleasurably.

Another benefit Elena has experienced due to her involvement in belly dance is to have moved beyond the "body shaming" many women experience, to develop a healthier body image:

> I do appreciate that even if I don't necessarily like the way I look overall, it is possible to make my body look good, look nice, look appealing. It's nice because I mean, I grew up with the same body shame that most women grow up with where if you're not completely flat from the hips up, then, screw you basically. So yeah, in that respect, even if I still would like to lose that last 10-15 lbs that I've got hanging on me, I'm not going to cry over it anymore because I know I can look good when I want to. In that respect, belly dance teaches you how to do that.

Such sentiments are aligned with third–wave feminism which seeks to redefine female subjectivity. This post-feminist perspective also permeates the very few empirical studies that have investigated the lived experience of belly dance (Kraus, 2009; Moe, 2012; Wright & Dreyfus, 1998), which—unlike forms of dance such as ballet—has no prescribed body type. The dance is experienced as offering participants the option to "come as you are" and learn to love their bodies. Moreover, involvement in belly dance allows women to move beyond concerns of the gaze by developing pride not only in how their body looks, but how it moves as well. Dancers develop competencies and skills that serve as a source of pride and further enhance body image evaluations. She continues:

> there will be a point where someone will say 'it's time to do the recital and you have to show your belly' … Eventually you do it and you're like, 'no one died. No one burst into flames. It's fine! I CAN wear whatever I want and if someone else has a problem it's their problem not mine'. You do learn to cultivate that, when you need it, 'I'm queen bitch' dance posture and then you can pull off anything in that sense.

Elena is mobilising an unexpected definition of femininity that neither second–wave feminist nor Orientalist scholars articulate. Generally, belly dance is associated with hyper-feminised traits, as dancers are usually depicted to have long-hair, to be wearing a great deal of make-up, to be using bright and sparkling costumes to draw attention to their breasts, hips and stomachs, and to

be dancing in a way that is sensual but not forceful. Yet, Elena's involvement with tribal belly dance engendered in her a type of femininity that is edgier and more aggressive. She has eschewed the traditional adoption of 'Arab subtleties', commonly referred to in dance classes teaching Egyptian-style belly dance, in favour of The Dark Side Studio's more assertive "I'm queen bitch" attitude which she transfers to other scenarios as well. It is this attitude that has helped her to transgress the body standards imposed by the gaze.

Perhaps the most startling instance of how the gaze becomes complicated appears in Lorraine's discussion of dancing for her partner. In belly dance classes, it is not unusual to hear teachers speak of dancing for their partners. As teachers' partners are well known in the studios, dropping in to talk about daycare arrangements and the like, students welcome such stories, often giggling salaciously as they picture this as 'hot'. Lorraine articulates the appeal of dancing for her husband:

> It's just a fantasy to play out I think. He enjoys it, I enjoy it. It's not lap-dancing but it's definitely more sexual. There's more enticing when I dance for him versus an audience. It takes on a whole different—it's foreplay essentially! I put that costume on for the same reason I'd put on a little lacy number with fluff, you know? I think you really get in touch with the sensual part, the part that you can't share with everybody. A dancer dances for herself, and she can dance for different people and entertainment, but there's a different dance when you're with your lover and it's a romantic scenario or situation. It becomes more of a really, powerful tool because you can amp up the enticing, sensual, sexual part that you don't touch on that with your audience. It's private. It's a personal thing. I'm looking for the feedback. And I really don't want to hear him talk.

Gaze scholars could not read this without feeling some despair as Orientalism is decidedly being recruited by Lorraine to titillate and seduce her husband. She equates the costume to lingerie and interprets her dance as foreplay. Yet, as opposed to being experienced as something done purely for the pleasure of her husband, a male onlooker, both she and her husband find pleasure in the act. It is not something she is doing "for him" but for the couple. She redefines the female body as something other than a fetishised object that exists for male pleasure, noting the dance is not "for him" but for their mutual pleasure. Her ability to seduce her husband through dance is experienced by Lorraine as powerful, and his role is to be silent. In this scenario, she is not the mute object of the gaze.

She goes on to discuss how her husband has an image of her tattooed upon his back:

> I know for a fact that my husband is very proud of me and very proud of what I do. He shows my dance pictures to everybody. He's got me tattooed on his back in a dance costume. He went out and had me professionally photographed so he could pick the pose in the photograph, and from that, his friend started the tattoo on his back.

On a first reading, Lorraine's experience appears aligned with gaze theory: her statement that "he had me photographed" makes her the passive object positioned according the tastes of a male onlooker.

But she continues: "and I'm not a little corner. I'm a good chunk. He's really proud of me. He's like 'Look at my wife!' That comes from having a great relationship". Lorraine is drawing on the same concept of occupying space that Elena detailed above. For Lorraine, taking up "a good chunk" of her husband's back as opposed to "a little corner" gives her a sense of pride. Moreover, this example draws attention to the flow of the gaze. In this situation, it is not only Lorraine who is being gazed at: as the tattoo is on her husband's back, he cannot see it. *He* becomes gazed at via the tattoo and most likely, the gazer is *her*. Further, he has also endured the pain of body modification to give her a view of herself that they have co-created. Thus, the power and pleasure in the gaze flows between them both.

"Shitting on cultures": Dancers' critical engagement with Orientalism

Orientalist and second–wave feminist scholars assume that subjects of the gaze passively submit to their own oppression. Their accounts represent dancers as unreflective and uncritical. However, my participants' responses demonstrate that dancers are in fact quite aware of some of the problematic elements of belly dance and that they have implemented some strategies in order to address the areas they find troublesome. For example, both Lorraine and Elena took issue with their first dance instructors, who each sold the dance in a manner congruent with the arguments of feminist and Orientalist scholars: as a way to indulge in a fantasy and make women feel sexy. Neither Lorraine nor Elena appreciated this interpretation of the dance and they each switched schools. As Lorraine explains:

> [The teacher] started her company because she dressed up and went out one Halloween as a belly dancer and somebody suggested that she should start a school. And she did. And everything to her was self-gain. She self-taught herself; have you ever heard of the Kashmara? I can tell you the name of the moves and you'd probably be like, 'What, what? Okay, I've never even seen that move before'.

At this point, Lorraine stands and performs a lazy hip accent with an uncharacteristic lack of control in her upper body, putting on the pouting face of someone attempting to be overtly sexy and moaning "Uhhhh … Uhhh … Uhhh …" This kind of dance, she says, is "dumbed down as much as you could dumb it down". Elena too imitates her instructor using bodily poses that say "stay away" at the same time as her sly smile and wide eyes invite "come hither", as she describes her instructor's assumption:

> That was what she thought we all wanted, was to be a little bit flirty and sexy, so the moves she taught us were really kind of sexy where you do the kind of 'come here' and 'stay away'. I only stayed for one block of classes and didn't sign up again. It was so superficial.

Rejecting these instructors' presentation of the dance as a site solely of sensuality and desire, as opposed to skill, both Elena and Lorraine left their original instructors and schools. Their rejection here is not named as a protest against racism or Orientalism, so much as against low skills, as conveyed through their movement demonstrations, which enlist me as a skilled observer who would also disparage such over-simplifications.

It was at this point in the two interviews that someone did talk about race, a factor noticeably absent elsewhere. In an extended discussion, Elena expresses a critical awareness of the appropriative elements of tribal belly dance and its history: "Someone without much regard for culture or where belly dance came from sat down with a bunch of *National Geographics* and was like 'that looks good, that looks good'". She pointed at her lap holding an imaginary magazine, pretending to choose elements from the pages to be incorporated into the tribal costume. She discusses how the result is a costume that ornamentalises the body with artifacts from cultures unrelated to belly dance, such as Indian cholis (short sleeved abbreviated tops), tassels from the saddles of Arabian camels, and jewelry taken from parts of Africa that "do completely different styles of dance". She speaks of a consciousness-raising moment occasioned by the Hindu bindi she was wearing on her forehead while taking the subway:

> I put one on for a performance and was like 'Oh whatever, it looks okay' but I had that thing that I know has happened to a lot of other tribal and fusion dancers. I was on the subway and there was an Indian family sitting right across me and staring at me and I was like 'yeah, I'm a horrible person for doing this'. I haven't touched them since then and I've tossed them out. I've been much more conscious about costuming.

Elena was content with this type of costuming until people from India, the country from which her bindi originated, turned their gazes upon her, causing her to question her choices. Moreover, the fact that she knows "this has happened to a lot of other tribal and fusion dancers" suggests that there is a culture of talk among white dancers addressing moments at which they reflect on the appropriative nature of the dance. Musing about how she thinks about the consequences of appropriation, which she terms "shitting on cultures", Elena explains:

> If I'm going to fuse two cultures, if I'm already shitting on one via my privileged position as a white person by the fact that I'm taking what is a Middle Eastern dance, at the very least I'm going to fuse it with a culture I have some connection to. I'll fuse it with my ballet training. You can't get away from the locking and popping in tribal fusion which was taken from break-dancing, a black form of dance, which is not great but I do limit that to a certain extent and I fuse it with more acting or sketch comedy which would be more American or British. So it's kind of like, 'let me only be horrible to one other culture at a time basically'. I make very sure I'm not pulling things from Indian costuming … I pulled a [stage] name [hers is Briar Rose] from a German Fairy Tale.

These quotes demonstrate that Elena is not lacking critical engagement with elements of belly dance, particularly its costuming and its history. She does not simply lap up the exoticised elements, but has come to question some of them and to experience conflicts between her values and her love of the dance. Elena has developed her own ways to participate in the dance while finding ways to resist some of the elements she finds most troublesome, mainly, the appropriation of culture.

However, the claims of empowered embodiment Elena was shown to be making earlier can be understood to be aligned with feminism insofar as they are implicitly coded as feminism for white women in a colour-blind society, an example of thinking problematised by intersectional feminist writers, most

notably Audrey Lourde (1984) and bell hooks (1981, 2000). These scholars critique second–wave feminists for conceptualising 'women' as a unified whole and focusing their theories and progressive agendas on the experiences of middle-class white women while leaving unacknowledged the ways in which different identities impact the experiences and henceforth needs of women of different classes, races, and sexual orientations.

A pattern in Elena's thinking is clearly racialised. She feels she is "shitting on" Middle Eastern culture by appropriating its dance, compounding the problem by incorporating African, Indian or (in another passage of her interview) Japanese styles of dance or aesthetics. Mixing these cultures with belly dance produces feelings of discomfort of "shitting on two cultures at once". However, she feels comfortable mixing belly dance with Celtic, German, American or British cultures, with ballet, which is of French origin, and with Gothic elements, which reinterpret a 19th century style of European literature, architecture and art. While it is left unsaid, I would argue that she feels entitled to fuse belly dance with European elements which she regards as neutral, as Lorde (1984) and hooks (1981, 2000) might argue, whereas she regards incorporating Indian, African or Japanese elements as appropriation because it would mean mixing two "colours".

Conclusion

From the point of view of second–wave feminist and Orientalism scholars, belly dance is interpreted as rife with oppressive tropes of Orientalism. However, my research demonstrates that belly dance is open to interpretation and to systems of meaning that neither of these schools of thought would expect. The visual focus of gaze theorists has contributed to the neglect of embodiment in these accounts; the body, which ought to be central to any research on dance, has been curiously absent in critical literature. Sensory anthropologists (Classen, 1997; Howes, 1991; Pink, 2009; Vannini, Waskul, & Gottschalk, 2012) would contend that the Western tendency to privilege the visual, and the Enlightenment legacy of regarding other senses as "primitive" (Classen, 1997) has led to the negation of other sensory input that contributes to how we interpret and evaluate an experience, negating the bodily-kinaesthetic knowledge of dancers in favour of visual representation.

The critical approach fails to account for the "complex interplay of culture, societal norms of femininity, individual expression, and women's emic experiences within this type of leisure" (Moe, 2012, p. 207), for the body as a site wherein many contradictory and opposing discourses exist (Shilling, 1993). Lorraine and Elena understand their bodies as more than objects of "inscription and oppression" (Wright & Dreyfus, 1998, p. 95). The interactions they describe between their bodies, subjectivities and cultural discourses require an analysis alert to these tensions and nuances.

While I have argued that the embodied experience of dance is key to analysing its meaning for participants, I also have wondered what to make of the racism and Orientalism implicit in a dance practice that does, after all, reinforce stereotypes of "Arab princesses" for its onlookers. This is not an unusual dilemma for researchers to be in (Arat, 2003). My response is that we must bear in mind that the experience of the body is always socially mediated by

constructed discourses that produce the body and its meanings (Bordo, 1993, p. 30). I wish to balance acknowledgement of the lived and embodied experiences of my participants, with acknowledgement that researchers are equipped with tools and theoretical dispositions that help them to analyse experience in relation to broader social processes of which participants may be are unaware. For example, while Elena sees the veil as a "partner" in dance, she also positions it as "ethereal" and "other-worldy", thus presenting a fairly clear Orientalising discourse. Further, her discussion of the ways in which belly dance has improved her body image again rehearses Orientalist discourse in the sense that it positions the presumed sensuality of Middle Eastern dance as a crutch for women with supposedly less good looking or normative bodies. Therefore, I do not intend for this paper to be an argument veiled in apologetics for racism; it is the role of the researcher to move beyond members' practically-oriented interpretations to more abstract and informed analysis (Schutz, as cited in Anderson, 2006, p. 381).

The in-depth exploration of these two dancers' views demonstrates that the embodied experience of belly dance largely impacts the ways in which women relate to and make sense of the dance and its practices. Contrary to gaze theorists' projections, my participants experience belly dance as experiencing feelings of empowerment through the corporeal, sensual and liberatory aspects of the dance that redress societal messages about the female body—in short, as intensely feminist. Moreover, they do not experience the gaze as unidirectional and oppressive but as a reciprocal relationship where positive energy is gained through the flow of power between participants.

Finally, a criticism that has been leveled against gaze theory is that it disarms would-be acts of resistance: in its framework, the female body has no potential to effect political change because the pre-existing meanings associated with it— e.g., as sex object or projection of the male gaze nullify the progressive intentions of subversive acts (Manning, 1997; Wolff, 1997). My participants express certain discomforts around Orientalism and appropriation, whether by dance instructors who emphasise sexuality in place of skills, or in demonstrating a critical engagement with the history of the dance form. Gaze theorists may not agree with Elena's perspectives on "shitting on cultures" or her efforts to resist what she considers wrong about belly dancing by taking a German fairy tale-based stage name rather than wearing a bindi, but to her, these are ways to effect change. Therefore, while their actions seem to be consistent with the practice of empowerment through the appropriation of the imagined cultural other, it is more complex because it is not done unthinkingly. When it comes to belly dance, the question of appropriation is not so simply resolved.

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Acknowledgements

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SPECIAL ISSUE: EDWARD SAID—INTELLECTUAL, CULTURAL CRITIC, ACTIVIST

Is Hellenism an Orientalism? Reflections on the boundaries of 'Europe' in an age of austerity

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My point of departure is Said's rejection of the idea of an 'Orientalist' Hellenism. What might it mean to argue that Orientalism characterises 'intra-European' cultural politics, specifically the colonial geography of western Europe vis-à-vis its 'subaltern' Others? Contra Said, I argue that the function of Hellenism in constituting both the fantasy of Europe and western hegemony has an Orientalist structure. I explore the cultural underpinnings of Greece's relation to 'Europe' in Hellenistic discourses. Then, I argue that the dominant discourse surrounding the odious Greek debt has an Orientalist structure. Pairing a critique of Orientalism with a core-periphery analysis arguably enables a more nuanced understanding of the coloniality of power in today's 'age of austerity', enabling a deconstruction of the racial logic underlying continental integration and revealing the violence inherent in the fantasy of European civilisation.

Keywords: Orientalism, Hellenism, colonial discourse, austerity politics

> "Orientalism and Hellenism are radically incomparable".
> Edward Said

Introduction

Edward Said famously defines 'Orientalism' as a discourse exterior to the Orient, refusing self-representations to peoples constructed as 'Oriental' (1978). As a discourse of European colonial dominance over non-Europeans, Orientalism brought 'the Orient' into existence as a means for the self-representation of the Occident. While Orientalism constructs clear lines and boundaries between Occident and Orient, west and east, I suggest we can discern Orientalist logic in relations internal to 'Europe', which do not come under scrutiny in Said's analysis. Specifically, the mythology of origins undergirding the construction of 'Europe' requires and effects an appropriative erasure of Greece in order to claim

for western Europe its redefined and re-imagined ancient past. While Greece is geographically and politically 'inside' Europe, and is often constructed as the origin of 'western' culture, Hellenism situates Greeks racially at the economic, political and cultural limits of the 'European', serving to disinherit them of their cultural and linguistic heritage. This paradoxical 'liminality' and Greeks' resulting racial ambiguity makes the Greek case particularly interesting with respect to rethinking the notion of Orientalism (Kolokotroni & Mitsi, 2008, p. 6). Particularly in North American interpretations of Said, there is a tendency to ascribe false racial, cultural or economic unity to 'Europe'. This spatial-temporal projection secures the idea of Europe—a racial, continental fantasy which variously absorbs, contains, and expels its cultural 'others' through its imperial self-representations, geopolitical arrogations, economic and immigration policies. Continents are racial metonyms, the borders of which are secured through the exercise of epistemological, cultural, economic, and military power. Said's critical intervention instructs us to read these various forms of power together, and search after the relations between them in constituting our world and representations of it. In this paper, I examine Said's rejection of the idea of an 'Orientalist' Hellenism. I explore the possibility that Orientalism characterises 'intra-European' cultural politics, specifically the colonial geography of western Europe to its 'subaltern' Others; I argue that the function of Hellenism in constituting both the fantasy of Europe and western hegemony has an Orientalist structure.

Orientalism, Hellenism

The polemical exchange between Said and one of his vociferous critics, Bernard Lewis, forms my point of entry into an exploration of the coloniality of 'western' civilisational discourses, in general, and the appropriative nature of Hellenism, specifically. In a derisive review of Said's *Orientalism* in the *New York Review of Books*, Lewis asked his readers to

> [i]magine a situation in which a group of patriots and radicals from Greece decides that the profession of classical studies is insulting to the great heritage of Hellas, and that those engaged in these studies, known as classicists, are the latest manifestation of a deep and evil conspiracy, incubated for centuries, hatched in Western Europe, fledged in America, the purpose of which is to denigrate the Greek achievement and subjugate the Greek lands and peoples. In this perspective, the entire European tradition of classical studies—largely the creation of French romantics, British colonial governors (of Cyprus, of course), and of poets, professors, and proconsuls from both countries—is a long-standing insult to the honor and integrity of Hellas, and a threat to its future. The poison has spread from Europe to the United States, where the teaching of Greek history, language, and literature in the universities is dominated by the evil race of classicists—men and women who are not of Greek origin, who have no sympathy for Greek causes, and who, under a false mask of dispassionate scholarship, strive to keep the Greek people in a state of permanent subordination. (1982)

The analogical use of classicism to expose the 'absurdity' of Said's argument concerning Orientalism turns on the dismissability of the notion that classicism 'denigrates' and 'subjugates' Greek society and culture, in order to show that Orientalism, a structurally similar intellectual endeavor—by analogy, the

'dispassionate' study of the Orient—cannot possibly be part of a colonial project of domination. Said's thesis does not warrant serious consideration, because if classicism, or, Hellenism, is politically innocent, so too, is Orientalism. On the other hand, if we were to accept Said's thesis that Orientalism is a western style of thought, an ontological division, and a corporate institution for dominating peoples constructed as 'Oriental', we would also be committed to the apparently 'ludicrous' position that Hellenism is, similarly, a colonial discourse. A reductio ad absurdum, the thought experiment is intended to garner our assent to Lewis' rejection of Said's argument, based on our existing assumption that classicists do not, in fact, 'strive' to 'permanently subordinate' Greek people. Yet this would be the 'absurd' consequence of Said's argument.

To defeat a reductio, one may sever the link between the supposed and the known fact, and thereby show their noncontradiction. This was Said's argumentative strategy against Lewis, when, in his 1994 Afterword to *Orientalism*, he responded to the mocking parallelism between Hellenism and Orientalism, stating categorically that not only are they disanalogous. In fact, they are

> radically incomparable. The former is an attempt to describe a whole region of the world as an accompaniment to that region's colonial conquest, the latter is not at all about the direct colonial conquest of Greece in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; in addition, Orientalism expresses antipathy to Islam, Hellenism sympathy for classical Greece. (1994/2003, p. 342)

Just as Lewis cites and at the same time dismisses the colonial relationship between 'the west' and Greek (and Cypriot) society, so too, at the margins of Said's remarks, reading between the lines, we can discern the tendentiousness of his characterisation of the relation of the west to Greek history and culture. Two adjectives play a crucial role in securing Said's disanalogy between Hellenism and Orientalism: 'direct' (in 'direct colonial conquest') and 'classical' (in 'sympathy for classical Greece'). Observing that Hellenism has been insufficiently critiqued from a postcolonial theoretical perspective on the politics of knowledge, Phiroze Vasunia argues that "the reception of the Hellenic past in the modern period remains substantially incomplete without an understanding of European colonialism in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries" (2003, p. 88). He addresses Said's own cursory treatment of Hellenism (quoted above), arguing that

> it is not enough to remark [as Said does] that Said's theory does not pertain to Greece on the grounds that no modern European power ever colonised Greece or even that Greece itself lies in Europe and not in Asia (in fact, the situation of Greece makes the latter distinction exceedingly problematic). (2003, p. 92)

Yet Vasunia's intervention, while informative and programmatic, decentres Greece, eliding the historically specific forms the coloniality of Euro-American power took with respect to Greece, focusing instead on "collusion between Classics and empire" in Asia (2003, p. 88). His conclusion, although well taken, is revealing of the 'disappearing modern Greek': arguing that contemporary Hellenic studies must "forge more inclusive histories of Hellenism" and "more open and less totalizing accounts of ancient Greece and its reception", he observes that "[a]n Egyptian, Iranian, or Indian is going to respond very differently to Herodotus than a white European who has been raised in the

Anglo-Saxon tradition" (Vasunia, 2003, p. 96). What a Greek's response to Herodotus might be remains, even in an 'inclusive' Hellenism, quite irrelevant. As we will see, this omission is not incidental, since Hellenism is by definition a discourse whose exteriority to Greece is precisely what confers its Orientalist structure—or, at least, its kinship with Orientalism.

Stathis Gourgouris has argued that "modern Greece is … history's sole witness of the consequences of … the 'colonization of the ideal'" (1996, p. 6, 124). Throughout its contemporary history since its foundation as a nation-state, Greece has been subject to indirect western European rule, and U.S.-supported dictatorships; the west's 'sympathy' for Greek culture extends only to its whitewashed ancient form, not its ineluctably premodern contemporary underdevelopment, due to which it required political 'stewardship' by western powers. Edmund Lyons, British Minister in Athens (1835-1849) expressed the western European view succinctly: "A really independent Greece is an absurdity" (as cited in Kolokotroni & Mitsi, 2008, p. 7). What is now modern 'Greece' was under Ottoman rule from the mid-15th century to 1821 (some parts of Greece were under Ottoman control until 1912); the Ionian Islands were British 'protectorates' from 1807 to 1863. However, Said's conceptualisation of Orientalism brackets the Ottoman Empire, since his examination of imperialism begins with the rise of western European empires. Yet arguably a more historically nuanced understanding of the interplay, competition, and complicity between 'western' and 'eastern' empires is needed to understand the Greek (and, more broadly, the Balkan) case. As Vassiliki Kolokotroni and Efterpi Mitsi argue, "Greece complicates the typical postcolonial model, having been colonized by a non-Western power, the Ottoman Empire" (2008, p. 7). Moreover, Greece's national independence is owed, in part, to the support of western European (British and French) and Russian imperial powers (an issue to which I return in the next section). Precisely in virtue of Ottoman colonisation, Milica Bakić-Hayden and Robert Hayden have argued for the extension of the concept of Orientalism to "Europe itself, between Europe 'proper' and those parts of the continent that were under Ottoman (hence Oriental) rule" (1992, p. 3). Furthermore, contending that in the twentieth century, "an ideological 'other', communism, has replaced the geographical/cultural 'other' of the Orient", they advocate an analysis of the "orientalizing discourses on communism by its ideological opponents in 'the west'", and, more generally, of the European "symbolic geography of eastern inferiority" (secured through historical, ideological, and religious axes of 'orientalisation') (Bakić-Hayden & Hayden, 1992, p. 5).

Neither Lewis in constructing his reductio, nor Said in attempting to refute it takes seriously the possibility that Hellenism could be a discourse that appropriates, distorts, or negates Greek history, language, or identity; both gloss over the colonial and imperialist entanglements in Greek society. Yet Lewis' reductio can be refuted in another way: by showing that the consequence of accepting Said's argument is not absurd, but historically tenable and entirely plausible. I suggest that, on the broader terms of Said's own argument, if we accept Said's thesis about the coloniality of Orientalism, we are led to view Hellenism as an Orientalism. This does not threaten Said's analysis, as Lewis would have it; it actually strengthens it, as Said failed to see. To the extent that 'Europe', and the notion that western European civilisation can be traced back to ancient Greece, have always been fantasies of white supremacy, I suggest that

we can bring Said's insights about Orientalism to bear on neocolonial relations between the European core and its internal periphery, by tracing the liminal positioning of Greece at the boundaries of 'Europe'. Greece functions as the 'axis' of binary distinctions central to occidental fantasies of superiority, such as "Oriental/European, ancient/modern, civilized/barbaric, metropolitan/peripheral" (Koundoura, 2007/2012, p. 8).

Pairing a discursive critique of Orientalism with a materialist core-periphery analysis arguably enables a more nuanced understanding of the coloniality of power in today's 'age of austerity' (McNally, 2012). This account is compatible with Said's own definition of imperialism—"the practice, theory and attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory"—which is distinct from, though often results in colonialism, "the implanting of settlements on distant territory" (Said, 1993, p. 9). Indeed, given his own definition of imperialism, it is puzzling that in rejecting the analogy between Hellenism and Orientalism, Said reduces imperialism to territorial colonialism, resulting in an impoverished and historically inaccurate account of the coloniality of western hegemony. If Said is correct that "[i]n our time, direct colonialism has largely ended" (and, of course, the ongoing colonisation of indigenous territories by white settler states contradict this thesis), then "imperialism … lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices" (Said, 1993, p. 9). Indeed, at various stages in its history, Greece has been subject to Anglo-American intervention and German occupation; the current conjuncture in which the corporate and national interests represented by the 'Troika' of the European Central Bank (ECB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the European Commission (EC) which collectively mandated austerity policies to the Greek state once again raise this specter, of 'debt colonialism'. In what follows, I explore the cultural underpinnings of Greece's relation to 'Europe' in domestic and foreign Hellenistic discourses. Then, I argue that the dominant discourse surrounding the odious Greek debt has an Orientalist structure. Complementing Said's concept of Orientalism with a core-periphery analysis of the recolonisation of politically independent states through debt and austerity enables us to further deconstruct the racial logic underlying continental integration and reveal the tenuousness of, and the violence inherent in the fantasy of European civilisation. In the final section, I argue that this fantasy, propped up by an internalised Hellenism, manifests itself in the white supremacist discourse of Golden Dawn (Χρυσή Αυγή). As Maria Koundoura argues, "the question of Greece's function and location is central to Said's argument; it is also what complicates it" (2007/2012, p. 27).

Appropriation of the past

In her book, *The Greek Idea: The Formation of National and Transnational Identities*, Koundoura theorises the paradoxical representation of Greece as both 'Europe's origin and Other', by examining its construction in Hellenistic, Orientalist discourses (2007/2012). Koundoura's important argument shows how "Greece's construction as the stable place of the West's identity formation lays open the tension between its mythic status and precarious history in the interstices of East and West" (2007/2012, p. 8). Constructed as the 'cradle of Western civilisation', Greece is frozen in an ancient past, constructed as

premodern, and therefore relegated to the political, economic, and social margins of European modernity. The "central characteristic" of modern 'Hellenism', Koundoura argues, is that "it effectively erases the reality of modern Greeks" (2007/2012, p. 5-6). "[E]voked as [an] historical abstraction", "cultural fantasy", "Greece has figured as the universal" against which western Europe defined its historical concreteness, its "process of self-totalization" (Koundoura, 2007/2012, p. 19). Western "[h]istorians, philosophers, [and] writers project onto the past a Greece of their imagination" thereby "discovering" the mythic origins of their societies, and securing the continuity of their civilizations (Koundoura, 2007/2012, p. 20). Koundoura argues that 'derealisation' typifies the west's encounter with "the idea and territory of Greece" (2007/2012, p. 4). As Sigmund Freud exclaimed when he saw the Acropolis, "a remarkable thought suddenly entered my mind: "So all this really does exist, just as we learnt at school!" (1964, p. 240-241). The scene or "geography" (in Dušan Bjelić's terms (2011)) of Freud's self-analysis occasions incredulity, displacement, the splitting of his subjectivity, and derealisation: "this doubt of a piece of reality, was doubly displaced in its actual expression: first, it was shifted back into the past, and secondly it was transposed from my relation to the Acropolis on to the very existence of the Acropolis … I had (or might have had) a momentary feeling: 'What I see here is not real'", writes Freud (1964, p. 240-241). As Stathis Gourgouris explains, derealisation "signif[ies] simultaneously both the unreality of the experience in light of the preconception and the evident unreality of the preconception in view of the experience" (1996, p. 123).

Whether Greece becomes known, or is deemed unknowable by the western subject (as, for instance, by Virginia Woolf), "these accounts are inevitably always an analysis of the West's relation to Greece and never about Greece itself, even as they displace that relation and name it Greek" (Woolf, 2008; Koundoura, 2007/2012, p. 4). As Gourgouris argues of Shelley's declaration, "We are all Greeks"—adopted, more recently, as a slogan by European leftists in the European Parliamentary elections of 2014—Hellenism hinges on the "displacement of Hellenes from a historical entity to an ontological condition" (1996, p. 127). The representational activities of displacement, appropriation, erasure, renaming and derealisation are significant, as they mark the exteriority of Hellenism to Greece, which, as Said tells us, is a crucial structural feature of Orientalism. 'Greece' is a metaphor, a romantic fetishisation (Koundoura, 2007/2012, p. 23). "[As] an object of desire, the Hellenic cannot exist, or rather it can only exist as a phantasmic projection", which "the Enlightment retroactively discovered to be its historical project" (Gourgouris, 1996, p. 127). Even when it is adopted as a discourse to foment Greek nationalism, Koundoura maintains that Hellenism preserves its exteriority: it "is always another's discourse, even when it presents itself as the nation's own" (2012, p. 12).

One central way in which the exteriority of Hellenism to Greece is secured (and, as we will see, is preserved even in domestic nationalist appropriations of the discourse) is through the 'Aryanisation' of ancient Greece. As Ella Shohat and Robert Stam argue, "[t]he Aryan model had to perform ingenious acrobatics to 'purify' classical Greece of all African and Asian 'contaminations'" (1994, p. 57). Indeed, Said himself acknowledges the "redesign[ing] as Aryan" of Greek civilisation, which (as Martin Bernal has argued in *Black Athena: the Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*) "was known originally to have roots in Egyptian, Semitic and various other southern and eastern cultures … roots either actively

purged or hidden from view" in a western European attempt to "'establish continuity with a suitable historic past'" (Said, 1993, p. 15-16; Hobsbawm, as cited in Said, 1993, p. 32; Bernal 1987). Moreover, this 'Aryanised' Hellenistic discourse was imparted through colonial education, so that "Hellenism has always been a function of the pedagogical apparatus of colonialism", part of the "hegemonic culture minted at the centers of power and disbursed along the supply routes of commerce and colonization" (McKinsey, 2010, p. 148, p. 21). The coloniality of this discourse is preserved even when it is adopted by ethnic Greeks to violently foment their nationalism. As I discuss in further detail in the next section of the paper, an 'Aryanised' ancient Greece is found in the ultranationalist discourse of the fascist political party Golden Dawn (Χρυσή Αυγή), which claims an ideological and a racial kinship with Nazism and neo-Nazi movements in Europe, seeking to 'purify' the Greek nation (which in reality has always been a multiculture) of supposedly 'foreign' contaminants: African, Asian, and eastern European migrants, historical Roma, Muslim and Jewish communities, sexual and gender minorities, and leftists (Chatzivasileiou & Carastathis, n.d.).

Despite this acknowledgement that Greece had to be 'Aryanised' in order to be constructed as the "cradle of western civilization", as Koundoura writes, Said "stumble[s] when it comes to Greece" (2007/2012, p. 21). Taking Greece, unproblematically, to be "at and the origin of a seamless and unified European identity", Said forgets "his own argument that this sense of continuity" from antiquity into the present, which an 'Aryanised' Greece secures for the west, is "an eighteenth-century fabrication that was materially consolidated in the nineteenth century" (Koundoura, 2007/2012, p. 26). For the purposes of his argument, Said needs Greece to function as the origin and metonym of western culture in order to consolidate the Occidental identity of 'the west' over and against its 'Oriental' Other (Farris, 2010; Koundoura, 2007/2012, p. 28). However, in the process, Said "erases the present in the name of the epochal", derealising Greece in the same manner of Hellenistic discourses (Koundoura, 2007/2012, p. 28). As Vasunia has argued, Said's work ambivalently "presents the East-West distinction as the problematic and phantasmatic retrojection of a modern European tradition" (Vasunia, 2003, p. 90). On the one hand, Said is critical of the discursive continuity and unity of Orientalism, its citational and self-referential totalisation of peoples and cultures constructed as 'Oriental'. On the other hand, Said appears to bestow precisely these qualities to Orientalism, when he "situate[s] ancient representations of the Orient as the precursors to the post-Enlightenment phenomenon of Orientalism" (Vasunia, 2003, p. 88). In what seems like an anachronistic argument that borrows the tendency to retroactively project a western fantasy on ancient Greece, Said goes so far as to suggest that "modern Orientalism, with all its ideological, military, political, scientific, sociological, and imaginative dimensions, was informed to a significant degree by ancient anxieties" (Vasunia, 2003, p. 89). But "to trace the roots of Orientalism back to Greece is to bestow on Hellenic antiquity a sanctity of origin or a founding point of reference which, in the light of the history of European thought, has come to appear extremely problematic" (2003, 89). Said himself "was keen to suggest in *Orientalism* that the authoritative nature of the unbroken European cultural tradition was founded on massive denial and violence. The idea that a post-Enlightenment discursive formation could be traced back in any unmediated sense to ancient Greece was a self-validating

European construct and fantasy" (Vasunia, 2003, p. 90); yet it is an idea which Said appears to reproduce in his own account of Hellenism.

In "Topographies of Greek Modernism", Marinos Pourgouris (2006) develops the concept of "temporal Orientalism" to describe the ways in which "misperceptions, ideological biases and un-historical anachronisms" mediate the western gaze. Specifically, he argues that temporal Orientalism "impos[es] an already misconstrued image of ancient Greeks on its modern inhabitants", whom the west views as less modern, and less western than their ancient progenitors (Pourgouris, 2006, pp. 100-101). The dispossession of Greeks of their ancient heritage, for instance by positing a break in continuity between modern culture or language and ancient civilisation, palliates the dissonance between desire, anticipation, and projection (on the one hand), and what the temporally Orientalist gaze 'discovers' in contemporary or modern Greece. Maria Todorova calls this dissonance "frustrated" or "thwarted philhellenism": "the subject of many studies illustrating either the lack of continuity between ancient Greece and the degenerate situation of its modern heiress" (1994, p. 465). To accommodate a western European fantasy of its own civilisational supremacy, "temporal Orientalism" represses "what is eastern in ancient Greek thought" (Pourgouris, 2006, p. 100). Too 'eastern' to be the inheritors of the originary 'western' civilisation, modern or contemporary Greeks are displaced by the true 'westerners', the true descendants of Hellenes. These cardinal concepts of 'east' and 'west', are, of course, to be invoked tentatively and always 'under erasure' (to paraphrase Stuart Hall), since, as Dimitris Stamatopoulos observes, "[f]or Orientalism … the limits of the notion of 'the East' are always fluid" (2008, p. 251; my translation). Complicating the "east/west dichotomy which has underlain scholarship on 'Orientalism' since the publication of Said's classic polemic", Milica Bakić-Hayden has argued for a "gradation of 'Orients'" that she terms "nesting orientalisms":

> a pattern of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which Orientalism is premised. In this pattern, Asia is more 'east' or 'other' than eastern Europe; within eastern Europe itself this gradation is reproduced with the Balkans perceived as most 'eastern'; within the Balkans there are similarly constructed hierarchies. (1995, p. 917)[1]

For Bakić-Hayden, rather than reifying 'east' and 'west', the concept of "nesting orientalisms" reveals that "the terms of definition of such a dichotomous model eventually establish conditions for its own contradiction" (1995, p. 917).

Characterising Greece as a "haunted community", Álvaro García Marín has argued that Greece constitutes "a perfect example of … psychic and semiotic uncanniness": through what he terms a process of "self-colonization" (2013, p. 54). By this he means that

> the classical ideal of Western Philhellenism [was] embraced by modern Greeks themselves [and] gave birth to a nation compelled to fit an abstract model built by European Enlightenment in its own image rather than the daily practice of the

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[1] For a critique of this view, see Maria Todorova, who argues that "'Balkanism' is not a sub-species of Orientalism, or an 'orientalist variation on a Balkan theme'", as Bakić-Hayden and Hayden argue, but a distinct discourse which "evolved independently from 'Orientalism' and, in certain aspects, against or despite it" (1994, p. 455).

> Greek community—Greek-speaking and Christian Orthodox, but most of all a *millet* among others in the Ottoman Empire. (2013, p. 54)

That is, Greek intellectuals at the turn of the nineteenth century "realized that classical antiquity held the key to the West's commitment to [Greek] struggle for autonomy. From the new nation's onset, Greek national consciousness was embedded also in the West's construction of the East, or in Orientalism" (Van Steen, as cited in Mitsi & Muse, 2013, p. 162). According to Gonda Van Steen, Greek national independence from the Ottoman Empire exploited "a binary thinking about the sullen, 'violent', and 'tyrannical' Eastern enemy", an Orientalist ideology which "came to serve all parties: the Greek revolutionaries of 1821 and also Russia, France, and Britain, which could only reluctantly be convinced to join the struggle for the cause of the Christian Greeks" (as cited in Mitsi & Muse, 2013, p. 166). In Van Steen's estimation,

> [t]he Great Powers … were more motivated by Greece's antiquity than by the fate of the 'earliest Christians'. Greece's very existence as a modern nation was thus 'owed' to its classical past. Revolution entailed a revolving back to past history, a tenacious investment in cultural, linguistic, and ethnic continuity, and a fierce denial of racial mixing. (as cited in Mitsi & Muse, 2013, p. 166)

The implications of the "internalization" of "these normative standards" and their "incorporation" in their "Neohellenic patriotism … drove the nation-building project for another full century", and arguably into the present (Van Steen, as cited in, Mitsi & Muse, 2013, p. 166). Following Van Steen's analysis, we might say that the Orientalist structure of Hellenism lies at the very heart of Greek national identity, suggesting a profound conflict between that homogenised, westernised identity and the heterogeneity of Greek historical narratives, cultural practices, identities, affinities, and communities of belonging.

Appropriation of the future

Symptomatic of the liminality of Greece, its interstitial or axial location, its 'non-place' between 'east' and 'west', is "Greece's anxiety over its Europeanness" (Koundoura, 2007/2012, p. 16, p. 20). If the new millennium seemed to materialise Greece's aspirational Europeanness—entering the European Monetary Union (EMU) in 2001, hosting the Olympic Games in 2004—in less than a decade, and after four years of austerity measures imposed by the EU, the IMF, and the European Central Bank (ECB), Greece faces a humanitarian crisis and is on the verge of being declared a 'failed state'. Presented as the only alternative to the sovereign debt crisis declared in 2010, three successive governments accepted the conditions of the Memorandum of Agreement pertaining to the economic adjustment programme tied to Troika loans (EC, 2010, 2012). The professed aim of the programme is to "improve competitiveness and alter the economy's structure towards a more investment- and export-led growth model" (EC 2010, p. 10). To achieve this, "a very large macroeconomic adjustment, especially in the public sector", has been imposed, entailing that "large cuts in public wages and pensions are inevitable" (EC, 2010, p. 13, p. 15). The Memorandum directs the Greek state to implement a "privatization programme with the aim of collecting €50 billion" by selling off state assets and eliminating national monopolies in transport, public infrastructure and utilities.

Simultaneously, it calls for the reduction of public sector wages by €205 million, and the dismissal of 150,000 public employees;[2] to undertake the "ambitious reforming" of the pension and judicial systems, the "modernization" of the health care system, and the "upgrading of the education system"; to reduce the national minimum wage by 22%, and by 32% for "young" workers under 25; and to implement the "Business-Friendly Greece Action Plan" (EC, 2012, p. 123-185). Furthermore, the Troika directs the Greek government to "neither propose nor implement measures which may infringe the rules on the free movement of capital" (EC, 2012, p. 126) and to insert in the Constitution "a provision ensuring that priority is granted to debt servicing payments" (EC, 2012, p. 165). As a direct consequence of the austerity programme, unemployment increased from 8.3% in 2007 to 17.7% in 2011 and by May 2013 had reached 27.6% (31.6% for women, and 64.9% for people under 25, up from 16.3% and 22.9% respectively in 2007) (Φραγκάκη, 2013). Private sector wages and pensions each decreased by more than 30% and one in three people is living in poverty (Φραγκάκη, 2013). Homelessness has exploded: in the absence of official or systematic studies, it is estimated that more than 20,000 people are homeless (Κλίμακα, 2011, p. 2). A health crisis has resulted from the collapse of the public health system: to cite just two indicators, infant morality has increased by 43% from 2008 to 2011; suicides have increased by a reported 45% between 2007 and 2011 (Kentikelenis, Karanikolos, Reeves, McKee & Stuckler, 2014, p. 750).

Securing contemporary austerity politics, the dominant discourse surrounding the odious Greek debt arguably has an Orientalist structure. While a systematic discourse analysis lies beyond the scope of this paper, preliminarily, we might sketch three of its prominent features: first, 'austerity discourse' uses a racial logic to justify Greece's place on the European economic periphery. Second, it exonerates powerful core states (e.g., Germany and France) and the financial and political institutions they dominate, concealing their histories of military occupation; their support for dictatorships; and, as host countries, their benefiting from exploitative labour migration. Third, the Troika's Memorandum paves the way for the financial recolonisation of Greece, through structural adjustment policies designed to subordinate Greek society to the interests of foreign and domestic capital. Privatisation, deregulation and constitutional change will facilitate military expansionism (through the purchase of French- and German-produced weapons); environmentally destructive resource extraction (for instance, in the Skouries forest of Halkidiki by the Canadian-based corporation El Dorado Gold); and tourism, through the planned de-industrialisation of the economy, the drastic reduction of labour costs, the elimination of labour rights and protections, the precaritisation of the labour force, and the privatisation of public spaces, such as seashores.

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[2] Ostensibly to achieve this benchmark, on 11 June 2013, the Greek government overnight closed the public broadcaster, ERT (Ελληνική Ραδιοφωνία-Τηλεόραση), which continues to broadcast from the internet, as an autonomous collective operated by its former employees. A police operation took place on 7 November 2013 to evacuate the main building of ERT which had been occupied for 148 days (ERT, 2013). In part due to the closure of the public broadcaster, but also due to the arrest and prosecution of journalists who criticise the government and corporate élites, and the corporate control of mass media, Greece fell 80 places, from 19th (in 2002) to 99th (in 2014), in the World Press Freedom Index issued by Reporters Without Borders (RWB, 2014).

The "outraged" resistance of the aganaktismenoi (αγανακτισμένοι), inspired by the Spanish *Indignados* movement and by the Tunisian, Egyptian, Yemeni revolutions (among other uprisings in the Arab world in 2011), displaces the Orientalist framing which constructs Greek debt as a function of Greek indolence, irresponsibility, and parasitism on industrious, even self-sacrificing Germans. Their message: «δε χρωστάμε, δεν πουλάμε, δεν πληρώνουμε»: "we don't owe, we're not selling, we're not paying". A global view of the 'age of austerity' or of 'debt colonialism' enables us to situate Greece within a transnational core-periphery structure, and to view Orientalist representations of Greeks (whether in international mass media or in European politicians' speeches) as the ideological reflexes of imperialist domination. Of course, a critique of economic, political and military structures, both external and internal to Greece, offers an alternative explanation of the origins of debt. For instance, as evinced in the popular crowd-funded documentary film, *Debtocracy* (Χρεοκρατία), transnational parallelisms are drawn to the neocolonial origins of debt in Latin American countries (e.g., Argentina and Ecuador), reflecting shared legacies of U.S.-backed dictatorship and proxy war in the Cold War era, and marking the transnational phenomenon of colonisation through indebtedness (Hatzistefanou & Kitidi, 2011). Χρεοκρατία, translated as 'Debtocracy', is a play on words with «χρεοκοπία», which means 'bankruptcy', 'insolvency', and 'failure'; and «κρατία», the tenure of rule (as in «δημοκρατία», rule of the people by the people). The term captures the crisis in political sovereignty unfolding in Greece in the 2010s, echoing what occurred in Bolivia in the 1980s, which Naomi Klein suggests "provided a blueprint for a new, more palatable kind of authoritarianism": economic restructuring proceeded by way of a "civilian coup d'état, one carried out by politicians and economists in business suits rather than soldiers in military uniforms—all unfolding within the official shell of a democratic regime" (2007, p. 154). Significantly, this process could "still be applauded as democratic because elections had taken place, regardless of how completely civil liberties were suppressed in the aftermath or how fully democratic wishes were ignored" (Klein, 2007, p. 154). As a central mechanism of authoritarian capitalism, debt rationalises the condition of permanent austerity which characterises the neoliberal, neocolonial economy. According to Mauricio Lazzarato, "the debt economy institutes economic and existential precariousness, which is but the new name for the old reality: proletarianization" (2012, p. 47). Lazzarato argues that "[d]ebt constitutes the most deterritorialised and the most general power relation through which the neoliberal power bloc institutes its class struggle" (2012, p. 46).

If Hellenism refuses Greece its actual history, cultural heterogeneity, linguistic hybridity, and political complexity, by fetishising a retrojected, imagined past, constituting a 'colonisation of an idea', as Gourgouris would have it, the neocolonial politics of debt and austerity refuse Greece (as one among many nation-states relegated to the peripheries of the global economy) its future. After all, "debt appropriates not only the present labor time of wage-earners and of the population in general, it also preempts non-chronological time, each person's future as well as the future of society as a whole" (Lazzarato, 2012, p. 22). Debt is invoked as a plausible "explanation for the strange sensation of living in a society without time, without possibility, without foreseeable rupture" (Lazzarato, 2012, p. 22). The disallowance of an historical past and the preemption of a livable future collide in the Greek present, marked by a rapid process of accumulation through dispossession (Harvey, 2004, p. 74).

The ways in which nationalists on the left and right have responded to the politics of austerity, often deploying Hellenistic motifs, reveals how this Orientalist discourse traps Greece in the coloniality of its own national identity. Hellenism is by definition a racist discourse on ancient Greece, inherently determined by an inescapable binary logic (Tziovas, 2001, p. 199), and deployed to secure the binary distinction between Occident and Orient, displacing actual Greeks whose liminality at the crossroads of three 'continents' (and whose ancient and modern diasporic condition) belies their categorisation or their self-identification as 'western' or 'European'. For Greeks to invoke this discourse or the binarisms on which it rests is to reproduce their own self-alteriorisation, to mystify their own geopolitical condition. Many view the austerity measures as an attempt to economically marginalise Greece within Europe and even expel it from the 'advanced capitalist' world. Arguably, a widespread aspiration to be or become 'European', 'western', and 'modern' is expressed in Greeks' desire to remain in the EMU; the fear of the consequences of 'Grexit' has secured the assent of a significant portion of the population to the governing Memorandum parties, which have ravaged Greek society. In this period of crisis, Hellenism has been deployed by nationalists in Greece as well as western Europeans to support racist claims of 'European' superiority and to naturalise both inter- and intranational inequality. Most critical accounts of the 'Greek crisis' focus on the financial recolonisation of Greece, overlooking the coincidence and interrelation of this process with the intensification of a form of "border imperialism" (Walia, 2013) that is mandated by the protectionist policies of, and funded by the European Union and is enthusiastically enacted by the Greek state (Carastathis, 2014, in press). But a critical perspective on Hellenism enables us to connect these two phenomena as expressions of competing and collaborating nationalist and continental narratives. Today, Hellenistic discourse is deployed by fascists in Greece as it was in Nazi Germany, to justify a murderously violent anti-migrant racism; Golden Dawn's use of a meander (μαίανδρος) as a metonym for a swastika, and its glorification of ancient Sparta echoes the fascist-Hellenist symbolism of the Metaxas dictatorship (1936-1941) and of the colonels' junta (1967-1974). In this connection, Koundoura's point about the inherent 'exteriority' of Hellenism is worth restating: the attempt to 'hellenise' fascism does not evince the autochthony of either discourse. If white supremacist 'pure Hellenism" (Mitsi & Muse, 2013, p. 168) had not appropriated the ancient Greek past—as for instance, in the Munich Olympics, as documented by Leni Riefenstahl (1938)—to glorify its putative connection to the so-called 'Aryan race', would Greek neo-Nazis—who, if they lack a phenotypic resemblance to 'Aryans', perform whiteness through the enactment of racist violence—have access to its representational functions?

Conclusion

To make sense of their political, economic, and existential condition, Greeks can often be heard invoking their history of colonisation, war and occupation: for instance, referring widely to the new regimes of taxation imposed by the Memoranda governments as haratsia (χαράτσια), the taxes collected by Ottoman Sultans from their Christian subjects; or, analogising the present loss of sovereignty and its deleterious humanitarian implications to the genocidal German occupation of Greece during the Second World War. Whether these are

inaccurate or accurate comparisons is rather beside the point. After all, as Said writes *in Culture and Imperialism*,

> [a]ppeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps. (1993, p. 3)

In general, I tend to think analogies (and homologies) are more deceptive than revealing as conceptual tools: one major flaw of analogies is that, in asserting the similarity between two phenomena, they make it difficult for us to appreciate their intersection, interconnection—or lack thereof. In this case, by asking, is Hellenism an Orientalism? I do not mean to flatly equate the two discourses, or to claim their identity; rather, I intend the question as an opening into the deconstruction of an opposition that I believe to be contradictory, and counterproductive to Said's critique of Orientalism. I have argued that Said's dismissal of Hellenism as a discourse that reveals a colonial relationship between western Europe and Greece glosses over, or fails to tarry with the material nature of that geopolitical relationship. In that sense, by rejecting the possibility that Hellenism may not only "support … imperialist and colonialist discourse" (Van Steen, as cited in Mitsi & Muse, 2013, p. 164), but may actually constitute such a discourse, we deprive our analysis of colonialism and colonial discourse of an important dimension: the positive construction of the fantasy of the 'self' through the abjection of the 'Other'. Moreover, we fail to view colonialism as a multifarious and heterogeneous historical process involving both 'western' and 'eastern' empires. Considering Hellenism from an antiracist perspective enables us to trouble the processes through which the cardinal concepts of 'east' and 'west' were constructed and are reproduced, mapped onto continents, 'races', civilisations, nations, and bodies. Specifically, we gain some insights into the production of European identity, as a continental metonym for whiteness that, I contend, illuminates the contemporary neoliberal project of economic integration under western control (as well as right-wing skepticism of that project, driven largely by racist ideologies); the genocidal project of territorial securitisation, which, since 1988, has claimed the lives of at least 20,000 people trying enter Europe, turning the continent into a fortress; and the rise of neo-Nazi parties in Greece and elsewhere in Europe, feeding on a invidious racism that right-wing governments have been fomenting for decades. Troubling Hellenism means 'unsettling' it as a viable identity for contemporary Greeks, inasmuch as it requires and cannot expunge the binary distinctions and erasures on which it is founded (Mitsi & Muse, 2013; Tziovas, 2001). In other words, to 'decolonise' Hellenism is not to 'return it' to Greece—as, for instance, Britain could repatriate the so-called Elgin Marbles; it is to interrogate the false exclusions on which its categorial logic is based and to generate new, autochtonous, multiplicitous narratives of the past animated by visions of a pluralistic, post-national, radically different future.

From within Greece, a country that has vivid historical memory of colonialism, foreign-backed dictatorships, war and occupation, all of which were interwoven in complicated ways with Hellenistic discourses, the coloniality of ostensibly democratic rule has perhaps never been so clear (at least to some) as it has become in the years of the Troika-imposed austerity measures, adopted by the

three successive Memorandum regimes. The pretext of debt has been used to enact constitutional change by stipulation, enabling the wholesale purchase and limitless exploitation of the country by foreign and domestic capital. Hellenism serves to secure the fantasy of European civilisational superiority; it intersects with Orientalism as its ostensible binary opposite, and refuses self-identity both to 'modern' Greeks and to peoples constructed as 'Oriental'. In this regard, it is worrisome that Hellenism is in the background of assertions made by Greeks themselves (on the right and the left) that they are 'European', 'white', or 'first-world'. Undermining such claims, and revealing their contingency on racist ideologies and colonial histories, European—or even 'Greek'—Hellenism betrays 'a certain uncanniness', a function of the repression of 'Balkan', 'Asian', and 'African' elements which 'haunt' the construction of a westernised 'Greece'; consequently, "the Occidental and the Oriental undermine each other by relentlessly (re)appearing at its core" and interrupting its "ontological closure" (García Marín, 2013, p. 54). As a Greek person of mixed roots, an immigrant, and a queer person, I would rather see Greeks abandon the project to prove their 'Europeanness', to accept the internal heterogeneity of their 'own' culture(s), and embrace the migrant and minority communities within their territorial borders that so many Greeks, currently, anxiously and violently reject. If Greece quite literally has been assigned the task of guarding the southeastern border of Fortress Europe, what kinds of new and palimpsistic identifications might be opened up were Greece to align itself socio-politically and culturally with its proximate Others, its ancient neighbours peopling the eastern Mediterranean basin?

My reflections, here, have been largely programmatic (as opposed to conclusive), examining the possibility that Hellenism and Orientalism are not quite so "radically incomparable" as Said asserts; if we were to suspend the assumption of their radical difference, might we be able to identify certain structural resemblances which enable these intersecting discourses to jointly participate in projects of western European hegemony? One interesting implication of the foregoing reflections is that revealing the Orientalist structure of Hellenism suggests that western European identity is constituted of 'nesting alterities' (to paraphrase Bakić-Hayden), reliant on multiple levels of temporal and spatial displacement to reinvent and sustain itself in austere times. Van Steen has invited us to "reflect on the … the expansionist reach" of western Hellenism, "and to consider how this Hellenism intersected with the project of Classical Studies and its own (hitherto underexplored) 'Occidentalism', which defined ancient *through* modern Greece at the expense of the 'degenerate' and 'hostile' East" (as cited in Mitsi & Muse, 2013, p. 161). The further question, is, then, how does the exteriority of the discourse that confers identity—a 'western' identity which appropriates 'Hellenic' alterity and thereby displaces 'Greek identity', relate to the exteriority of the discourse—Orientalism—that fixes alterity for the Occidental subject? If Hellenism has been instrumental in constructing the 'European', or the 'western' subject, this subject is already an Other, anxiously searching for another Other to constitute it as a Self in its own imaginary.

Author Note

Acknowledgements

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SPECIAL ISSUE: EDWARD SAID—INTELLECTUAL, CULTURAL CRITIC, ACTIVIST

Said and Aida: Culture, Imperialism, Egypt and Opera

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In Culture and Imperialism (1993) Edward Said argues that Verdi's 1871 opera Aida is a prime example of "a cultural discourse relegating and confining the non-European to a secondary racial, cultural and ontological status" (1993, p. 70). But is Aida as Orientalist a work as Said maintains? Building on earlier articles challenging Said's thesis by Robinson (1993), Bergeron (2002) and Guarracino (2010), and with particular reference to Osborne's 1969 book on Verdi's operas, this article explores three aspects of Said's analysis of Aida: the genesis of the work, the work as a symbol of European political aspirations in the Middle East, and the work as a contribution to the Europeanisation of Egypt. The article continues with a discussion of the music in the opera, a matter scarcely mentioned by Said. Again three aspects are explored: the so-called 'exotic' music, the triumphal music, and the intimate music for the three central characters. The author concludes that the opera is far more complex than Said indicates, and that a thorough investigation of the work yields more challenges to Said's thesis than evidence to support it.

Keywords: Aida, Egypt, imperialism, music, opera, Verdi

Verdi's Grand Opera *Aida* was first performed in the Opera House in Cairo, Egypt, on Christmas Eve 1871. It was Verdi's 26th opera, the work of an experienced composer who knew his trade, and it has become a favourite in the operatic repertoire. Its story, of love across the divide of social and political difference, and its spectacular setting, in the Egypt of the Pharaohs, makes *Aida* a quintessentially Romantic nineteenth-century work. But to Edward Said, the opera was a hallmark of a different kind: he regarded it as a representation of Europe's distorted view of the Middle East.

Let us remind ourselves what the opera is about. The Egyptians, under their army commander Radames, are engaged in a war of conquest against the Ethiopians ruled by King Amonasro. The king's daughter, Aida, has been

captured, and she is now a slave girl serving the Pharaoh's daughter, Amneris. Within this political context a love triangle has emerged: Amneris is in love with Radames, but he is not interested. He secretly loves Aida and his feelings are reciprocated. A new battle is fought between Egyptians and Ethiopians, during which King Amonasro is captured. The celebrations in Egypt are considerable, with a triumphal march displaying booty and captives including a disguised King Amonsasro. The Pharaoh announces that his daughter and Radames are to be married, to Amneris's delight and Radames' alarm. Amonasro meets Aida and calls on his daughter's patriotic duty to lure Radames into revealing his further military plans against the Ethiopians. Radames and Aida, meet, exchange vows, and agree to run away together. But during the course of their conversation Radames lets slip where the Egyptian army will attack the Ethiopians. Alas, Amneris has overheard. She denounces Radames as a traitor, and the High Priest Ramfis sentences him to death. Amneris, realising she is losing the man she loves, tries to persuade Radames to defend himself, but he will not. The sentence is to be buried alive in a tomb, but when Radames has been escorted there, and the door has been shut, he discovers he is not alone. Aida has chosen to die with him.

During his career as a cultural historian and a music critic, Edward Said wrote several times about *Aida*, but most fully in *Culture and Imperialism*, where it is included as an example of "The Empire at Work". His perspective on the opera can be summed up in the following.

> *Aida* embodies, as it was intended to do, the authority of Europe's version of Egypt at a moment in its nineteenth-century history … A full contrapuntal appreciation of *Aida* reveals a structure of reference and attitude, a web of affiliations, connections, decisions, and collaborations, which can be read as leaving a set of ghostly notations in the opera's visual and musical text. (1993, p. 151)

The "ghostly notations", once deciphered, expose the "sordid imperial exploitation" in the work (1993, p. 133). Two years earlier, in *Musical Elaborations*, Said had described *Aida* as "saturated … in the European domination of the Middle East" (1991, p. 65); now he confirms that view. "As a visual, musical and theatrical spectacle", he writes, "*Aida* does a great many things for and in European culture, one of which is to confirm the Orient as an essentially exotic, distant and antique place in which Europeans can mount certain shows of force" (1993, p. 134).

These assertions are fully compatible with Said's wider thesis about European literature, and, given his own involvement with Western Classical Music as well as his years of education in Egypt, it would perhaps have been odd if he had not succumbed to the temptation to include *Aida* as an example of European imperialist culture. His views on the opera have been challenged by several other writers, however, and it is appropriate to ask whether he has dealt fairly with the opera. Is *Aida* as Orientalist a work as Said maintains?

Said begins with the genesis of the work. Verdi was tempted to compose the piece, he suggests, by the large fee offered by Khedive Ismail, the Ottoman viceroy of Egypt, and by the opportunity to create a totally unified work of art, "informed only by the aesthetic intention of a single creator. Thus an imperial

notion of the artist dovetailed conveniently with an imperial notion of a non-European world whose claims on the European composer were either minimal or non-existent" (1993, p. 140). The evidence of exploitation is clear, in Said's eyes, and it is supported by the involvement in the creation of the opera of the renowned French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette, who in a letter in 1871 claimed that "*Aida* … is in effect a product of my work. I am the one who convinced the viceroy to order its presentation; *Aida*, in a word, is a creation of my brain" (as cited in Said, 1993, p. 147). Mariette had designed the Egyptian pavilion at the Paris International Exhibition of 1867, and Said points out that this pavilion was a European version of Egypt, not a historical representation of it. Verdi was to create the same thing in his opera, "ancient Egypt as reflected through the imperial eye" (1993, p. 142). The opera therefore modifies historical fact to present an 'Orientalised' Egypt, with inauthentic touches such as priestesses, conveniently added to display the exotically erotic, and a High Priest presented as a "despotic Oriental potentate" (1993, p. 146).

It is certainly true that Mariette played a role in the creation of *Aida*. Said is remiss, however, in omitting the contributions of others. In particular, he slides over the fact that it was Khedive Ismail's idea to have an 'Egyptian opera' composed for performance at the Cairo Opera House to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal. No one from Europe foisted this idea on him, so far as we know—and if they did Said would presumably have mentioned this, since it would be splendid evidence to support his thesis. The Khedive's timing was not good, however, and he probably did not realise the time required to write and compose an opera. In any event, the opera house opened in 1869 without its 'Egyptian opera'. Certainly, once the Khedive expresses his intention, he turned to Mariette for assistance, and Mariette certainly wrote and printed a story which he suggested to the Khedive would fit the bill. The story then passed into the hands of Camille du Locle, a librettist who had provided the text for Verdi's opera *Don Carlos* in 1867. Du Locle sent Verdi a four-page synopsis of the *Aida* story, which interested him. This was but one of several proposals that Verdi was considering in 1870, but it quickly became his first choice (Osborne, 1969, p. 372). Du Locle drafted a libretto in French, which was then translated into Italian by Antonio Ghislanzoni. Verdi too had a hand in the libretto, proposing alterations and amendments to the text. Given these circumstances, Mariette's claims begin to seem a little extravagant. Osborne undermines them further, pointing out that Auguste Mariette seems to have stolen his story from a novel written by his brother Edouard (1969, p. 378). At the same time, he cites Joseph Kerman's 1957 claim in *Opera and Drama* of a close similarity between the *Aida* story and that of *[La] Nitteti*, an opera libretto written by Pietro Metastasio in 1756 and set to music by at least fifteen composers during the eighteenth century. Metastasio in turn claimed the story came from Herodotus. Osborne writes "though the plot of *Nitteti* is not that of *Aida*, they are close enough to each other in several places for one reasonably to suspect that *Nitteti* was known to one of the authors of *Aida*" (1969, p. 380). Osborne further remarks on similarities between *Aida* and Racine's play *Bajazet* as well as Beaumarchais's play *Tarare*, set to music by Mozart's contemporary Salieri in 1787 (1969, pp. 381-382). Mariette's claim looks even more shaky. The fact that there may have been direct or indirect contributions to the opera libretto by other European writers does not of itself negate Said's thesis, for they may well have had the same Orientalist view of Egypt as Mariette, even if not in quite so extreme a form. However, for Said to have ignored or excluded the information provided in an easily available book by

Osborne, an authoritative opera scholar and one surely known to as well-schooled a music critic as Said, opens him to the accusation of selectivity in presenting supporting evidence for his argument.

Said's second claim is a political one: that *Aida* supports European political agendas in Egypt in the early 1870s. Khedive Ismail was keen to expand southwards, towards Ethiopia. According to Said, "the British regarded Egyptian objectives there … as a threat to their Red Sea hegemony, and the safety of their route to India; nevertheless, prudently shifting policy, the British encouraged Ismail's moves in East Africa as a way of blocking French and Italian ambitions in Somalia and Ethiopia" (1993, p. 151). However, "from the French point of view, incorporated by Mariette, *Aida* dramatised the dangers of a successful Egyptian policy of force in Ethiopia, especially since Ismail himself—as Ottoman viceroy—was interested in such ventures as a way of achieving more independence from Istanbul" (Said, 1993, p. 151). Presumably, the argument is that Radames' attack on Ethiopia is an allegory of British support for Ismail, while Radames' betrayal and death represents a successful French opposition to this. This is a very ingenious plot by the French, so ingenious, indeed, that it not only fooled the Khedive and his advisors (who, presumably, would not have permitted the opera to proceed if they had perceived this message in it) but has also been missed by opera audiences, critics and musicologists ever since. Further, it is not altogether clear why the French would believe they could successfully influence Egyptian policy by going through the process of getting Mariette to persuade the Khedive to commission an opera from Verdi. Finally, it is difficult to imagine that Khedive Ismael would change his policy because the opera suggested he might lose his leading military commander as the result of a foolish infatuation with a slave girl, especially since the Egyptians are clearly victorious in any case. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that this is one of the silliest ideas Said ever came up with.

Paul Robinson presents a simpler perspective on the political content of the opera. He calls it "an immediate embarrassment" to Said's theory that in the opera the imperialist aggressor is Egypt, and the marginalised, victimised culture is the Ethiopian one (1993, p. 135). "Furthermore" he goes on,

> Verdi's sympathies in the opera are wholeheartedly on the Ethiopian side. Egypt is represented as an authoritarian theocracy, tyrannised by its intolerant priesthood, while Ethiopia … is repeatedly celebrated as a country of vernal beauty and heroic rectitude … A more natural reading would be to see the opera as an anti-imperialist work, in which the exploitative relation between Europe and its empire has been translated into one between expansionist Egyptians and colonised Ethiopians. (Robinson, 1993, p. 135)

For Robinson, this is not at all unexpected.

> In writing *Aida*, I would contend, [Verdi] identified Ethiopia with Italy, just as he associated Egypt with Habsburg Austria … Ramfis and the Egyptian priesthood are products of Verdi's Risorgimento anti-clericalism; they are equated in his mind with the Habsburg Catholic hierarchy and the reactionary politics of the Roman papacy. (1993, p. 140)

Robinson's arguments have merit. If Said is correct in proposing that the discourse of *Aida* embodies nineteenth-century European imperialism, then

Robinson is surely no less plausible in proposing that it embodies the political aspirations of the Italian Risorgimento, in which Verdi and his operas played a significant and deliberate part. Indeed, this, rather than the Egyptian setting, may well have been what made the *Aida* story so appealing to Verdi.

Serena Guarracino picks up on this as she explores what Italian audiences at the time would have made of Verdi's opera. She suggests they would have viewed *Aida* with mixed feelings, identifying both with Ethiopia as an oppressed people, and with Egypt's nationalism. "At the time of *Aida*'s conception", she writes, "Italy was working hard to transform itself from Ethiopia to Egypt, from being an oppressed, colonized, and fragmented peninsula to slowly and painfully becoming a European, modern political reality" (2010, p. 9). She points out that Aida herself, the Ethiopian slave-princess, is described in Radames' first act aria as "celeste Aida", invoking that most European of images, "the stereotype of the Catholic virgin martyr" (2010, p. 11).

One further aspect of this could perhaps be touched upon. Said's thesis in *Culture and Imperialism* is concerned with exposing "a cultural discourse relegating and confining the non-European to a secondary racial, cultural, ontological status" (1993, p. 70). The victims of this discourse are, for Said, the Arab nations of the Middle East, and the dominating race and culture is the European one. What *Aida* exposes, however, is a historical discourse in which Arab culture relegated and confined sub-Saharan Africans, like the inhabitants of Ethiopia, to a secondary racial, cultural and ontological status, particularly through slave-trade conducted by Arabs from the seventh century through the nineteenth. If we view Egypt in *Aida* through the lens of European imperialism, perhaps we could equally view Ethiopia in the opera through the lens of Arab imperial practices.

More persuasive in *Culture and Imperialism* is Said's connection of the opera to the economic situation in Egypt in the 1860s (1993, pp. 152-155). The country was being opened up more and more to European commerce and European entrepreneurs. Egypt's finances were directed to providing cheap loans to Europeans who would develop the city along European lines. The Suez Canal was a joint venture between French and English companies. Cairo was becoming a city of two communities, one wealthy and European and the other poor and Egyptian. The European community was to the west, a city of broad well-lit streets laid out in grids, with formal gardens, a railroad station, wheeled coaches, and running water. The native city was to the east, with narrow muddy streets, no street lights, and water delivered by pedlars. Said describes the location of the Opera House, for which *Aida* was composed, "at the centre of the north-south axis, in the middle of a spacious square, facing the European city" (1993, p. 155) and therefore with its back to the native quarter. He concludes that

> *Aida*'s Egyptian identity was part of the city's European facade … for most of Egypt, *Aida* was an imperial *article de luxe* purchased by credit for a tiny clientele whose entertainment was incidental to their real purposes … [it was] an imperial spectacle designed to alienate and impress an almost exclusively European audience. (1993, p. 156)

The first part of this argument focuses on the venue and the art-form. The Cairo Opera House had been opened on November 1 1869, two years before *Aida*, with a performance of Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Certainly the building in the nineteenth century of European opera houses in other parts of the world, and the performance of European operas in them, were expressions of an imposed settler culture. Like education and legal systems imported from Europe, they were part of what Europeans considered a 'civilising mission', as well as being an opportunity for settlers to maintain their own traditions in a foreign land. Opera in Egypt, or in Manaos on the Amazon, or in Macao in China, was always part of a city's 'European facade'—the same facade that offered Said's parents educational opportunities for their son at Victoria College in Cairo in the late 1940s. In the context of Khedive Ismail's deliberate encouragement of European entrepreneurs, his 'Europeanisation' of Cairo, the opera house (and its offerings) can certainly be viewed as 'an imperial *article de luxe* purchased by credit,' but this is a generic comment and not one specific to *Aida*.

The contribution of *Aida* to this process lies in the way it provides a particular gloss on the culture of Ancient Egypt, via 'imperial spectacle'. Like Said, Katherine Bergeron argues that this spectacle had a more than operatic purpose: the opera "reproduced inside the theatre a vision of the new order that increasingly defined the state of things outside" (2002, p. 151). The scenes in which the Egyptian army prepares for war, and returns victorious from it, create an image of military discipline, one in which "the boundary between theatre and politics was conveniently blurred" (2002, p. 152). She draws attention to two categories in the new order: the leading of groups and self-discipline. Radames is an example of this, "less a clueless tenor than a kind of model citizen, a true Egyptian subject" (2002, p. 152). Radames' crisis occurs in Act 3 when he confronts his 'foil', Amonasro,

> a totally unreconstructed monarch belonging to the 'old' order … It is finally in this scene that we see Radames shouldering the full extent of his modern 'political' responsibility, forced to enact, so to speak, the 'private *siyasa*' through which he is no longer a leader of armies, but a leader of himself. (2002, p. 152-3)

But then he turns from 'vincitor' to 'traditor', from victor to traitor. His succumbing to the blandishments of Aida is a loss of discipline, for which he is suitably punished. Finally he yields to Ramfis and accepts the moral consequence of his actions. According to Bergeron, the opera should be viewed not as the imposition of European culture on Egypt from outside but as a representation of the Khedive's desire to create a 'modern' Egypt which puts together traditional and European elements. It may be that the Khedive could not have formulated such a policy without the influence of Europe, but it does suggest that Europe was less directly imposing its culture on Egypt via *Aida*. Indeed, Bergeron argues that Verdi should be freed from responsibility in this respect: "armed with little or no knowledge of modern Egypt, Verdi is unlikely to have formulated any such view of the opera's leading Egyptian male" (2002, p. 153).

These challenges to Said's view of the opera do not gainsay it. Rather, they suggest that a more nuanced view needs to be taken. Various agendas seem to be present: Khedive Ismail's, Mariette's, and Verdi's. While there is no need to question Said's fundamental view that works of art inevitably embody ideologies, there may be more than one ideology present in *Aida*. If they are not all

compatible, or even contiguous, that should not necessarily be cause for alarm. We are, after all, dealing with a work of art, one in a genre that includes multiple modes of expression.

By its very nature, an opera is more than a story and a verbal text. The discourse of a literary text, such as the novels of Conrad, Jane Austen and Albert Camus that Said discusses in *Culture and Imperialism*, is straightforward as a subject for analysis; however, in the form of a playscript the discourse becomes more complex, since the text is mediated by performers. In the case of an opera, an even more powerful mediation occurs: the text is now words plus actions plus music. Not only do performers and stage director mediate the text, but, at a more fundamental level, the music mediates the verbal text of stage action and dialogue, often significantly reinterpreting them as a musical text is created. It becomes difficult, and is in the end unsatisfactory if not negligent, to analyse only the scenario and text of an opera, and not to take into account the contribution of the music to the work as a whole.

This is not to suggest that Said completely ignores the music of *Aida*. After all, his knowledge of Western Classical Music was considerable: he was an accomplished pianist and for many years he wrote music reviews for the journal *The Nation*. In his section on *Aida* in *Culture and Imperialism* Said mentions Verdi's use of a flattened supertonic, the cliché invented in the nineteenth century to create what purported to be Arab harmony, as well as Verdi's use of contrapuntal techniques to create a monumental effect (1993, p. 151). Counterpoint was a term dear to Said's heart; he described his own relationship with traditional critical theory as contrapuntal. He states that the ballets and parades in the opera "are undermined in some some way" (1993, p. 149) without specifying in what way, except to cite a production of *Aida* in Cincinnati in which the Triumphal March of Act II included eleven different zoo animals and a "body count for the production of 261" (1993, p. 149). Such production excesses are not, of course, Verdi's responsibility, any more than including prostitutes practicing their profession in a production of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Berlin in 2004 is Mozart's responsibility.

Said has very little to say about the rest of the music, in particular, the music for the central human relationships in the opera. This is a pity, since the opera is, like all operas, essentially about human beings in crisis. *Pace* Said, the Egyptian setting could be regarded as incidental, like the setting in Ancient Gaul of Bellini's *Norma*, or the settings in Venice and Cyprus of Shakespeare's *Othello*. In none of these cases is the locale of the story crucial to the central interaction of the main characters. Indeed, contemporary productions of nineteenth-century operas often transpose the plot to quite different settings. A 1977 production of Weber's *Der Freischütz* at Covent Garden shifted the action from rural Germany to a defoliated Vietnam, a more recent production of Bizet's *Carmen* took the action from Spain to a car demolition yard in Latin America, and one of Wagner's *Die Walküre* translated the action from German forests and mountains to a public library (Pleasants, 1989, pp. 30-32). Peter Sellars' productions of Mozart's operas are famous if not notorious: *Le nozze di Figaro* located on the 52nd floor of Manhattan's Trump Tower, *Don Giovanni* in Harlem, and *Così fan tutte* in a New York diner. The implication of these productions is that the original setting of an opera is less important than the situations, dilemmas and emotional relationships of the characters. This is not to dismiss Said's notion that *Aida* may have been

conceived as an expression of Europe's distortions of the Middle East, but it does weaken the suggestion that this is a particularly significant aspect of the opera. It is not necessary to go as far as Joseph Kerman does in *Opera as Drama*, where he dismisses the Egyptian setting of *Aida* as a "careless application of local colour", (1988, p. 207) but we do need to beware of allowing the tail to wag the dog. As Paul Robinson suggests, "if *Aida* is an orientalist opera, then, it will have to be because of its music" (1993, p. 135).

Verdi's music falls into two broad categories: the public music for the spectacular scenes, and the private music for the intimate scenes. The first sign of Verdi's priorities comes in the Prelude, the first music heard in the opera. It opens with a simple and quiet statement by muted strings of a theme "later associated with Aida's love for Radames" (Osborne 1992, p. 384). This is followed by a theme used later to portray the implacable priests, before Aida's love theme returns, leading to music of conflict and eventually to a quiet, intimate ending. It is hard to construe this as a European 'show of force'; while the music is of course European, our sympathies are engaged right from the start with the victims of the Egyptian 'show of force' and in particular with the Ethiopian victim.

Said described the score of *Aida* as "overdeveloped" (2008, p. 40) but this adjective is scarcely applicable to the simple music which opens the opera. It could more convincingly be applied to the spectacular scenes, which include the second scene of Act 1 ("Grand Scene of the Consecration"), the Triumphal March in Act 2 Scene 2, and the Judgment Scene of the priests in Act 4. Two kinds of music can be discerned in these scenes.

Firstly, there is the music that purports to provide 'local colour', that is, music that to European ears sounds exotic, indeed, oriental. Said draws attention to this, describing "the harmonic clichés, much used in carnival hoochy-kooch, [which] are based on a flattening of the hypertonic" (1993, p. 146-7).[1] An example of this phenomenon is the opening melody of the Grand Scene of Consecration, sung to the text 'Possente Fthà' (O powerful Phtha), and repeated at the end of the opera. Osborne confirms that it "sounds decidedly exotic". He continues "it is not, however, in the slightest degree Egyptian, and, if it sounds so to us today, this is because Verdi has persuaded us that it does" (1992, p. 387). This remark certainly supports Said's thesis that Verdi, the European composer, has imposed on audiences a particular view of what 'Egyptian' music means, in 'a show of force'. Robinson does not demur from this view, but suggests that the 'exotic' music in *Aida* is used only "for liturgical exercises and ballets. None of the principal Egyptian characters expresses him or herself, as it were, orientally" (1993, p.137). This may be true, but the choruses of Egyptian priests and priestesses are nonetheless an important part of the opera. Robinson further seeks to divert our attention from this.

> Furthermore, one should note that all of the opera's exotic music, in both its liturgical episodes and its ballets, is associated with women—to the point that the antithesis between exotic and non-exotic music in *Aida* comes to seem a code as much for gender difference as for ethnic difference. (1993, p. 138)

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[1] Said is presumably referring to the hoochie coochie, a suggestive belly dance popular in America in the period 1880 to 1945. The term 'hypertonic' is incorrect; the note above the tonic is called the supertonic. Further, he probably means not 'harmonic' but 'melodic.' These errors are unexpected in a writer with Said's level of musical knowledge.

Unfortunately for Robinson, this statement is incorrect. The priests are as actively involved in presenting the 'exotic music' as are the priestesses, and there is no evidence that Aida and Amneris, the two central female characters, have more exotic musical lines than Radames. What we can safely conclude is that the priests and priestesses, and to an extent the slavegirls of Amneris in Act 2, have music that Verdi has calculated will sound 'foreign' and 'different' to European audiences (whether they are in Europe or in Cairo), and that, in serving that end, Verdi uses melodic shapes and intervals that have become clichés.

The second kind of spectacular music is that epitomised in the Triumphal March in Act 2. It includes some passages of 'Oriental music', including the 'implacable priests' theme, but the musical 'show of force' as the army marches past is resolutely Western in style—it could be used for a march-past of the Italian, German, French army, or even (if the tempo were faster) the American army. Robinson correctly describes this as "regular, diatonic and brassy … Verdi relying on the most traditional harmonic, melodic and rhythmic means to conjure up an impression of power, authority and military might" (1993, p. 136). As Robinson points out, this associates the Egyptian army with European imperialist armies, and its conquest of the Ethiopians with the European subjugation of other conquered peoples. It does so automatically, if the view is taken that European music always represents European imperialism. It can be argued, then, that Said has put Verdi in a no-win situation: if he composes traditional European music for the Triumphal March he is practicing imperialism directly, and if he composes music which modifies traditional European music through the importation of exotic elements he is practicing imperialism indirectly. It is hard to see what else Verdi could do. That, of course, may be Said's perspective: that Verdi was damned as soon as he accepted the offer to compose an 'Egyptian' opera.

The situation is made more complex, however, through the music Verdi composed not for the spectacular scenes but for the more intimate ones. Robinson points out that when Aida sings of her native Ethiopia "Verdi sets her utterances at the polar opposite of the sort of music he writes for the massed Egyptians. Instead of four-square diatonic marching tunes, he writes music distinguished by its sinuous irregularity, its long legato lines, its close intervals, its chromatic harmonies and its subdued woodwind orchestration" (1993, p. 136). Radames' aria describing 'Celeste Aida' in the opening scene of Act 1 is written in the same kind of musical idiom Verdi had used in previous operas like *La traviata* (set in nineteenth-century France) and would use again in *Otello* (set in Shakespeare's Cyprus). It is the music he provides for the expression of the emotions of human beings, of whatever race, gender, or cultural background. Bergeron's comment that Radames is "less a clueless tenor than a kind of model citizen" (2002, p. 152) is irrelevant in the opera house: what the audience experiences is a young man in love.

As the opera proceeds, so we get to know the major characters: they begin to stand out more and more from the background of Egyptian history. In Act 1 we discover Aida in a dilemma: the man she loves is setting out to defeat her father. The love theme that opened the opera returns here in all its poignancy and leads to her prayer to the Gods ('Numi, pietà'), one of Verdi's most powerful moments, a simple diatonic Western tonal melody with tremolo string accompaniment that

draws us into Aida's personal situation in a powerful and convincing way. In the final Act, when Amneris discovers Radames will not give up his love for Aida, the music Verdi provides for the heartbroken daughter of the Pharaoh powerfully conveys her tragic situation. The orchestra plays the 'implacable priests' theme, while, against it, Amneris sings disjointed musical phrases in a thoroughly Western idiom. The priests may well be 'Egyptian' in their music, but Amneris is merely a woman rejected by the man she loves.

The end of the opera may make the point clearer. While the priests menacingly chant their implacable theme, with its exotic turns of phrase, Radames and Aida, the doomed pair in the underground tomb, sing a duet whose melodic line is a profound expression of optimistic yearning. The text simply says "farewell earth, farewell vale of tears". It is, perhaps, clichéd, and if we were to look at it just as words, we might find it a banal anti-climax. But in Verdi's hands it becomes something else: a soaring melody—one of Verdi's most inspired tunes—which carves out a meaning that Aida and Radames can rise above the pain and despair of their situation. In *The Magic Mountain*, Thomas Mann described Verdi's melody here as "the triumphant idealism of music, of art, of the human spirit" (1928, p. 645). The text, and the scene, may well suggest, as Said proposes, "hopeless deadlock and literal entombment" (1993, p. 148), but the music says something else—it is an expression, in the midst of a doomed situation, of hope and aspiration. In the end, the music will carry the day, for this is, after all, an opera.

Is *Aida* as Orientalist an opera as Edward Said suggested? Investigating Said's ideas, and placing them in context, indicates that his views are certainly worth our attention, and that they reveal a good deal about the opera and its circumstances. But ultimately what they leave out and ignore overcomes what they include. Composed during a period of the Europeanisation of Egypt under Khedive Ismail, it perhaps inevitably reflects some political and social aspects of that environment. It may (if Bergeron is right) reflect Khedive Ismail's aspirations for a new political order in Egypt. If Robinson is right, Verdi may have found in the story of Ethiopia's struggles against a colonising Egypt a reflection of Italy's struggles against an Austrian hegemony. Guarracino argues that Italian audiences at the time would have sympathised both with the nationalism of the Egyptians and with the Ethiopians as oppressed people. Guarracino further contends that "the landing of *Aida* on Egyptian soil may be considered less as the enforcement of a foreign, colonial culture on the 'non-European' and more as one step of a tight cultural exchange between the two sides of the Mediterranean" (2010, p. 7). This is certainly a more complex, and possibly more convincing interpretation of the work than Said's arguments about French and English political aspirations for Egypt.

It is certainly true that the genre of opera in the nineteenth century included works whose stories were set in exotic locations, often the sites of European imperial enterprise. Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* (1863) is set on the island of Ceylon; Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* (1865) concerns a tragic confrontation between European and indigenous culture in Madagascar; Delibes's *Lakmé* (1883) is a similar confrontation in British India. Even Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* of 1781 could be read as a European hero outwitting an Oriental potentate and making his henchman look silly, if it weren't for the final scene in which Pasha Selim displays the most enlightened European values of anyone in the

cast. It may well be that these works are part of a European desire to marginalise the Orient, but the argument needs to be made more persuasively, and more comprehensively, than Said has managed to do in his discussion of *Aida* in *Culture and Imperialism*.

Even if Said is correct in seeing Verdi as a tool of European imperialism, this begs the question of what options the composer might have had. Like Said, Verdi was a man of his time. Many of his operas include large-scale chorus scenes like the Triumphal March in Act 2, based around memorable tunes, of which the chorus of Hebrew slaves "Va pensiero" in *Nabucco* is merely the most famous example: it quickly became a street-song of the Risorgimento. Nowhere does Said discuss *Nabucco*, which tells the Biblical story of the Jewish exile in Babylon, so we do not know whether he would have regarded it as a European show of force about Babylon (assuming the Bible to be a piece of European literature) or a European show of force about the Middle Eastern Jews. Neither argument seems particularly plausible, and it may well seem equally implausible to see the *Aida* March as an Orientalist presentation of ancient Egypt.[2]

The deliberately exotic music created by Verdi to provide an 'Egyptian flavour' can certainly be seen as an attempt to include Egypt in a generic 'Middle Eastern music' package, or, vice versa, to tar Egypt with the generic musical characterisation. In a similar way, many Hollywood movies instantly characterise the wealthy villain's pretentious parties through including a string quartet playing Classical Music in the background. It isn't fair, but that kind of instant cultural connotation is ubiquitous, and may not be confined only to European cultures. Similar practices may be found elsewhere in the world. The white-faced, top-hatted caricature of the European is a significant feature of many African and Caribbean cultural celebrations. Robinson concludes that "the ideological import of Verdi's exotic musical gestures in the opera is more complicated than Said allows, and in some respects at least it seems to be exactly opposite from the construction he insists on" (1993, p. 139).

What undermines Said's view of the opera more than anything is his neglect of the intimate music. It can of course be argued that all Western opera, which by definition in the nineteenth century at least was written in a Western musical idiom, is inevitably a sign of Western domination, and that every character of every race who shares his or her feelings within that idiom is being exploited by the art-form and its owners, but Said's argument about *Aida* is not made for Western opera as a whole. Given, then, that he allows Western music its expressive power, and his own successful involvement in it as a practitioner and critic would give credibility to the view that its meanings can be acquired through enculturation, it is disappointing that he neglects to take more into account the way Verdi focuses on communicating through music the individual dilemmas of the main characters.

Is *Aida* an Orientalist work? Said's claim is not as strong as its author would like. While he makes a cogent case, it is one which in some respects misses the bus

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[2] But Said does claim, in *Musical Elaborations*, (1991, p. 65) that Berlioz's operatic trilogy *Les Troyens* is 'saturated' with the politics of the French conquest of North Africa, a claim which seems not to fit well with Jacques Barzun's comment that "Paris under the Second Empire virtually forbade the kind of enterprise he had in hand" (1956, p. 326).

and in others catches the wrong one. This is a little strange, since it comes from a man whose historical and musical perceptions were not lacking in knowledge or understanding, and we might have expected a more subtle exploration of the opera. Is it possible that Said's attitude to Verdi's work was coloured by his own experiences of Egypt? He had been educated in the European half of Cairo, in 'the west', and later came to identify with the aspirations of the so-called native quarter 'in the east'. *Aida* was performed in the opera house which turned its back on the natives, and faced the Europeans. Did he resent the fact that it hadn't, unlike himself, turned itself around to face the other way?

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SPECIAL ISSUE: EDWARD SAID—INTELLECTUAL, CULTURAL CRITIC, ACTIVIST

Said matters: Teaching Edward Said to the non-humanities undergraduate

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Among the many ways that neoliberalism's influence on higher education affects the academic climate is the increase in the consumer-student's desire to invest in classes and degrees that will have a good return. In the climate of privatisation of the university, however, fewer students are exposed to thinkers such as Edward Said because they increasingly avoid the humanities as majors. Non-humanities majors usually must take general education classes. It is here that teaching Said can have a great impact. However teaching Said in general education classes presents challenges. General education students often have no background in theory; their majors do not tend to instill in them a critical sense, and they frequently take for granted the world 'as it appears' (and it often appears unproblematic). This can be the best audience for Said's works. Such majors need very specific examples to show them how power and knowledge are connected, how challenging the dominant discourses is necessary in all contexts (not just foreign policy, but health care policy, patriarchy, etc.), and how the cultural leads the political. Although teaching Said to the general education student takes him out of the realm of the theoretical, it also creates an awareness on the part of these students who are not typically taught theory, but who tend to gravitate towards those fields in which a critical consciousness could be valuable. In some ways, such students are the front lines for a fundamental rethinking about their engagement in the world.

Keywords: neoliberalism, critical thinking, humanities, academic freedom, Western canon

Introduction

In an essay from his 2004 book *From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map*, Edward Said recounts a story about the French writer Guy de Maupassant's dislike of the newly built Eiffel Tower in France. In short, the story goes that a friend of de

Maupassant, after hearing him complain ceaselessly about what an eyesore the tower was, noticed that each day the writer would take his lunch in the restaurant of the Eiffel Tower. When he was confronted with this seeming hypocrisy, de Maupassant replied "I go there because being inside it is the only place in Paris where you don't actually have to look at or even see the Tower". In typical Said-ian fashion, Said uses the amusing anecdote to make a larger point about the dangers of failing to see past our own navels. The message: Inside the tower we lose sight of ourselves. Inside the tower we become incapable of seeing ourselves with a critical eye as others might see us. In his essay, Said takes this story as a place to start a discussion about the failure of Israelis to see their country as much of the world sees it when it is critical of Israel's continuing occupation of Palestinian land.

Re-reading and reflecting on this story of de Maupassant one is struck by how many avenues this story could have taken in Said's works. Because this tale points to the dangers of insularity, it could have been the opening to the monumental *Orientalism* (1979)*,* or to any of the essays in *Culture and Imperialism.* It could certainly be applied to each essay in *From Oslo to Iraq,* and one would not be stretching the point to look at events after the death of Said to begin a criticism of American drone use, or targeted assassinations for example, using this same anecdote of de Maupassant.

Over decades of writing, lectures and teaching, Said worked constantly to try to help us get outside of our own Eiffel Towers, to look up past our midsections, and to adopt a state of mind analogous to that of an exile, who is constantly *mal a l'aise* in the world, and therefore can frequently see things that others who feel more at home cannot, an exile who occupies constantly a liminal space. Obviously such an effort involves the difficult work of getting people to see that they are actually in the structure (the country, the city, the organisation, etc.) in the first place. Said's writings on exile detail the 'pleasures of exile' and advocate for a cultivation of the perspective of the exiled thinker. This perspective can be nurtured in any thinker, and indeed should be; Said (quoting Adorno) saw it as a moral imperative. This exiled intellectual would be "best with half-involvements and half-detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, and adept mimic or a secret outcast on another" (Bayoumi & Rubin 2000, p. 371), constantly guarding against the feeling of security and the sense of complacency that inevitably accompany such a feeling.

This essay takes as central to its argument that Said matters. More specifically, I argue that in considering the increasing encroachment of neo-liberal ideas and policies into the modern university, and the accompanying crisis of critical thought, the central concerns of Edward Said offer an intervention and promise a method for teaching the kinds of students enrolled in the university today. From Said's vast number of ideas articulated in his works over several decades, I single out his critiques of the construction of knowledge (and the linkages of this to the academy and other institutions), as well as his constant vigilance of the role that culture plays in the formation of knowledge and ideology, as vital for students to learn and understand themselves. Only then can they be capable of thinking in the world and making critical decisions for themselves and their communities. Because the university is undergoing serious changes in the way the institution conceives of its own role in educating students and the pedagogical model most appropriate for this role, the way that students

encounter Said, and which kinds of students encounter him is also very different than it would have been several decades ago. Most students are now required to fulfill core or general education requirements which will consist of some humanities courses. This changing environment and population of the university necessitates, I argue, the translation of Said into a new context. As with all translations, inevitably something is lost in this process. At the same time, however, there is much hope that the reach of Said's words and ideas can be further and wider than before. What follows is a brief critique of the university (drawing in particular on my experience teaching in a Midwestern American university with a very homogeneous population), followed by an argument for how Said's works serve both as a way to critique this situation, and to take advantage of it to help restore some of the ideal values of a university education.[1]

Appraising the university

In its traditional and most utopian role the university deemed itself to be part of the solution to the problems associated with insular thinking. Ideally, universities were places where people engaged in debates, conversations, and collective searching for answers to questions that might be ancient or contemporary. This searching connected the intellectual (as student or scholar) to the larger civic community. The university provided intellectuals with security, not in order to foster complacency, but, on the contrary, to allow scholars the freedom to be the kind of exiled thinker of the sort for which Said advocated. Without attempting to romanticise the university as a place where any idea—no matter how radical—was tolerated and promoted, we can assert that from its development in the Middle Ages, the university has at least sporadically viewed part of its role as providing an umbrella under which thinkers might pursue knowledge wherever it would take them. Medieval history (with the difficulties faced by scholars such as Abelard, Siger of Brabant, and Galileo) does not seem likely to have been able to provide examples of ideal conditions for academic freedom. However, even in the midst of the thirteenth century, scholars were often able to protect themselves and their peers from interference in their oral teachings by the Church authorities, at least on first offense (let's recognise that a second offence might get you burned …). Historians point to official letters of protection provided by the university to its scholars as they travelled in search of knowledge as the earliest origins of academic freedom. From these fragile origins, the conception of the university as a place where thinkers should have the protected right to be free to think has been—at least in theory—the organising principle behind the very idea of the university.

However, one is compelled to point out the obvious fact that the idea of the ideal university was always much better in theory than in practice. When philosophers John Dewey (1938) or John Stuart Mill imagined the ideal university, they envisioned an institution that was the central force for shaping democratic and engaged citizens. This, so said Dewy and Mill, could only be done in a place

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[1] The latest numbers from my campus state that the campus is 91% white and 7% African American. Hispanic students make up 4.4 percent of undergraduate students and Asian or Pacific Islanders are at 3.3 percent. See "A Homogeneous Campus" by Peter Chums (2014).

where the decisions about what was taught and researched was as independent as possible from the forces of the market or politics. At times when this independence is not secured, it was easy to see that professors, students, and knowledge in general suffer. U.S. history offers up the McCarthy era as an example of modern-day witch hunting and the risks facing professors who have had unpopular or subversive writings, ideas and teachings. However, the term 'McCarthy era' gives a false sense of a bygone time. The recent difficulties faced by academics such as Norman Finkelstein and Ward Churchill provide contemporary examples of the same kinds of interference that was seen on a large scale during the 1950s. Academic freedom, like democracy itself, was something that needed to be deliberately protected in order to be preserved.

If the McCarthy era was a time of obvious, overt persecution of academics, today the attacks on the university are somewhat less evident, and come from directions other than government interference in academic affairs (although, as will be noted below, this is certainly not absent!). These changes follow a general trend in fields outside of the university towards an increase of neoliberal policies. Features of neoliberalism include deregulation, privatisation, reduction in government spending for social services, and the "substitution of market values for social values" (McClennen, 2008-09, p. 460). In the past few decades there has been an increasing drive on the part of forces outside of the university to strip the university of any last remnants of its role as a place where critique is valued and protected and thinking for its own sake is not regarded as unproductive or wasteful, as well as its role in shaping citizens in a democratic society. These efforts have not gone unnoticed or criticised, but one can simply reiterate that in the United States, this gradual erosion has been increasing since at least the 1980s, and in recent years has become even more worrisome as neoliberal policies have had numerous negative effects on the university.

Said has written extensively about this, often connecting neoliberal attacks on the university with the worrisome lack of willingness of many intellectuals to make themselves public intellectuals or to take a public stance on issues for fear of retribution or negative consequences.[2] Other scholars such as Giroux (2008) and McClennen (2008) have documented the increasing threat to academic freedom posed from both the political and private spheres (often working in conjunction with one another). The effects of these efforts to defang the university of its traditional role have been dramatic. The most visible manifestation of such efforts has been the increase in the cost of student tuition. Public funding of education has steadily dropped in the past several decades, going in some places from as high as 80% public funding to 17% or less in a space of less than two decades.[3] The effect of this is multifaceted, but one obvious result has been pressure on students to think about education as a product that they purchase, like any other product (though increasingly expensive and out of reach). In purchasing this product, student/consumers are naturally interested in the 'return' value. A university education is now often seen only as a means to an end, and in this kind of equation majoring in the

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[2] On this, see Said (2000) "On Defiance and Taking Positions" in *Reflections on Exile.*
[3] This figure comes from the University of Michigan. The figures are nearly the same in my own university. See the University of Michigan website for an explanation to parents about the cost of the university:
http://www.vpcomm.umich.edu/pa/key/understandingtuition.html

humanities (valued at a lower rate than business or health professions) has been on the decline. Students "choices of major and minor fields are informed (no, dictated) by a rudimentary understanding of the nature of the job market rather than by intellectual curiosity, let alone intellectual passion" (Aronowitz, 2000, p. 10). Reducing the concept and cost of education to simply the kind of return on investment that it will provide comes with its own self-perpetuating logic, so that people are often unable to see any value in the process of education of the human, or of seeing education as being transformative and citizen-building.[4] Rather than seeing education as a whole process, it has been stripped down to its bare ability (or not) to secure students a place in the workforce.

Less visible than increased tuition costs has been the effect of neoliberal policies on the university curriculum itself. As the private sector increasingly sees the public education system as a training center for its future employees, and as students—burdened by increasing costs of tuition and fears of rising unemployment prospects—express concerns about increasing their times to graduation, the curriculum has come under scrutiny by students, parents, and politicians to determine whether students are wasting their time (and therefore their money and what little tax dollars remain in the system) on certain courses. Most often, humanities courses are put under a microscope to examine their fiscal return, and in the United States, an attitude of criticising the humanities is frequently on display.[5] Sadly, we have very recent instances of this kind of criticism to call upon as examples. This past January, for instance, President Obama visited a factory in Wisconsin and urged factory workers to learn trades that would 'earn them more money than an art history degree'. In the same speech Obama proudly noted the 'schools-to-skills' alliance between local schools and businesses.

While Obama immediately added that there was "nothing wrong with an art history degree", other politicians have been unabashedly critical of what they deem 'unessential' subjects of study (Jaschik, 2014). After the economic collapse of 2008, the idea that the university served important purposes not necessarily related directly or immediately to readying students for private-sector jobs had become even less coherent to many politicians and their constituents. Most notorious for this in the past year in the United States has been North Carolina governor Patrick McCrory. The governor has gone beyond rhetorical criticism of the university to full-scale efforts to influence or eliminate parts of the curriculum. Denouncing the idea of 'subsidising' courses such as gender studies, philosophy, and other liberal arts subjects that he claims will not get someone employment, McCrory joined a bevy of politicians, emboldened by redistricting and increasing public criticism of higher education, who are unabashed in their attempts to undermine the university as anything other than a training facility for future workers. Giroux (2008), Aronowitz (2008), Morrison (2001) and hooks (2003) have long expressed concerns about the changing university climate, and/or have documented increasingly aggressive efforts to curtail dissent on

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[4] A more cynical view is that the transformative possibilities of education are seen, but not desired. On this, see the collaborative online project at *anthropologies:* http://www.anthropologiesproject.org/2013/01/neoliberal-education-from-affordable.html

[5] One example of this is the proposal in Florida to charge more for 'non-strategic' majors such as history and English (see Marcus, 2013).

campus, influence curriculum and to limit the role of the university to that of serving the private sphere.

The discussion about the high cost of education for students is an important one, but one could be forgiven for being suspicious of the motives of politicians who advocate the need for cuts in education and express concerns over students wasting money on 'unnecessary' courses, while advocating tax and economic policies that do very little to promote real economic growth or security for the middle and lower classes. Governor McCrory, for example, has repeatedly cut funding to the university overall, and while he may be sincere in his desires to educate students to compete for jobs, his overall cuts to education do not further this goal. One suspects that beyond the rhetoric about concern over the cost of education is a desire to strip the university of any potential role it can play in educating informed citizens who are capable of questioning the role of money in politics, and the role of existing institutions on public policies, that increasingly worsen the role of 99% of the citizens in the country. The increase of business-models as ways to run universities, the increase in massive open online classes (MOOCs), intensifying outside criticism of sabbaticals for professors, and increasing scrutiny of professor's political positions are all evidence of this stripping away of the university's traditional function. From Michigan, one example of this kind of scrutiny comes from the recent controversy over the Michigan Mackinac Center's call to release the emails of three professors of labour history who may have taken a stand on the events taking place in Wisconsin when Governor Walker had his standoff with the state's unions.[6] These examples cited are only a few from a long list of items that can be cited when raising suspicions about the rhetoric of higher tuition costs in the face of policies destructive to the very notion of the public university.

General education?

Initially, to be educated in the American university was to be fairly well-grounded in the liberal arts, and this was an education almost exclusively based on a Western canon. In many respects, the philosophy governing the American university and college was consistent with John Stuart Mill's views in *On Liberty*, where he outlined a vision of education as a liberating pursuit that ought to be promoted (although not directed) by the state (2006). He saw education in an ideal sense, as a way to lift students out of the narrow confines imposed upon them by their upbringings and religions. It can be repeated that in its most perfect form, there was never a time in the history of American education that this view was perfectly embodied, but one could look to the early nineteenth century as a 'golden age' where many university and college presidents ardently strived to embody this vision. The development of specialised schools towards the end of the nineteenth century in America looked poised to disrupt the traditional core curriculum in the liberal arts. The professional schools wanted more of an emphasis on building specific skills that would be needed in the workplace. What emerged from this tension between the professional schools and the traditional curriculum was a hybrid system which preserved the 'core' of the liberal arts but allowed a major in more professional studies (Wagoner,

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[6] A good discussion of this can be found in *The Michigan Daily* (2011): https://www.michigandaily.com/opinion/daily-misuse-foia

Jennings & Urban, 2013, p. 163). Yet this hybrid model strengthened the view that particular training mattered over the larger, more nebulous goal of enlarging the minds of students.

Today, the general education programs required in many institutions still provide the core curriculum in American colleges and universities, and they are often the last bastions of the traditional liberal arts programs at many universities. The philosophy behind general education curriculums is that the whole student should be developed, and that she should be required to take courses outside of her major area in order to give her a firm grounding in the traditional liberal arts. If the disciplines of literature, philosophy and scientific theory were once the foundations of an education, if they are present at all today, they are offered to most students as part of core requirements of the university. But over time, this curriculum too has become influenced by debates about the role of the humanities and some of the social sciences (most notably political science) in the university and has come under attack by neoliberal groups.[7] The most influential mark these attacks have had on general education is with respect to their evolved role from a general mission of expanding students' horizons of knowledge, shaping them as critical thinkers and exposing them to fields outside of their majors, to an emphasis on delivering a core education that purports to give students the 'skills' and 'competencies' that they are told they will need to succeed in the world.

Across North America, humanities departments have tried to juggle these two competing ideas: the traditional vision of the humanities as providing students with 'an education', meaning new ways of seeing the world, understanding of literature and the important themes found in that literature that speak to the human condition on the one hand, and, on the other hand a mandated curriculum focusing on skill-building. This tension has forced humanities faculty to account for its 'applicability' and 'usefulness' and 'relevance' in the world. An illustration of this push for relevance can be found in the field of ethics. It is more and more common for the teaching of ethics to be done not in traditional philosophy departments, but in the professions with applied ethics. Why, some have asked, should students waste their time studying Aristotle, Bentham and Kant when they can learn cases of ethical breaches that are specific to their majors and minors (health professions, business, veterinary medicine, etc.)? Increasingly, these courses are being taught not by philosophers of ethics, but by faculty trained in the discipline in which ethics is to be applied. Many times these new applied ethics courses focus on how breaches of ethics will affect a corporation or institution's branding or bottom line, what the corporate or cultural guidelines are, and what legal implications might be involved. This decline in demand for philosophy faculty to teach what had traditionally been their most important courses in the university plays itself out in variations specific to the discipline throughout humanities departments. Faculty find that the definition of 'useful' takes on the narrowest sense of a cost-based analysis

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[7] For an astute, concise analysis of recent congressional efforts to defang political theory, see J. Lepore's (2013) "Long Division" in *The New Yorker*. Lepore discusses the recent bill signed into law restricting funding for the National Science Foundation's Political Science Program, which supports academic research in "citizenship, government and politics". The law requires funding to be used only if it promotes national security or the economic interests of the United States.

about which courses will be 'beneficial'. In such an environment, the last bastion of 'usefulness' for faculty (and in some their only function) is the general education program. For many faculty, teaching introductory classes to non-humanities majors who must fulfill general education requirements is their primary role (or only role—this essay has not discussed the fact that most university courses are taught by non-tenure track adjuncts). Sadly, given the current climate, even this can be seen as a success. Some schools have eviscerated their humanities offerings to a point where there are almost none left. These general education classes, which are likely the only philosophy, literature or art classes that a vast majority of students will ever take, become a default arena for teaching Said.

There is one bright spot here. Despite its many malfunctions, today's universities and colleges have a good chance of being at least slightly more accommodating as a whole to the idea of requiring students think about issues on a global scale, a state of affairs which Said did much to bring about. At many American universities there are more course offerings in non-Western literature, music, philosophy, art and history than in previous generations when the overall climate for the humanities might have been more favorable but was dominated by the Western canon. His observation that "most scholars and students in the contemporary American academy are now aware, as they were never aware before, that society and culture have been the heterogenous product of heterogenous people in an enormous variety of cultures, traditions and situations" (Said, 2000, p. 380) continues to ring true, and this awareness has become even more acute after 9/11. This is no small feat, and it should be celebrated. It must, however, be celebrated with caution, and such increased diversity in the curriculum must not usher in an attitude of complacency. These changes were brought about slowly and only with difficulty, and they must be continuously nurtured in the university lest they lose ground. Said mentions the popularity of certain works in America, such as Allen Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind,* Alvin Kernan's *The Death of Literature* and Roger Kimball's *Tenured Radicals* as evidence that the opposition to such a changed curriculum is alive and active. We can add others to this list (Kimball has spent his career writing books in a similar vein, so has David Horowitz).

Furthermore, diversity for its own sake comes with new problems, and one of particular concern is the problem of 'new Orientalism'. Many universities, libraries and book clubs, often with the best of intentions and in the name of 'globalism' or 'multiculturalism' feature authors such as Khaled Husseini (*Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns),* Ayaan Hirsi Ali's (*Infidel),* or any number of other books by 'insider' or 'native' authors, purporting to give the 'true' story about the East, or depicting a fictional image of an eastern country that is problematic less for what it includes (often depicting scenes of brutality, misogyny, religious intolerance, etc.) than what it excludes: a sense of historical context to these events—which lacking this seem to exist either in a vacuum or because of some genetic or cultural deficiency of the locals. Often these authors and books are promoted owing to well-intentioned efforts to expand the views of students (but unfortunately the lack of historical context in these books means that even after reading them, students are often less prepared to think about and engage with cultures other than their own than if they had not read the books to begin with). Given this rather dismal description, what is the strength of

Said's writings in this atmosphere? More precisely, what is the power of Said's writings in the contemporary university today?

Despite the decline of majors in the humanities, the presence of general education programs means that there are still venues for the humanities to make an impact on students' educations. Because they must reach a broader audience and are under pressure to show their relevance, general education courses themselves often must avoid obscure prose, and they do at least have the potential to impact a large number of students. Such courses have the potential to be an arena where theory meets practice. Here, however, we can notice a paradox: while fewer and fewer students are majoring in the humanities, most students are required to take several humanities courses, and these courses are more likely than ever to incorporate a diverse reading list. This is why we find ourselves in the unique position of being able to teach many students the works of Edward Said, but at the same time having those same students coming to the courses with very little prior preparation for being able to think about his writings. Frequently, Said's discussion of power and knowledge comes in the context of his reflections on literature. It is likely that some of these discussions will be out of reach for general education students (think of his discussions of Lukács, Cioran and Auerbach). Now we might have to think about how to teach Said without watering him down or domesticating him to the point where his theories no longer have real transformative power. There is also the likely scenario that most students don't see the relevance of, or may resent, general education courses, insisting on knowing how they are 'applicable to the real world'. As if we don't have enough cards stacked against us, add one acknowledging the very real possibility that the global scope of Said's writings are threatening to some students who fear that 'their' culture is being replaced by someone else's (this is certainly the case in my own university). In short, the audience is often at best uninterested, and at worst, hostile. Considering the terrain, we will have to speak of 'fundamentals'. What from Said's works is essential to teach?

As I mentioned above, surely one of the most important features of Said's writings are the insights he makes about the structures of power, their impact on the production of knowledge, along with the role of culture in perpetuating that knowledge. This series of arguments comes up repeatedly in Said's writings. They are at the heart of *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism.* His writings on Palestine also provide multiple ways of illustrating these points. *The Question of Palestine* (1992) explores the enabling systems of colonialism in the carving out of the state of Israel, and pointed out the role of culture in the normalisation of the colonial enterprise. *From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map* and numerous other essays elsewhere excoriated Arafat for his complicity in making Israel's occupation over Palestine more efficient and legitimate and noted the legitimising systems which accompanied and forced a cultural understanding of the conflict, which was always framed in the context of Orientalism or new-Orientalism. I have focused my examples on Said's writings about the Middle East, but obviously his breadth of scholarship is much greater. Throughout all of his writings is a sustained critique of the institutions of power, the vicissitudes of power, and a conviction that the answer to this was a critical, awakened consciousness, best embodied in his image of the exile.

If we keep sight of these ideas, we can meet students on the level where they are. The lexicon of business and the market insist on 'applicability'—but they do so in a way that demands immediate, measurable outcomes. And of course, theory resists this. Thinking resists this. Creativity resists this. But in their own ways, theory, thinking, creativity are applicable *all the time*. One of the beauties of Said's writings was the way that he could move from, say, the cause of Arabism, a discussion of a passage from Flaubert, a rather thorough discussion of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and *much more* to a critique of Arafat in the span of a few pages. In the space of human interest, there was no subject with which he could not find some way to engage with critically to a certain point. If the question is relevancy, Said is always so.

With this in mind, we can try to find a way to show students the relevancy of Said. I have found that at times this means taking Said's work temporarily out of the specific context of a given essay in order to look at the larger idea. Doing this shows that Said's critiques are those that can be offered towards dominant paradigms of any type. Further, if my own university can provide any model, students who come from white, middle-class backgrounds often fail to see the importance of discussions about diversity and are often completely unaware of issues such as white privilege, institutional racism and the dangers and prevalence of stereotyping. Furthermore, having ingested a steady diet of the American media, they often harbour a deep suspicion about the Middle East, unquestioned support for Israel, and a fear of Islam. Therefore, focusing on the critiques of Said, temporarily divorced from these 'threatening' ideas, students can see Said's theories function in another area before the discussion turns back to his own concerns.

By way of example, let us consider how Said's ideas can be applied to the discourse of health. This example happens to be particularly pertinent in the United States as the country continues to debate health care law, and it is something with which most students have at least a passing familiarity. They may have ideologically sharp opinions about health, but they would likely be mainly concerned with the issue of the recent healthcare law, the Affordable Care Act, or 'Obamacare'. Students often initially see 'health', and the pursuit of it through medicine and science, as something concrete. They don't question the methods used by science, or how some research pursuits qualify as 'real' science, and others as pseudo-science. Imagine that students are introduced to the text and arguments in *Orientalism,* but asked to think about the paradigm of 'health' that is dominant in the 'Western world' or more specifically, in America. With some coaxing, the students can see the paradigm of medicine as 'disease management' at the center of this paradigm. What might fall off to the side as weak or unscientific challenges to that centre are things like chiropractic medicine, acupuncture, nutrition-based healing, etc. It is not difficult to get students to start to think about how the centre is maintained, and what institutions participate in the maintenance of the health as disease-management model (National Institute of Health, Center for Disease Control, American Heart Society, American Cancer Society, etc.).[8] They start to see that "theology, not

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[8] For an extended critique of these and other organisations, see T. Colin Cambell's book, *Whole* (2013). Cambell's critique of American medicine helped shaped the example that I use in class cited above. Indeed, although it is likely that Cambell has not read Said, there are quite a few parallels that can be drawn between Cambell's arguments that

history, is the presiding authority" over our conception of what constitutes health (Said, 2004, p. 46).

There will be exceptions, but most students will have no trouble seeing how our current model of health works and is maintained, and how it can shift—often slowly—to challenges from the margins which endure. They can readily acknowledge that our health care system is really one that manages diseases rather than promotes health, and that there are immense profits to be made in managing disease (and no profit for the pharmaceutical companies in promoting a lifestyle focused on maintaining health through exercise and eating and not by taking pharmaceuticals). They can also see that there are times when something from the margin can move to the center—that is, the discourse (in this case about health) can change to incorporate other influences. One ready example of this is chiropractic medicine, which has more and more made its way into the dominant paradigm. Chiropractic medicine, once widely seen as 'quack' medicine, is now more frequently covered by insurance companies—a sure sign of it becoming mainstream and 'legitimate'. By thinking about all that goes into our Western (specifically American) conception of health, students can start to think critically about our concept of health, and they can start to see what Said means when he refers to Orientalism as a discourse, because they are now able to see how health can be a discourse. They can also understand that viewing this conception critically does not mean it must be totally undermined, but they can come to understand it differently: less fixed, less sacrosanct, and as something that a great deal of work and power go into maintaining.

Once students have a non-threatening example firmly in their grasp, they can be asked to look at how this same idea of discourse and dominant paradigm model works with respect to construction of other kinds of knowledge that is, for many students, further from home and perhaps not nearly as immediate to their concerns. The parallel can be made to the idea of the canon in literature itself. In what way is this 'centre' for the Western canon maintained? What institutions work to preserve its central notion in American curriculums? What happens when the dominant model of the canon is challenged? How do challenges to the canon by non-Western authors often result in those non-canonical works of literature being 'domesticated' or 'tamed'? An example of this latter point might be illustrated by discussing the idea of 'multicultural days' which celebrate 'ethnicity' and 'diversity' in a general sense, but can often dilute any sense of difference that might be challenging or that might force students to think about these issues seriously. The importance of a pedagogical model that applies the ideas of Said outside of his usual topics is that it allows students to understand the power dynamics involved in maintaining any type of system. The central argument of *Orientalism*—that our 'knowledge' of the Middle East is the result of complex power structures maintained over several hundred years—is, with modification, the central argument about knowledge in general, and gets at the critique of the relationship between knowledge and power.

These ideas are often a revelation to students. They become able to 'read' in new ways. They begin to understand what Said means when he writes about the

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modern medicine is focused on narrow parts (disease management) and thus fails to see the importance of the 'whole' picture (including prevention through nutrition) and Said's writings.

'production of knowledge', and how this expands far beyond knowledge about the Middle East. Social media, pop culture, mainstream news sources, all come under new kinds of scrutiny. Can this help turn students into the kinds of free thinkers, more capable of analysing the centres of power, addressing social issues and understanding the links between their own concerns (employment prospects, healthcare, social safety nets, outsourcing of employment prospects, rising tuition costs, etc.) and the greater public? I believe that it can—that teaching Said to this particular group of students is often revelatory and makes a deep impact on how they see the world.

The goal of being able to connect concerns about one's personal welfare with concern about public welfare is a thoroughly Said-ian goal. When Said writes about literature, he takes us through the changes in the American university curriculum since the second World War in order to air out how the humanities centre, as the preserver of the European or Western canon and 'values', has been challenged by marginal fields such as African American studies, women's studies, queer theory, and other marginalised groups and areas. Now, we are firmly in the territory of Said's works themselves. This kind of education, advocated by Said, gives students not skills but theoretical tools which they could use to see and understand power and how it functions, and to use this power to enact real change in the world. The Saidian project is nothing less than awakening students to their own agency and the social responsibility which accompanies it.

Conclusion

Said, even at his most pessimistic, never gave in to the kind of despair that would cause him to abandon critical thinking. He understood thoughtful criticism as something which even the most hopeless cause necessitated. Quoting Adorno on this, he stressed, "as long as thinking is not interrupted, it has a firm grasp upon possibility. Its insatiable quality, the resistance against petty satiety, rejects the foolish wisdom of resignation" (Said, 2000, p. 553). What he hoped for, what we can hope for—perhaps the most important thing one can strive for in these general education classes—is to habituate students to a kind of openness and spirit of criticism. In this openness, one can learn to see the 'whole', rather than just the Western-centred, nationalistic stories that we might be inclined to continue to tell ourselves because they are comforting, non-threatening, and don't require us to think about ourselves as in any way perpetuators of injustice.[9] It was this inculcation of the 'whole' that Said pushed for in all of his writings over his career. At times he referenced music, and talked about seeing history as a great score of music, where individual histories were as 'contrapuntal lines' on the score. In other places, his preferred term was 'worldliness'. Regardless of the term, this idea was nearly omni-present in his works. Said came to link the very idea of seeing the whole as an issue of academic freedom. As much as he celebrated the many efforts to criticise the

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[9] The Latin word *universitas* means "whole; the whole universe; the whole world". It is this original sense of the word that needs to be restored. See also T. Colin Cambell's work *Whole* (2013) which offers a critique of the American approach to nutrition and disease management. Cambell's critique reads like a Said-ian critique of nutrition and health policy.

canon's sole supremacy in the curriculum, he cautioned against a kind of revolutionary zeal that would have merely exchanged one canon for another—even if the new canon was from a culture, traditions and histories that had long been denied acknowledgement and place beside the Western canon: "Ethnic particularity does not provide for intellectual process—quite the contrary", he warned (Said, 2000, p. 381). Emphasising the notion of the 'whole' to a graduating class at the University of Cairo in 1999, he warned:

> The world we live in is made up of numerous identities, numerous ideas, lives, philosophies, interacting, sometimes harmoniously, sometimes antithetically. Not to deal with that whole … is not to have academic freedom. We cannot make our claim as seekers after justice, if we advocate knowledge only of and about ourselves, knowledge only that is approved by a team of referees who decide what can and cannot be read. Who will then referee the referees? (Said, 2005, p. 32)

This model of the whole that Said often called upon is an antidote to the problem of 'the tower' referenced earlier. The university must strive to nurture and preserve a climate where cultural curriculums are not pitted against each other, but where they can interact freely and productively. Said reckoned this to a migrant or traveler, who is free to discover herself and her others.

Once students learn to think critically about the world around them, they can think better about Said's optimism in the face of lost causes, and they will need to be warned away from despair. We commonly hear this from students concerning politics. Many will say that 'both parties are corrupt' and therefore that voting is useless. Such an attitude clearly benefits the status quo. Giroux has argued persuasively that students, who are awakened to what the effects are of neoliberal policies in the university, and how those effects directly impact their lives, can learn how to hold power accountable (2004, 2013). If students can be awakened to the connection between the effects of power on their own lives and how these same causes affect others, sometimes in much more drastic and concrete ways, we can hope that they will be actively involved in finding solutions and calling out abuses. We can put our efforts towards this hope, despite our knowing that many of our students may be thoroughly steeped in a worldview at best ambivalent and at worst hostile towards rethinking their assumptions. Learning about and contesting abuses of power may not be the goal of the university administration itself, or of the general public when they think about the role of the university, but it can become the goal of many of our students.

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BOOK REVIEW

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This book identifies and critically assesses what Tilley refers to as the "white vanishing trope", highly prevalent in Australian literary output. Whether historical accounts of Burke and Wills or celluloid adaptations such as *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), the myth of the white person being vulnerable and in danger of disappearing when faced with Australia's landscape is a potent one, and narratives that deal with the struggles of 'lost' white people have found themselves at the forefront of Australian cultural consciousness. While this trope has been identified by previous scholars and addressed with reference to specific texts individually, there have been no comprehensive analyses of a variety of literary texts featuring 'white vanishing' that speak to a broader Australian cultural preoccupation.

Tilley states that one of the aims of her book is not to look at Australian literature and culture in order to track changes that have occurred, but is instead "quite deliberately a book about continuity … It is about recognising an obstinate cultural trope that has changed little, if at all, over time" (p. ix). If we consider the ubiquity of political and cultural anxieties about asylum seekers and the incessant problematisation of Aboriginal people in mainstream Australian culture, it is clear that white society's fear of the Other remains ever present. *White Vanishing* could not have been published at a more opportune time.

The book's analysis is separated into six parts, with the four middle chapters dealing with an important aspect of semiosis in white vanishing narratives. The first chapter after the introduction looks at the figure of the lost child in narratives that have constructed white Australia. The child vanishing into the bush and either being lost or rediscovered is a broader parable for the relationship between white people and the landscape. The colonial enterprise can therefore be conceived as one in which white European settlers are themselves

children, wide-eyed and innocent in their exploration of the unforgiving Australian bush. It is here that she lays the theoretical groundwork for each chapter to come. What Peter Hulme has previously dubbed the classic colonial triangle—interaction between white settlers, the landscape and Other (usually an Indigenous Other)—is identified by Tilley as a device in which the Indigenous Other performs a resolutory function for the troubled relationship between settler and land.

Within white vanishing narratives, this colonial triangle supports the political utility of indigenising the white settler and confirming the legitimacy of the colonial nation-building project. For this to happen, the Other must be placed in a role that supports (but does not threaten) the white settler's struggle and triumphant possession of the land. The next two chapters, entitled "Black Displacements" and "White Presencing" respectively, deal with this. They articulate the compulsion of white vanishing texts to displace the Indigene from the landscapes they depict in order to enforce white subjectivity.

The next two chapters (entitled "Temporal Trouble" and "Entering Terra Nullius") deal with discourses surrounding time and space respectively. The white vanishing narrative has a teleological discourse of progress woven through it, a discourse that legitimates and naturalises white settler colonisation of Indigenous space without repercussion: "Asserting a linear temporality is crucial to the politics of colonization, and particularly instrumental to the enactment of *terra nullius*" (p. 159). White vanishing texts utilise moments of temporal slippage (such as when characters become lost) to create a struggle to overcome, the result of which can be positively interpreted as progress: "White society is naturalized as more progressive and evolved than all (its) Others despite—indeed, *because* of its responses to—the moments of temporal frustration it experiences in white vanishing" (p. 161).

In the sixth chapter and the conclusion, "White Vanishing *in situ*" the combination and interaction of the semiotic markers of vanishing outlined in the previous four chapters is deployed within a selection of five texts. It is in this chapter where Tilley's study is most rigorous and most rewarding, weaving the subject matter of the previous chapters through her literary analysis. The concluding chapter also finishes the book well, grounding the preceding literary analysis in historical events (such as the Lindy Chamberlain case) that galvanise the white vanishing trope into public consciousness. Tilley also addresses relevant debates in Australian literary criticism in forming her conclusion.

Tilley's book is an engaging and rigorous in its analysis, and does a great deal to fill the epistemological gap in disappearance mythology in Australian literature. Even for readers who are not *au fait* with literary textual analysis or whiteness theory, Tilley's book makes it easy to trace the insidious and enduring inheritance of the white vanishing trope in terms of its origins in the oppressive function of colonialism.

Author Note

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SPECIAL ISSUE: EDWARD SAID—INTELLECTUAL, CULTURAL CRITIC, ACTIVIST

'Gendering Orientalism': Gender, sexuality, and race in post-9/11 global politics

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Edward W. Said's Orientalism, although written 34 years ago, remains relevant to understanding the ways in which the world is constructed along binaries of 'East' and 'West'. Its relevance to global politics is particularly relevant to the 'War on Terror', one of the most significant contemporary examples of state-inflicted violence in pursuit of political objectives. Feminist and postcolonial scholars have demonstrated that the practices of contemporary global politics are fundamentally gendered and racialised. Said's work allows us to uncover the practices of 'gendered orientalism' that inform mainstream 'Western' analyses of 'the Middle East'. That is, legitimacy, power, and authority (to define people, places, things, and to undertake or avoid particular actions) are discursively constructed through representations that are both orientalist and gendered. Official US 'War on Terror' discourse functions to (re)produce dominant regimes of 'truth' and 'knowledge' which enable certain possibilities and actions (such as military intervention) whilst excluding or limiting others. Focusing on the lead-up to and early months of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, this article illustrates that the Bush Administration's 'War on Terror' discourse constructs and deploys a range of (hierarchically organised) binaries that situate the 'West' in opposition to the 'East' (good/evil, civilised/barbaric, rational/irrational, progressive/backward) and involve the (re)production of mainstream understandings of 'race', 'gender', and 'sexuality'. Said's conception of orientalism, and in particular, a feminist reading of it, allows us to undermine the apparent 'naturalness' of identities of race, gender and sex and their deployment in global politics.

Keywords: gender, orientalism, race, 'War on Terror', global politics

Introduction

This article will illustrate the relevance of Edward Said's concept of 'orientalism' to contemporary global politics through a gendered reading. The practices of contemporary global politics are fundamentally gendered and racialised; feminist and postcolonial scholars have pointed out that mainstream scholarship fails to problematise (and in doing so 'silences') the politics and power inherent in constructing and deploying racialised and gendered categories, instead taking these for granted by largely ignoring how shape and are deployed in global politics. Orientalism, I argue, is a particular type of racialisation that is also inherently gendered, and essential to understanding the 'War on Terror', one of the most significant contemporary examples of state-inflicted violence in pursuit of political objectives. While generally overlooked in mainstream scholarship on the 'War on Terror', the intersection between gender and orientalism has been identified in some feminist scholarship on the 'War on Terror' (Cloud, 2004; Khalid, 2011; Nayak, 2006; Stabile & Kumar, 2005). Building on this research, I offer an analysis of the George W. Bush administration's 'War on Terror' discourse in order to illustrate the ways in which legitimacy, power, and authority (to define people, places, things, and to undertake or avoid particular actions) in the 'War on Terror' are discursively constructed through representations that are both orientalist *and* gendered.

In doing so, I begin by setting out the key tenets of Said's conception of 'orientalism', explaining its relevance to the contemporary US, and exploring the intersections between orientalism and gender. I apply this theoretical framework to the 'War on Terror', specifically, the official texts of Bush Administration (or 'official') 'War on Terror' discourse, in order to illustrate how this discourse functions to (re)produce dominant regimes of 'truth' and 'knowledge' which enable certain possibilities and actions (such as military intervention) whilst excluding or limiting others.[1] I explore the ways in which the Bush Administration's 'War on Terror' discourse is a 'gendered orientalist' discourse that constructs and deploys a range of binaries that situate 'the West' in opposition to 'the East' (for example, good/evil, civilised/barbaric, rational/irrational, progressive/backward) and involves the (re)production of mainstream understandings of 'race', 'gender', and 'sexuality' (for example defining 'acceptable' masculinities and femininities).[2] In this discourse, 'women', 'men', 'masculinities' and 'femininities' are (re)produced according to a binary logic of orientalism that creates dichotomies and hierarchies between and

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[1] In terms of my research in this article, I limit 'official' texts to those texts (spoken, visual and written) created and distributed by senior members of the Bush administration (and those authorised to speak on their behalf) and that have reached a public audience. My concern is not with the decision-making processes behind the creation and implementation of specific policies, but rather with identifying gendered orientalist discourse intended for public consumption, as it is this that is deployed in constructing intervention as 'necessary'.

[2] By 'the West' and 'Western' I mean primarily the US, UK, Canada, Australia and those European countries that, as Meghan Nayak and Eric Selbin (2010, p. 2) explain, "represent themselves as 'universal', developed and civilized". I use scare quotes to indicate that 'Western' or 'the' 'West', like 'the' 'East' (or 'Eastern'), are discursively constructed concepts, changing, historically contingent, and complex, and to avoid (re)producing the unity and homogeneity that speaking of the Western (or Eastern) subject would.

amongst groups of 'white' and 'brown' 'men' and 'women'. Said's conception of orientalism, and in particular, a feminist reading of it, allows us to undermine the apparent 'naturalness' of identities of race, gender and sex and their deployment in global politics. As this examination of 'War on Terror' demonstrates, the deployment of these identities can have devastating consequences, enabling violent and imperialist interventions.

The 'War on Terror' and its 'Others'

The 'War on Terror' was instigated by the US after the September 11, 2001 attacks by Al-Qaeda on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. The George W. Bush administration characterised the al Qaeda attacks as requiring the US to conduct "a war to save civilization itself", a war which "[w]e did not seek … but we must fight" (Bush, 2001g). Supporters of the 'War on Terror' focused their discourse on strategic issues around the most effective way to proceed with the conflict (Bobbitt, 2008; Byman, 2003; Lewis, 2003; Pipes, 2002). These analyses, in being uncritical of the assumptions around the necessity of the 'War on Terror', took as given a particular set of (highly contested and complex) 'values' that have had currency in orientalist and gendered discourses before and during the 'War on Terror'. Taking for-granted the characterisation of the conflict as one between 'good' and 'evil', civilisation and barbarity, such analyses fail to problematise the binary underpinnings of the representations deployed in official US 'War on Terror' discourse.

Soon after the Al-Qaeda attacks, Bush (2001c) declared a 'War on Terror' and characterised this war as waged not only against specific terrorist groups but more broadly "against barbaric behavior, people that hate freedom and hate what we stand for". As Said explained, "[w]ithout a well-organized sense that these people over there were not like 'us' and didn't appreciate 'our' values—the very core of orientalist dogma—there would have been no war" (2004, p. 872). Indeed, in his 2009 farewell address to the nation, Bush drew on orientalist tropes in his assessment of the military interventions undertaken under the banner of the 'War on Terror':

> Afghanistan has gone from a nation where the Taliban harbored al Qaeda and stoned women in the streets to a young democracy that is fighting terror and encouraging girls to go to school. Iraq has gone from a brutal dictatorship and a sworn enemy of America to an Arab democracy at the heart of the Middle East and a friend of the United States … good and evil are present in this world, and between the two of them there can be no compromise. Murdering the innocent to advance an ideology is wrong every time, everywhere. Freeing people from oppression and despair is eternally right. This nation must continue to speak out for justice and truth. We must always be willing to act in their defense—and to advance the cause of peace. (Bush, 2009)

These military interventions could become necessary (if not inevitable) because of the construction of a world that is cast as locked in a battle between 'good' and 'evil'. As Jutta Weldes (1996, p. 287) explains, "[d]ifferent representations of the world entail different identities, which in turn carry with them different ways of functioning in the world, are located within different power relations and make possible different interests". Uncovering the operation of this entails asking how identity categories such as 'us', 'them', 'good', 'evil', 'civilised', 'barbaric' and

so on are constructed. In the 'War on Terror' context, this is made possible because of the logic of orientalism.

Orientalism as an analytic framework

'Orientalism' is a discourse of gendered racialisation, through which 'the East' (as Arab/Muslim) is constructed in opposition to 'the West'.[3] The Bush administration's representations of the world, drawing on stereotyped images of 'us' and 'them' as 'civilised' and 'barbaric', and an artificial division of the world into 'East'/'West' and 'good'/'evil', are made intelligible because of (historical and contemporary) racialised, and gendered discourses. Said's *Orientalism* (1978/2003) is central to understanding the function of such representations. Said's thesis followed early critiques of the discipline of Orientalism, which had pointed to its lack of 'objectivity' and contribution to the production of stereotypical images of Islam, Muslims, and 'the East' (Abdel-Malik, 1963; Tibawi, 1963). For Said, however Orientalism was more than a field of inquiry, and had a great reach not only in terms of geographical space, but also in terms of time, spanning many eras. Ultimately, Said argued, orientalism established binary oppositions (such as irrational/rational, primitive/developed) that constructed the 'East' as irrational, backwards, exotic, despotic and lazy, while the 'West' was civilised, rational, moral and Christian. These representations served to not only 'other' the Orient, but also represented the 'West' self-referentially—the 'West' was everything the 'East' was not. Said argued that over time, this type of 'knowledge' about the 'East' and the construction of an 'Eastern reality' produced a tradition, which then consistently influenced all further learning and knowledge about the Orient (Said, 1978/2003, pp. 2-3, and chap. 1). Central to this is Said's notion of orientalism as a cultural and ideological concept bound to a structure of political domination. Orientalism was a mode of discourse that utilised "supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles" (1978/2003, p. 2). It was Said's conceptualisation of orientalism as a 'discourse', in the Foucauldian sense, that differentiated his work from previous critiques of orientalism (Ahmed, 1992, pp. 177-178; Sardar, 1999, p. 67). It is conceiving of orientalism-as-discourse that offers an analytical framework through which to uncover the power relations that underwrite 'Western' representations of 'the East'. This in turn enables us to destabilise the power of representations (to define, naturalise, legitimate, and deploy knowledge about and for others) in 'Western' constructs of 'the East' and relatedly, of 'the West's' efforts to assert and define itself.

'American' orientalism

Although focused primarily on the British and French colonial experiences, *Orientalism* can be applied to contexts beyond that which Said examined. Said's conception of orientalism as a discourse(s) means that the discourse(s) and the repository of representations which they draw upon are fluid and shifting, readily adapted to the changing circumstances to which they relate, both historically

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[3] I purposely use 'Arab/Muslim' to signify that 'Arabs' and 'Muslims' are conflated in 'War on Terror' (and other orientalist) discourse(s), despite differences amongst and between them.

specific and situated in a broader long-standing 'tradition' (Jiwani, 2005, p. 181; Sardar, 1999; Tuastad, 2003). Ziauddin Sardar's study on orientalism traces the transmission of orientalist representations, tropes, and narratives through 800 years of 'Western' interactions with the 'Orient of Islam', concluding that these experiences have affected the 'Western' world's experiences with the Middle East (1999, pp. 54-55, pp. 77-106). The 'Orient' and 'Western' depictions of it have played (and still play) a crucial role as a key component of 'Western' civilisation and culture. The self-reflexivity of orientalist 'Othering' (through 'Othering' the 'Self' is constructed as everything the 'Other' is not) has been and still is reflected in dominant 'Western' understandings of political, social, and cultural development in which 'Western' experiences of development and progress are ideal models to which 'Others' are compared. Sardar (1999, p. 55) explains, "[f]rom film to fiction, foreign policy to polemics' this 'Other' is projected as 'a problem' that becomes 'an immovable obstacle between 'Western' civilization as its destiny: globalization". For example, the discourse of 'Islam' constructed in US mainstream media and the works of experts is a pertinent example of the ways in which orientalist discourse is inextricable from power (Said, 1997). 'Islam', defined by mainstream media and prominent 'experts', is constructed as 'the enemy' through its predication as violent, barbaric, and backward, often illustrated by its adherents' views on women and democracy.

A contemporary example of scholarship that relies on these orientalist ideas is Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilisations' thesis. The immutable binary logics underscoring Huntington's work have also been reflected in the works of other 'popular experts' such as Daniel Pipes (Sardar, 1999, pp. 82-85; Tuastad, 2003, pp. 594-595). These texts have a broad impact: as Geeta Chowdhry (2007, p. 108) argues, the issues raised in them "reflect popular and often official US government sentiments about security policies, broadly understood", reproducing orientalist binaries. Douglas Little (2009), Melani McAlister (2008), and Dag Tuastad (2003) have examined, in both official and popular discourses, a specifically 'American' orientalism that employs the binaries of civilised 'West'/barbaric 'East', deploying images of Arabs/Muslims as underdeveloped yet strong enough to pose a threat to 'us', juxtaposed with a view of the superiority of American civilisation, ultimately legitimising a perceived need to police them.

Orientalist representations have become particularly important in providing 'knowledge' of Islam and Arabs because, as Mohammed Samiei (2010, p. 1148) writes, Islam has "moved ever closer to the centre of world politics", becoming an explanatory tool for events in the Muslim and Arab world. For example, the formation of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) composed largely of Arab states was read as a challenge to 'Western' domination, and linked to the 'resurgence' of 'fundamentalist' and 'militant' Islam by both mainstream media and political authors (Sardar, 1999, p. 81). In popular discourse, 'Islam' and by extension, Arabs, are seen as irrational, menacing, untrustworthy, anti-'Western', and dishonest. These are elements of what Tuastad calls 'the new barbarism', a contemporary expression of orientalism that, in glossing over historically, politically, and economically specific explanations for events (especially violent events) in the Middle East, imply that violence, corruption, and irrationality are embedded in 'Other' cultures. Similarly, the homogenisation of an 'Islamist terrorist enemy' in mainstream political and media discourses ignores the specificities of movements such as al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad, and paints them as 'enemies of the

civilised world' driven by irrational hatred rather than motivated by (at least some measure of) logic linked to challenging unsatisfactory social or political conditions (Hellmich, 2008; Samiei, 2010, p. 1149). Such representations and narratives, conflating 'Arab' and 'Islamic', display the hallmarks of orientalism in the reproduction of a fundamental division between 'East' and 'West' (Tuastad, 2003). They legitimate presuppositions which are built on the knowledge/power nexus of orientalism, as the "production of enemy imaginaries contributes to legitimising continuous colonial economic or political projects" (Samiei, 2010, p. 1149).

Gendering orientalism

Feminist scholars, too, are concerned with examining how power 'works', interrogating the function of gendered power and its function in ordering the way we see the world and how we act in it. Reading gender in global politics uncovers the ways in which the world is ordered in line with 'natural' or assumed ideas about the ways that categories of people think, behave, and act. Thus, 'gender' is more than simply "a noun (i.e., an identity) and a verb (i.e., a way to look at the world…) but also a logic, which is produced by and productive of the ways in which we understand and perform global politics" (Shepherd, 2010, p. 5). Jill Steans explains that there are "deep and profound connections between the construction of masculinities, femininities, and state-sanctioned violence" (2006, p. 61). This is illustrated in the protector/protected 'myth' (or 'Man as Warrior' and 'Beautiful Souls'), in which women are constructed as weak and vulnerable, and in need of (military) protection provided by the (masculine) state (Elshtain, 1995, pp. 3-4; Tickner, 2002;). This requires the control of "femininity as an idea and of women themselves", constructing the two naturally linked (Enloe, 1993, pp. 173-174). Furthermore, militarised masculinities need 'Other' masculinities to represent another type of 'subordinate' identities against which the 'Self' can be constructed. In this sense, understanding "how militarism is (re)produced and deployed in enacting military operations" means taking "gender *and* race as mutually constructed and thus contingent on each other" (Khalid, 2014, in press). Carol Cohn (1993, p. 236) and Joshua S. Goldstein (2001, p. 356, 359) illustrate this by reference to the first Gulf War, where US masculinity was asserted by feminising (and sexualising) the 'enemy Other' (Iraqi men) through derogatory language usually associated with women (for example 'bitch') and symbolic anal rape (missiles with 'Bend Over, Saddam' written on them).

The importance of Said's work for feminists lies in its uncovering of 'East-West' power relations, specifically the relationship between the desire to represent the 'Orient' and to wield power over it. Understanding orientalism as shaped by and productive of gender and sexuality allows us to understand the multiplicity of roles played by men and women in contributing to orientalist discourses, but also how these are constituted along gendered lines (Lewis, 1996. p. 20; Yegenoglu, 1998, pp. 14-15). Although *Orientalism* contained critiques of representations of women by orientalist writers, it did not deal with gender relations in depth (Hale, 2005, p. 2; Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 25). Still, the uncovering of the relationship between power and representation in Said's orientalism can be (and has been) harnessed by feminists, for example those who have interrogated the function of gender in imperialism and colonialism, in particular pointing to the importance that women's rights have taken in supporting 'civilising missions' (Abu-Lughod,

2001; Ahmed, 1992; Mehdid, 1993). For example, Muslim women have typically been represented as wholly oppressed, functioning as a homogenous 'other' for a range of 'Western Selves' to be defined against (Mohanty, 1998, p. 7; Suleri, 2002, p. 750). At the same time, such representations render the 'Other' inherently backward and barbaric, and as, Miriam Cooke, Jasmine Zine, Carole Stabile, and Deepika Kumar *inter alia* argue, these images play a role in the legitimation of intervention (most recently in the 'War on Terror') (Cooke, 2002; Stabile & Kumar, 2005; Zine, 2006). The veil in particular has become a central icon in orientalist discourses that define the experiences of Arab/Muslim women. A visible symbol of their continuing 'oppression', it has been referred to in defence of (imperial) 'liberating missions' past and present (Cloud, 2004; Kapur, 2002; Steans, 2008).

Knowing, constructing, and representing 'Self' and 'Other' is both shaped by and reflective of the construction of gender difference *and* racial difference, through the privileging of certain masculinities and femininities attached to racialised bodies (Yegenoglu, 1998, pp. 25-26). For example, Bush's 2009 farewell address (quoted above) is an example of how violence against women is racialised, and in doing so portrays 'our world' and 'us' as egalitarian and by extension, civilised (Khalid, 2011, p. 22). As such, the logic of orientalism is inherently gendered, refracted through social constructions of "what counts as 'woman' and as 'man'" (Squires & Weldes, 2007, p. 186). As logics of 'Othering', gender and orientalism function together to 'produce' the world and the people in it (barbaric 'Other' men, civilised 'Western' men, oppressed Muslim women, for example), organising peoples, groups, and places according to hierarchies that hinge on binaries such as us/them, masculine/feminine.

Deploying gendered orientalism in the 'War on Terror'

The (re)production of orientalist and gendered ideas about the world (and its people, places, ideas and so on) are central to the discursive processes by which gendered orientalism functions to enable military responses to (discursively constructed) threats. This is done through the construction of identity categories for particular groups of people ('us', 'them', Western, Middle Eastern/Muslim/Arab, 'self', 'other', various groups of men and women), which are then used to construct narratives in which 'security' and 'freedom' is ensured through military intervention. That is, the narratives of the 'War on Terror' (centred on securing and spreading 'civilisation', 'freedom', 'democracy' and 'progress') are *predicated* on gendered orientalist logics that prescribe military action. The representation of Afghan men as dangerous to Afghan women *and* the security of the US, along with the 'civilised world', is a key way in which this has taken place. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the Bush administration's statements featured a motif of violence through repeated reference to battles and wars. This motif operated according to a gendered logic that values masculinity, above all else, as capable of delivering security against an irrational, barbaric 'Other'.

In the days and weeks after 9/11, Bush (2001c) explained that "a group of barbarians have declared war on the American people"; Dick Cheney warned the world that these were "vicious and violent *men*" (2001b) (emphasis mine), "a group of barbarians that threaten all of us" (2001a). However, a paradox also

emerged in the construction of the 'enemy Other'. This enemy was both "evil", "ruthless", and capable of overthrowing governments" (Bush, 2001h), but also "hides in shadows … preys on innocent and unsuspecting people, runs for cover" (2001a). Here the 'Other' is feminised (described as 'weak' and cowardly) at the same time as 'he' is constructed as devious and dangerous. This highlights what Meghana Nayak (2006, p. 49-50) characterises as the Bush administration's 'masculinist anxiety', revealed in the need to 'save' the US state from (material) violence but also the US 'Self' from feminisation, both through specifically militarist solutions. Donald Rumsfeld explained, "the only way to deal with that kind of an attack is in self-defense, to go after the terrorists that are perpetrating those crimes" (2001a); non-violent processes of international law were not entertained as legitimate avenues of recourse.

Feminist scholars have demonstrated that mainstream media discourses in 'the West' (for example, CNN, Fox News, NBC, popular news magazines such as *Newsweek* and *Time*) utilised images of 'the veiled Afghan woman' to illustrate the barbarity of 'the (male) Eastern Other' in support of military intervention into Afghanistan (Cloud, 2004; Stabile & Kumar, 2005). This narrative of 'saving brown women from brown men' (Cooke, 2002) was also deployed in official US 'War on Terror' discourse through September and early October 2001, characterising the military intervention into Afghanistan as a rescue mission (Cloud, 2004). Gender and orientalism were central to the narrative of 'saving' Afghanistan. On 20 September 2001, Bush explained why the US intervention into Afghanistan was necessary in the context of widespread violence and oppression perpetrated against Afghans:

> Afghanistan's people have been brutalized—many are starving and many have fled. Women are not allowed to attend school. You can be jailed for owning a television. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough. (Bush, 2001e)

Afghan women and 'ordinary' Afghan men, targets of the Taliban's irrational and uncontrolled masculinity, are feminised through their inability to resist the dominance of the Taliban. This is significant as the exercise of imperial power depends not only on the feminisation of the body of the 'Other', but also the geographical location of the 'Other' (Said, 1978/2003, pp. 138, 206). Through the feminisation of Afghans, Afghanistan itself is constructed as a territory that can be penetrated, and US masculinity, through the exercise of imperial power, can be (re)asserted (Nayak, 2006, p. 50).

The Administration's rhetoric focused in particular on the brutality of the Taliban to the oppression of women. Bush spoke of "an incredibly repressive government, a government that has a value system that's hard for many in America … to relate to. Incredibly repressive toward women" (2001f). In the official narrative, 'Other' men were most visible in the role of violent oppressors: even though the Administration noted the abuses inflicted on Afghan men, it was women (and children) who almost exclusively symbolised as victims in official US 'War on Terror' discourse. The Administration explicitly connected the treatment of women to backward and 'uncivilised' behaviour amongst the enemies of the US and its allies. Bush stated that the men who attacked the US are the same "faceless cowards" (2001d) who demonstrate their barbarity in "slitting the throats of women" (2001b). Rumsfeld (2001b) explained that "if you look at the

support from across the globe, the world does not believe that violence against women and children in free countries is something that ought to be tolerated".

The operation of orientalist logics in these constructions of the 'enemy Other' in the narrative around the Afghan war functioned through commonly accepted notions of 'appropriate' gendered behaviour, particularly toward women. As Mohja Kahf (1999, p. 9) has shown, the homogenous image of oppressed Muslim women has been vital to imperial projects in its use as a symbol and evidence of the backwardness of 'Other' societies as a whole, and the barbarity of 'Other' men in particular. In official US 'War on Terror' discourse, the image of the oppressed (veiled) Muslim woman was a potent symbol of the threat posed by the irrational, backward, violent, and dangerous masculinity of the enemy. In mainstream understandings of gender identities and roles, women, female bodies, and femininity best supported the construction of the masculine 'Self' and 'Other' that were at the centre of 'War on Terror' narratives. Indeed, the construction of a barbaric and dangerous masculinity performed by a male 'Other' *required* the simultaneous construction of oppressed 'Other' femininity (symbolised by veiling/unveiling as indicative of the oppression/liberation in regards to Middle Eastern/Muslim women) (Khalid, 2011; Shepherd, 2006).

There were significant differences between the Afghan and Iraq wars in terms of planning, level of support, and international legitimacy. However, the basic assumptions of 'Self' and 'Other' (re)produced in the lead up to and during the Afghan war were instrumental in discursively enabling the military intervention in Iraq. That is, 'War on Terror' discourse as constructed immediately after 11 September 2001 and through the first months of the Afghan war constructed and *naturalised* gendered orientalist 'knowledge' (for example, presuppositions, predications of identity for 'us' and 'them' the nature of the 'threat'). Indeed, although the military intervention in Iraq did not proceed for two and a half years after the September 2001 attacks, 'War on Terror' discourse in the lead-up to the Iraq war drew directly on discursive constructions from 2001, constructions of threat, (in)security, and masculine competition against an orientalised 'Other'.

Iraq's incorporation into 'War on Terror' discourse, and in particular Hussein's construction as an 'enemy Other', was suggested in the first three months after 9/11 (Rice, 2001a, 2001b). 'Orientalising' Iraq, constructing it as penetrable, centred on racialised and gendered motifs that drew on long-standing tropes of 'Other' barbarism and deviant sexuality. Hussein became 'Other' through his rejection of 'our' values, which served to simultaneously mark out his barbarism, and the feminisation, through passivity, of Iraqis. His lack of care for 'his own people', as well as the purported threat he posed to the rest of the world, functioned as an 'updated' version of the 'oriental despotism' trope central to colonial interventions into the 'East'.

The connection was most famously made in the 2002 State of the Union Address, in which Iraq became a key player in the 'Axis of Evil' (Bush, 2002a). Condoleeza Rice (2002) also warned that "a stubborn and extremely troubling fact that the list of states that sponsor terror and the lists of states that are seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction overlap substantially". Although these 'facts' were by no means indisputable, the very act of articulating them served to create a discursive link between a religious group (al Qaeda) and a secular dictatorship (Ba'athist Iraq) (Freedman, 2004; Kumar, 2006, pp. 55-56), discursively

redefining Iraq's location vis-à-vis terrorism. This was effective because of long-standing orientalist understandings of 'Arabs-as-Muslims/Muslims-as-Arabs'; recurring discursive links in post-9/11 imagery between "the forces of chaos" (Rice, 2002) (located in 'the East') and the assertion of 'our' civilisation; and the continuing insistence that the 'Other' "cannot be held back by deterrence, nor reasoned with through diplomacy" (Cheney, 2002). This made it possible for the Administration to, in March 2003, reassert fairly discredited assertions against Iraq by reiterating the events of September 2001, and the 'successes' of the Afghan war (Kumar, 2006, p. 60).

These representations constructed Saddam Hussein and his regime as an embodiment of the ubiquitous barbaric/irrational/evil 'Other' constructed in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks served to solidify the discursive link that was created between these attacks, al Qaeda, the Taliban, and Hussein's regime. Situating the 'Iraqi threat' in the context of a world discursively divided into two fundamentally opposed civilisations, official US 'War on Terror' discourse enabled the (re)deployment of gendered orientalist logics predicated upon a specific narrative of intervention. Bush explained that "[t]he United States has no quarrel with the Iraqi people. They've suffered too long in silent captivity. Liberty for the Iraqi people is a great moral cause and a great strategic goal" (2002b). The White House devoted a section of its website to documenting not only the actions of the Iraqi government with regards to weapons inspection, but also documenting abuses carried out against Iraqis (White House, 2003a). The narrative constructed in Iraq, of 'Oriental despotism', served the dual purpose of constructing the 'Other' as a threat to the world, but also provided an image of widespread oppression and passivity (of ordinary Iraqis not affiliated with the Ba'ath party) that 'required' military intervention. Those under Hussein's rule were feminised, juxtaposed with the powerful motif of a ruthless, authoritarian despot. Once again, the narrative of the discourse of intervention centred on competing expressions of masculinity (the hypermasculine civilised US 'Self' against the irrational masculinity of the 'Other').

Another key motif in the lead up to Iraq centred on sexuality and deviancy. A sexualisation of the 'Other' took place in ways that served to reinforce the representation of the enemy 'Other' as inferior to the US 'Self' in 'War on Terror' narratives. For example, in 2003 the White House compiled a series of personal stories from mainstream (Western) media outlets about life under the Ba'athist regime from Iraqis. Some of the stories were about the sexual deviancy of members of the regime; one in particular detailed the activities of Uday Hussein, "a floor-to-ceiling cage in the corner of the club's kitchen where he says monkeys were kept for Uday because he liked to have the animals watch him when he was deflowering virgins" (White House, 2003b). Official 'War on Terror' discourse wove together sexual deviancy with torture inflicted on Iraqis who defied Hussein, his sons, or their associates; this became confirmation of uncontrolled/uncontrollable and deviant Arab/Muslim male sexuality. This deviancy was theatrically represented in the capture-and-rescue narrative of the Jessica Lynch story (taking place in the early days of the Iraq war). Initially, it was reported that Lynch was in injured captured in combat by hostile Iraqi forces and abused; US troops enacted a highly-publicised 'rescue' operation. It was later revealed that Lynch was not injured in a battle, and was looked after by staff at the Iraqi hospital where was found by US troops (Brittain, 2006, pp. 83-84; Sjoberg, 2007, p. 86). However, the contrived 'manly' heroics of US marines

thwarting the 'enemy Other' and reclaiming 'our' female soldier were initially compelling (and attracted widespread media coverage). In effect, the narrative constructed through Bush administration representations and media portrayals based on Pentagon (dis)information repackaged historical tropes of gendered orientalism that function to simultaneously construct the (enemy) 'Other' as hypermasculine *and* feminised. That is, male (it is assumed) Iraqi soldiers present a hypermasculine threat to 'Western' values because 'our' (female) soldiers embody 'the nation' (Khalid, 2011, p. 26; Kumar, 2004).

This discourse was ruptured, however, when evidence of the US' sexualised abuse of Iraqi prisoners came to light in the media. These acts of abuse threatened to undermined the US' projection of its own progressive and 'civilised' identity and blur the line between the 'barbaric Other' and the 'civilised US Self' that the Bush administration had been so keen to project in official US 'War on Terror' discourse. The images of the abuse also, because of the women involved in them, threatened the (male) hypermasculinity that was central to the construction of the US 'Self'. Images of a women (Lynndie England) taking part in what is 'supposed' to be a masculine exercise of power illustrated the contingency of dominant understandings of gender in which 'masculine' is a natural attribute of 'male'. Projections of 'Self' along gendered and racialised boundaries (male/masculine and Western/civilised) are key characteristics on which 'War on Terror' narratives of intervention are predicated; without these, the discursively constructed 'boundaries' between 'us' and 'them' are more easily revealed as blurred, complex, and unfixed.

As Melanie Richter-Montpetit explains, the Abu Ghraib abuses "follow a pre-constructed heterosexed, racialised and gendered script" that informs the "'save civilisation itself'-fantasy" that is central to 'War on Terror' discourses (both media and official) (2007, pp. 39, 41). As Timothy Kaufman-Osborne argues, these acts then become not 'just' abuse but a particular kind of abuse: they function as acts of "imperialist and racist violence" (2007, pp. 152-153). The logic of gendered orientalism functions here in the deployment of the racialised and gendered identities that inform dominant interpretations of the photos of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib. The imagery and performance of the sexual and racial abuse at Abu Ghraib prison serves to reinforce the differences between 'Other' and US power and masculinity; the infliction of violence by US soldiers against the male 'Other' feminises them by seeking to make them discursively (as well as physically) powerless, and attempting to (re)assert the superiority of US masculinity.

Official reactions to the scandal also functioned to (or at least aimed to) (re)produce the civilised, developed, enlightened 'Self' that has been central to official US 'War on Terror' discourse. The Bush administration expressed their shock and disgust at the pictures (Sontag, 2004), and Bush personally acknowledged the "humiliation suffered by the Iraqi prisoners" (Bush, 2004). He reiterated that 'the actions of those folks in Iraq do not represent the values of the United States of America', and that Abu Ghraib was only a "symbol of disgraceful conduct by a few American troops who...disregarded our values" (Bush, 2004). As such, he sought to reposition the location of the 'problem' away from the suffering of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and more importantly, away from the systemic sexualisation of torture in the US military (Kaufman-Osborne, 2007), pp. 153-159). Indeed, the focus became the character of the US and its

troops, and in particular, on reasserting 'our' civilisational superiority through their performances of masculinity:

> the actions of the people in that prison do not reflect the nature of the men and women who wear our uniform. We've got brave souls in Iraq, sacrificing so that somebody can be free. And helping that—the Iraqi citizens be free, it helps America be more secure. There are thousands of acts of kindness and decency taking place every day in Iraq, because our soldiers, our men and women in uniform, are honorable, decent, loving people. (Bush, 2004)

'Other men' in this gendered orientalist discourse then, do not suffer in the same way that Afghan women did—it is only certain kinds of 'Others' (passive women and men) whose suffering can be acknowledged, those 'Others' who can be saved by 'us'. The civilised, egalitarian and progressive hypermasculinity of the US in official 'War on Terror' discourse conceives of the world in terms of competing masculinities. In refusing to accept responsibility for the acts, the Administration's discourse reflects the desire to 're-fix' the gendered and racialised characteristics of the US 'Self' and the 'Other' that became destabilised as a result of the publication of evidence of abuse at Abu Ghraib. 'We', in orientalist discourse, are not 'like them' and must not become like 'them'. It is gendered orientalist logics that prompted the official response, that required the reassertion of the US 'Self' as good, brave, and just in keeping "Iraqi citizens … free" and making "America … more secure" (Bush, 2004).

Enduring logics of 'War on Terror' discourse

The logics of (gendered and racialised) security that underscored the Bush administration's 'War on Terror' reflect a dominant discourse of gendered orientalism that has had currency beyond the Bush years. This is evident in the Obama administration's approach to foreign policy engagements with 'the East'. Although the Obama administration publicly rested the term 'War on Terror' (Solomon, 2009), the basic logics of 'War on Terror' discourse are identifiable in this Administration's policies towards Afghanistan, Pakistan, drone attacks, Guantanamo Bay and torture. Trevor McCrisken argues that rather than being "trapped in the Bush narrative", Obama "has always shared its core assumptions" (2011, p. 786). While Obama's election campaign rhetoric criticised the Bush administration's 'War on Terror', Obama's own construction of the policy the US ought to take in regards to security vis-à-vis terrorism centered explicitly on a concern with 'our morality' and 'our values' (McCrisken, 2011, pp. 781-782). In this sense, Obama's discourse on counterterrorism echoed Bush's, as US (material) security was bound up with the protection of 'US values' as a way to construct 'Self' in contrast to the 'Other'; Obama insisted that "[w]e must adhere to our values as diligently as we protect our safety with no exceptions" ("Obama gives intelligence team", 2009).

Much like the Bush administration, Obama's understanding of 'the world', and the US' place in it, reflected a concern with masculinist as well as 'US values'—as early as 2002, when Obama drew on the imagery of masculine combat to illustrate his support of the Bush administration's "pledge to hunt down and root out those who would slaughter innocents" (McCrisken, 2011, p. 786). Obama retained the militarist outlook of the Bush era. The day after a failed attack in

Detroit he chose to cast the event as proof that "we are at war"; the necessity of military engagement with al-Qaeda (and other related groups) was not questioned in the Obama administration's 'post' 'War on Terror' discourse (McCrisken, 2011, pp. 784. 788). As Deepa Kumar notes, although Obama's 2009 Cairo speech drew on the language of cooperation in discussing Muslims and the West, "the continuation of Bush-era policies in the Middle East and South Asia" (re)produces the Islamophobia that marked the discourse of the Bush administration, and which is rooted in orientalist knowledges (2010, p. 272).

Recommitting the US to a war-without-end, fought for 'civilised values' as well as security, Obama has effectively failed to challenge the core assumptions of the 'War on Terror'—that there is something that inherently marks 'us' out from 'them', and that masculinist responses are the only viable courses of action in this context. Obama's 2009 comments on the US' 'just war' against terrorist groups explicitly juxtaposed US-inflicted violence (as ensuring global security) with that of its adversaries, which Obama suggested be seen in the context of "the imperfections of man and the limits of reason" (2009). Drawing on long-held orientalist and masculinist constructions of 'Self' as rational and civilised, the 'Other' is marked by "their inability to cope with the 'dizzying pace of globalization' and 'the cultural levelling of modernity'", culminating in indiscriminate violence (Mullin, 2011, p. 272). The Obama administration did little to shift the basic binary logics that underscored the gendered orientalist discourse deployed by the Bush administration in the service of empire.

Conclusion

Identity categories (such as 'good', 'evil', 'terrorist', 'barbaric', those who 'hate what we stand for', those to be 'saved' or 'liberated'), and the 'proper' placement of people into them, are by no means 'natural' or pre-given. They are routinely deployed in global politics, discursively enabling some actions while excluding others from the realm of possibility. Key examples of this are the military interventions undertaken as part of the 'War on Terror'. Representations of US/'Western' 'Self' and 'Arab/Muslim' 'Other' in this context draw heavily on 'common sense' and assumed knowledge about groups of people (for example 'Eastern', 'Western', 'male', 'female', 'masculine', 'feminine'). Utilising Said's conception of a 'repository' of orientalist knowledge is central to understanding how this occurs; Said's thesis provides the tools for unravelling the ways in which knowledge about 'the East' constructed by 'the West', that shapes dominant understandings of people, places, ideas, and so on related to 'the East'. As I have demonstrated, orientalist narratives in the 'War on Terror' explicitly and implicitly draw on gender roles to classify and organise people into hierarchies. Men and women are essentialised in these narratives, targets of the 'discursive violence' and masculinist practices of the 'War on Terror' (Eisenstein, 2007, pp. 37-38, p. 41). Understanding orientalism as a gendered discourse gives very particular insights into 'War on Terror' (and other) discourses that cannot be achieved if we only look for orientalist logics. Reading official 'War on Terror' discourse as orientalist *and* gendered allows us to see that the ways in which civilisational binaries are ascribed to 'Self' and 'Other' rely on racial stereotypes as much as an anxiety around 'appropriate' performances of masculinities and femininities. Harnessing the insights of Said's work is essential for research that intends to unravel the power relations that shape our

understandings of the world, and specifically the relationship between the desire to represent the 'Orient' and to wield power over it that remains central to global politics.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: EDWARD SAID—INTELLECTUAL, CULTURAL CRITIC, ACTIVIST

Edward Said, Salman Rushdie and spectres of humanism

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Edward Said's last published work, which went to press weeks before his death in September 2003, was Humanism and Democratic Criticism *(2004). I want to read this book not as the summation of Said's fifty years of engagement with literary and cultural studies and with the plight of the Palestinians but as an engagement with a problematic that has been at the centre of his writings, and by extension at the centre of Salman Rushdie's creative output. Said refers to the book (which began as lectures at Columbia and Cambridge) as his re-engagement with the 'relevance of humanism' at a time when the 'setting' of humanism is being dramatically transformed, especially in the wake of 9/11 since when, in one view, 'Islamist' extremism has confirmed the location of humanism only in the enlightened West where the practitioners of humanism feel that true humanism has been violated by unruly intruders with their 'disreputable modishness … uncanonised learning'. This narrow affirmation of an exclusivist humanism is what Said sets out to challenge as he did in his 1978 masterpiece* Orientalism. *After examining an ambivalence, an 'increasingly global predicament' as James Clifford termed it, in that book between Said's commitment to humanism and the subject matter's antihumanism (Orientalism as discursive representation without agencies), something that Said himself has subsequently acknowledged, this paper looks at Salman Rushdie's engagement with Islam in the context of Said's own redefinition of humanism as a universal critical practice.*

Keywords: Edward Said, Salman Rushdie, scholastic tradition, Arabic hermeneutics, blasphemy

Edward Said's last published work, which went to press weeks before his death in September 2003, was *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004). Edward Said's impact on literary and cultural studies has been so huge that there are now many scholars who are Said authorities. I am certainly not one of them although Said's works, without necessarily citing them in every instance, have been the haunting spectre behind my writings on postcolonial theory, diaspora

and multiculturalism. I cannot claim any degree of mastery of the Said bibliography which is, in a direct way, an admission of scholarly inadequacy in respect of the subject matter addressed here (2009). With this confession, I turn to his posthumously published work because as W. J. T. Mitchell observed in his excellent homage to Said, "any continuation of the conversation with Edward Said would have to include the question of humanism and its many discontents" (2005, p. 99).

For the past few years I have been reading the Salman Rushdie Archive and annotating his major works. In the Archive deposited in the Woodruff Library of Emory University, there are marginal comments on Edward Said by Rushdie, including a transcript of an interview with Said. The 1986 transcript was included in *Imaginary Homelands* (Rushdie, 1991, pp. 166-184). The occasion for the interview was the publication of Said's *After the Last Sky*, a collaborative venture with the photographer Jean Mohr, the title itself taken from a poem, "The Earth is Closing on Us", by the Palestinian national poet Mahmoud Darwish (1999). The themes that interest Rushdie, and which forms the basis of his questions, are: the insider/outsider problematic when the history of Palestine has turned the Palestinian Arab insider into an outsider, the Palestinian interiority as a function of an outsider's discourse, the matter of exile and diaspora, of landless people and their notions of a homeland, the idea of excess for the exile as public intellectual because he is "obliged to carry too much luggage" (1991, p. 176), the problems of narrative ordering when existence itself is discontinuous, and related matters. To transform these themes into an historical narrative—the themes disrupt a uniform, teleological narrative—on two occasions Said specifically refers to *Midnight's Children*. "It is like trying to find the magical moment when everything starts, as in *Midnight's Children*", and again, says Said, "that is the central problem. It is almost impossible to imagine a single narrative: it would have to be the kind of crazy history that comes out in *Midnight's Children*, with all those little strands coming and going in and out" (1991, p. 179).

Rushdie turns to Said again in his later collection of essays, *Steps Across the Line* (2002). In the section entitled 'Columns' there is a brief defence of Said's autobiography *Out of Place* ("October 1999: Edward Said") which begins with the opening sentences of Said's book: "All families invent their parents and children, give each of them a story, character, fate, and even language. There was always something wrong with how I was invented" (as cited in Rushdie, 2002, p. 282). Rushdie called the autobiography a great memoir (reading *Joseph Anton* one detects some intertextual indebtedness to Said's autobiography there) and makes it clear that since inventions and blurrings are part of memory and recall, the criticism of Justus Reid Weiner, resident scholar at the Jerusalem Centre for Public affairs, that there is no historical record that Edward was actually born in Jerusalem or that his father owned a house there (a title search shows names of other owners) has a subtext: Said cannot claim to have been driven out of his homeland to Cairo after the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict because his family was never in Jerusalem in the first instance. Of course in extended families and in Arab clans (even Christian ones) ownership is never straightforward, and documents do not have the same auratic value. But that is not the point because other evidence of his school days in eastern Jerusalem is certainly available. What Weiner wishes to deny Said is the right to claim any association with Palestinian refugees because he wasn't one, and therefore by extension also

weaken his own work as a strong defence of the Palestinian cause. I do not know the details of the case but I am interested in the filiations, the lines of connections, of flight, between Rushdie's reading of the memoir and his earlier interview and the case for humanism that Said makes in his last published work.

I want to read *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* not as the summation of Said's forty-year engagement with literary and cultural studies and with the plight of the Palestinians but as an engagement with a problematic that has been at the centre of his writings, and by extension at the centre of Salman Rushdie's creative output. Said refers to the book (which began as lectures at Columbia and Cambridge) as his re-engagement with the "relevance of humanism" (2004, p. 6) at a time when the 'setting' of humanism is being dramatically transformed, especially in the wake of 9/11 since when, in one view, Islamist extremism has confirmed the location of humanism only in the enlightened West. This narrow affirmation of an exclusivist humanism is what Said sets out to challenge, but first he reflects on his own path-breaking work, the 1978 masterpiece *Orientalism*.

Said turns, with characteristic openness and self-reflection, to James Clifford's memorable 1980 review of the book (later included in his own influential 1988 book *The Predicament of Culture* [pp. 255-76]). In his review Clifford, in Said's paraphrase, had noted "the conflict between my (that is Said's) avowed and unmistakeable humanistic bias and the antihumanism of my subject and my approach" (2004, p. 8). Orientalism was an essentialised project (the representation of the East because they didn't know how to represent themselves within rational, Enlightenment categories) which required methods critical of the "totalizing habits of western humanism", methods which as any reader of Said's magisterial work knows, is indebted to Foucault's foundational works on discourse and power. As Clifford reads *Orientalism*, Said wishes to have it both ways, but it is a posture which is symptomatic of an 'increasingly global predicament' where humanism finds itself ambivalently located in an overpowering but pervasive critical and cultural theory where agency is progressively located within systems which are primarily functions of the two great founders of discursivity, Marx (on capital) and Freud (on psychoanalysis). Said confesses that Clifford gets it right because he too was the product of the 60s and 70s theory of the death of the subject, and of grand narratives. But the ambivalence that Clifford detects also points to Said's own insistence on humanism as the "achievement of form by human will and agency" because it is "neither a system nor impersonal force like the market (Marx) or the unconscious (Freud)" (2004, p. 15) with the proviso that Said never saw humanism primarily, emphatically and unquestionably as totalising. If the orientalists brought a narrow perspective, the fault was not with humanism but with its instrumental application, the same kind of distinction that Kant made in his memorable letter "What is Enlightenment?" Said makes his position clear in the following passage which, although a little long, must be cited in full.

> I believe then, and still believe, that it is possible to be critical of humanism in the name of humanism and that, schooled in its abuses by the experience of Eurocentrism and empire, one could fashion a different kind of humanism that was cosmopolitan and text-and-language bound in ways that absorbed the great lessons of the past from, say, Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer and more recently from Richard Poirier, and still remain attuned to the emergent voices and currents

> of the present, many of them exilic, extraterritorial, and unhoused … For my
> purposes here, the core of humanism is the secular notion that the historical
> world is made up of men and women, and not by God, and that it can be
> understood rationally according to the principle formulated by Vico in *New
> Science*, that we can really know only what we make or, to put it differently, we
> can know things according to the way they are made … historical knowledge
> based on the human being's capacity to make knowledge, as opposed to
> absorbing it passively, reactively, dully. (2004, pp. 10-11)

Following his hero Giambattista Vico, the eighteenth-century Italian philosopher,
Said addresses humanism in this fashion because so many of the liberal
practitioners of humanism feel that true humanism has been violated by unruly
practitioners (races, nations, the multicultural, the multilingual) who have
brought "disreputable modishness … uncanonised learning" (2004, p. 18) to the
gates of humanism.[1] It is clear that the subtext of the critique is of course
'Eurocentrism', in itself a key pillar of European faith. Eurocentric humanism is
based on principles of withdrawal and exclusion, not on participatory democracy.
It is a humanism of secrecy which disavows its own principles of *sapere aude*; it
is a humanism that fails to see that its principles have always unearthed
historical injustices because the past is not fixed, it is not canonical or canonised,
it is an uncompleted history. To know that uncompleted history or to complete
the project of a true modernity, humanism has to be delinked from Eurocentrism
and made into a feature of the human mind itself, not just the European mind.
The move here is to dehistoricise humanism, that is, to shift proprietorial claims
to it, so that, shall we say, Bhishma's lengthy oration on his death bed in the
Book of Drona in the great Hindu epic the *Mahabharata* is humanistically and
intrinsically interesting because it is a profound meditation on the ritual of battle,
on blood sacrifice and on the idea of the nation itself.

Bhishma's meditation is of course in Sanskrit. To read it well requires us to know
the language and to understand how the mind expresses questions of ethical
responsibility, precisely the overriding issue in the *Mahabharata*, in itself, at one
level, a document of civilisation which is also a document of barbarism—
something that a critical humanism will always know. And this is deeply,
unquestionably and profoundly at the heart of humanism. How do we understand
Bhishma's predicament, how do we read it sensitively, comparatively, both on its
own terms and in terms of our global responsibility? How do we get around Saul
Bellow's condescending phrase, "I'll read Zulu writing when you can show me a
Zulu Tolstoy" (or was it Proust?). For the practice of this new humanism the
aesthetic becomes important. Said quotes a passage from Richard Poirier's *The
Renewal of Literature* in which he had written, "language is also the place
wherein we can most effectively register our dissent from our fate by means of
our troping, punning, parodistic echoings, and by letting vernacular energies play
against revered terminologies" (as cited in Said, 2004, p. 29).The quotation
reminds us that Said's humanism is not the diametric opposite of the decentering
of origins in favour of beginnings found in poststructuralist/posthumanist
thought, and especially in Derrida who, referring to one's ethical responsibility,
had emphatically stressed, in a manner not dissimilar to Said's, that "one must
be just without being noticed for it" because ethical responsibility requires a

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[1] See Said in *Representations of the Intellectual*: "Giambattista Vico, who has long been
a hero of mine" (1994, p. 45).

messianic impulse without a Messiah who is only "the name of a possibility" (1997, p. 107-108).

Said feels most comfortable with literary texts and it is in literature that he finds the most exciting and productive ways in which the Eurocentric assumptions about humanism may be challenged. As late modernists, and those of us not constrained by ideological absolutism, including that of religion, know only too well literatures do not exist only within national contexts, nor are they generically stable. Which is why a nationalistic humanism no longer provides all the critical tools; but religious enthusiasm too has its dangers. The coupling of nationalistic humanism with religious enthusiasm by Said is conscious because both produce intolerance and an inhumane world view. So a critique of Eurocentrism in so far as it challenges forms of absolutism, and recognises the "contradictory, even antinomian and antithetical currents running" (2004, p. 45) in our complex world, is also a challenge to anti-secular and anti-democratic polities in the name of religion. These currents find their expression in the aesthetic domain, and for our purposes, in literature where the turn to philology is a legacy of the humanist enterprise. This philological turn need not be a Dr Casaubon-like (in *Middlemarch*) reactionary learning that would lead to the key to all mythologies. What this turn requires is attention to detail and an openness to the language of the text; if done well it leads to what Said calls 'heroic first readings' by us in response to a recognition of authorial heroism.

I wish to turn to Said's spectres of humanism by bringing into dialogue Said and the writer with whose interview and review essay we began this presentation. The writer in question, Salman Rushdie, is also ambivalently located in postmodern minor narratives and a humanist understanding of deep structure, the former the world of surfaces, of the collapse of the high and low, the latter the wish to know, the wish to dismantle Eurocentric assumptions and deconstruct orientalist representations. I wish to advance the dialogue by two moves. The first is through a critical deployment of Said's references to a specifically Arabic hermeneutics to Salman Rushdie's own engagement with Islam's holy book. And second, embedded in the first, is through a form of textual criticism that engages with vernacular resistance. Both moves grow out of Said's own understanding of humanism as an inclusive critical practice.

Said very correctly critiques a humanism that locates itself centrally within a Western intellectual tradition that refuses to admit an unruly multicultural mob knocking at its doors. Humanism in this reading is defiantly canonical and dismissive of any alternative splitting of reason. Humanism here can only be practised by people who can locate themselves unproblematically in an essentialist Western tradition or who can be easily assimilated into it, notably someone like Said himself. Said's critique, as we have already outlined, is strong, principled and in the end unarguably sensible. What is less obvious is his critique of those exclusive institutions such as religion that refuse critical engagement with an alternative humanism finely attuned to modern realities. What is Said's take on the sacred which, after Vico (one of his heroes), is unknowable and therefore inconsequential because it is not 'man' made? To Islam, it may be argued, and persuasively I think, Said continues to bring an uncritical, perhaps even a romantic, vision, primarily because he separated the secular from the sacred. And this poses a serious problem because the primacy of the sacred in Islam as a social formation as well as a belief system is non-negotiable. For Said

the two has to be differentiated and it is sufficient to show that Islam, as a social formation rather than as a religion, is woefully misunderstood by the West (and by China and India too, let us add).

The role of humanist criticism with reference to the Islamic sacred cannot be ignored and the question one asks is: What then of an Islamic humanism incapable of addressing the 'constructedness' of its holy book, a text which too had an historical beginning and is therefore made by us and is part of the larger humanist project? Let us, therefore, turn to a model of critical thinking that Said advances in the few paragraphs in which he places a schema for heroic first reading on Islamic principles. Said's interest here is in presenting another humanistic heroism with its 'own built-in constraints and disciplines' which can be placed in dialogue with our received ideas about humanism. Let us follow Said's synopsis of what he has called this "common enterprise" (2004, p. 68), an enterprise little known among Eurocentric scholars but, I suggest, certainly known to Orientalists who didn't think it merited attention.

The Qur'an, Said correctly points out, is in Islam the 'Word of God' which, by virtue of its unmediated, unwritten utterance, can never be known fully. But it has, miraculously (some of these modalities are my own not Said's) come to us as a written text and must therefore be subjected to some kind of literal paraphrase with the explicit proviso that others have already attempted a paraphrase. What is then established is a continuum of witnesses in the act of reading which makes any reading dependent on the chain of witnesses. Reading therefore becomes systemic and is called *isnad*, the common goal of which (as the product of interdependent witnesses) is to arrive at the *usul* (the text's ground or essence). There is a 'model' reader here, a reader willing to commit himself to finding the 'truth', the act itself called *ijtihad* (a word that derives from the same root as *jihad* or holy war). So in this sense, although Said himself does not tarry here, the effort has the sense of religious piety, and linked to the question of 'permissibility'. To whom is *ijtihad* available is another matter; is it available to everyone or as the scholar Ibn-Taymiyya (1263-1328 CE) says only to the *as-salaf al-salih* (pious forerunners) who should be followed? Although this reading has been challenged, it remains the dominant mode of interpretation in Islam. Said adds, quite correctly, that it is wrong to say that alternative positions have not been advanced in Islam but what this paradigm of interdependent witnesses points to is the limits to what is permissible. To understand a text's rhetorical and semantic structures, one works within a certain law, within the requirements of jurisprudence; in short there is an ethics of responsibility in interpretation from which it follows that "one cannot just say anything one pleases and in whichever way one may wish to say it". We are reined in by this "sense of responsibility and acceptability" (2004, p. 69).

Said's example is given as an instance of the need for a critical dialogue between textual paradigms, the point here being that an Islamic hermeneutic is not unlike a humanist hermeneutic as both work from similar principles. What is not taken up is the question of textual authority and the extent to which an Islamic hermeneutic has sealed itself off from the principles of Western humanist textual criticism. The equivalent of the system of interdependent readings or *isnad* in the Western tradition began with the scholia tradition of annotations. The agential noun form of the word 'annotate' (from the Latin '*annotāt-*, participial stem of *annotā-re* or *adnotāre* to put a note to; the latter from *ad* to + *notā-re* to mark'),

annotator, meaning "one who annotates or writes notes to a text", first appeared in 1663. Two citations later, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED* 2nd ed.) cites the early orientalist Henry Thomas Colebrooke's observation on Sanskrit textual annotators (1808): "A crowd of annotators whose works expound every passage in the original gloss". Colebrooke's reference to "a crowd of annotators" points to an annotating principle which was the dominant form of textual criticism in pre-colonial India. The annotator in this reading of his craft was an interpreter if not a co-author of the text, written or oral. The defining feature is a different, anti-auratic reading of text and author, both of which were seen as collective products of culture. The Indian epics stand out pre-eminently in this respect but so do two of the great annotations of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the Hindu revealed or *śruti* text—the *gītābhāṣyas* of the *advaitic* Śankara and the *viśiṣṭādvaitic* Rāmānuja—where commentaries immeasurably transformed the 'original' text (which of course had undergone its own internal annotations, interpolations and variant readings before, as a fixed religious document, it arrived at its final form around the time of Christ (Gambhirananda, 2000; Sampatkumaran, 1985).

Colebrooke's comments on Sanskrit annotations may be conveniently, but incorrectly, dismissed as 'orientalist' irony. I consider them as a scholar's recognition of cross-cultural Indo-European continuity. To him Sanskrit textual annotations are part of the tradition of the classical scholia, or commentaries, and scholiasts, or commentators, who provide us with tools which we now refer to as textual criticism, a rigorous methodology about which, in 1913, the Biblical scholar Alexander Souter wrote in the context of the New Testament recensions, "if we possessed the twenty-seven documents now composing our New Testament exactly in the form in which they were dictated or written by their original authors, there would be no textual criticism of the New Testament" (1913, p. 3). Often the word 'Enarratio', "an expository narrative, designed for guidance and education", would be attached to the work of a scholiast such as Asconius's commentaries on Cicero (AD 54–57) and of the Eastern Greek scholar Eustathius (c. 1115– c.1195), whose description of the first line of the *Iliad* alone runs to ten pages. The principles of literary scholarship inaugurated by these early scholiasts have become the stock-in-trade of humanist textual criticism. In establishing the text of Homer, for instance, textual variants were noted, different styles were recognised (the story of Dolon in the *Iliad X* was looked upon with considerable suspicion since its style was so different from the rest of that epic), use of words in an author's entire corpus was seen to be a necessary guide to meaning and nuanced semantics and commentaries in which alternative readings were offered became indispensable.

Textual emendations, allegorical readings, comparative study of manuscripts, the construction of a proto- stemmatic theory of recension are some of scholiast legacy. The tradition so inaugurated was used in biblical scholarship where as early as the fifth century Procopius of Gaza (c. 460 – c.530) began what is known as the catena (which is something like the scholia) where running commentaries on a book of the Bible quoted sometimes verbatim the "opinions of several previous interpreters" (Reynolds & Wilson, 1991, p. 53).[2] I refer to the

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[2] The Greek Bible made its way into the Orient and both in Syriac and in Arabic there were commentaries on it. As a general rule, though, the Arabic versions of Greek texts were of little use when it came to establishing the original Greek text. This negative

humanist scholia tradition and to the foundational principles of textual criticism to point to Said's own blindness even as the insight into the Islamic hermeneutical tradition is canvassed. Although, Said, quite correctly, points to the limits of humanist interpretation (there is a juridical frame of reference that limits what is permissible), the fundamental fact of humanist textual criticism—the text itself as an editorial problem—is not addressed via a western humanist methodology when it comes to the Qur'an. I have quoted Souter's comments on New Testament textual recensions. For Said, one suspects, the textuality of the Qur'an is out of bounds, only the interdependent readings are legitimate points of entry.

Said's references to responsibility, jurisprudence and permissibility in respect of the Islamic hermeneutical tradition functions as a corrective to Swift's parody of 'out-of-control subjective frenzy' in *A Tale of the Tub*. I have a strong suspicion that the 'out of control frenzy' that Said speaks of was directed not so much towards Swift (valuable as he is as an analogy) but to the unnamed Salman Rushdie. I began this paper with Salman Rushdie's interview of Edward Said. I wish to spend the second half by looking at Rushdie as the exemplary humanist in terms of Said's own definition of the heroic humanist who like Said is ambivalently located between postmodern theory and humanist foundationalism, and occupies the position of both the "insider and outsider" (2004, p. 77) in the circuit of ideas. What is a humanist challenge to textual authority? What is his or her relationship to blasphemy in the context of discrepant and mutually exclusive jurisprudence? In writing about Islamic commentarial tradition why was Said silent about both Rushdie and the place of blasphemy in Islam? And what of the work of 'witnesses' who are not pious forerunners?

My point of entry is the stoning of the apostle Stephen in Acts of the Apostles. Chapters six and seven of Acts (the entire book is addressed to one Theophilus) are devoted to the Stephen. Chapter 5 had already introduced us to the Council of Jewish elders who concerned with the proselytising methods of the apostles wanted them killed. They are saved by a Pharisee named Gamaliel who basically argued that the apostles should be left alone. If what they preached came from men, their ideas would disappear; if indeed they came from God then we have no choice but to listen to them, "lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (5:39). These are the early years of the Christian church (we may want to recall even now that the intertext of *The Satanic Verses* too are the early years of the Islamic church) and we get, along with theology, a schematic sociology of the foundational moments of the Christian Church. Stephen comes into the picture literally out of nowhere because the apostles require someone to look after their finances and the material well-being of their members. There is some

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reading of Arabic contribution, at least in one instance, argue Reynolds and Wilson is unjustified. I quote them at this point:

> In Aristotle's *Poetics* the Arabic text, though exceptionally difficult to understand, offers a few readings which the editor must accept and several more which he must consider seriously, a reasonable harvest if the brevity of the treatise is borne in mind. That the *Poetics* should have been translated is a cause of some surprise at first sight; but the explanation of both the Syriac and Arabic renderings may be simply that all writings of 'the master of those who know' were held to be important enough to justify translation. For the most part, however, it was science and philosophy that interested the Arabs. (1991, p. 56)

strife between converts especially in respect of the treatment of widows and it is the latter's material needs which require special redressing. Clearly Stephen is a brilliant accountant, a great debater as well as a miracle-worker. Such a combination in a man can be dangerous and often it is those who have recently acquired freedom who find such a person threatening. So, recently freed Jewish slaves (by the Romans) foment strife. They bribe their own kind who now declare, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God" (6:11). Stephen is caught in a bind: witnesses have declared that he has blasphemed. How does he get out of it? His case is doomed even as he mounts a theological defence in which he retraces God's covenant from Abraham down to Jesus. And yet he makes no critical re-appraisal of the Mosaic 'law' of blasphemy under which he has been condemned. The synopsis has considerable rhetorical power and is even novelistic in its design but its very ingenuity triggers memory of the Old Testament God's own treatment of blasphemy. In Leviticus 24:10–16 we get the incident of the Egyptian-Israelite man who during a quarrel with an Israelite "blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed" (24:11). He is taken to Moses for judgement and Moses in turn waits for God to tell him what punishment should be meted out to him. And God replies,

> Bring forth him that hath cursed … and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head [to testify that he is guilty], and let all the congregation stone him. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land [the foreigner as well as the Israelite], when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death. (24:14–16)

This is the law as we find it when we turn to the full text of Stephen's defence that follows the accusation. The witnesses (which include jurists) testify, one presumes falsely, before the Council of Jewish elders that "we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us" (6:14). Witnesses declare that he has blasphemed; God had earlier declared that this is acceptable testimony. The defendant's penalty is death by stoning.

As Acts presents it, the charge is of course trumped up. The constructed crime, quite conveniently, is: he had spoken against God and his prophet Moses. And it seems that under the Mosaic code this is as blasphemous as you can get. Stephen's speech, which takes up all but two or three verses of chapter seven, rehearses Jewish resistance to the 'Holy Spirit', their failure to observe God's law and acknowledge the coming of the 'Just One', the promised Saviour, who was in fact murdered by them. The speech, in terms of the failure of the Jews to uphold the austere monotheistic covenant between God and Abraham, reads very much like a synopsis of the Qur'an with the difference that in the latter the covenant gets qualified via Muhammad and not via Christ. Stephen's defence, however, is too much for the jury and witnesses stone him to death as Saul is seen "consenting unto his death" (8:1). Acts begins to read like a novel as we know that this Saul, as Paul, the great Jewish convert, will soon become the ethical voice of Christianity through the letters he will write to the foundational Christian churches and their key players.

In the case of Stephen blasphemy is a useful excuse for punishment. We do not know what the other crime of the part-Israelite was in Leviticus but we may suspect that witnesses there too found blasphemy a very convenient excuse for killing off troublesome people. This is not to say that blasphemy has no historical power or that it has a purely ideological function; rather it co-exists with religion, belief, God and society which is why laws against blasphemy exist in so many countries. This much is clear from the *OED*. The word comes from the Greek βλασφημία via Latin blasphēmia, meaning slander, blasphemy. The first meaning is given as "profane speaking of God or sacred things; impious irreverence". The first *OED* citation around 1225 is from Middle English (Þe seoueđe hweolp is Blasphemie, "that seventh hweolp is Blasphemy"). Caxton (1488) defines blasphemy as speaking "unhonestly of god" and Milton (1659) "blasphemy or evil speaking against God maliciously". By 1768 (Blackstone) we get a meaning that touches more directly on our subject matter: "blasphemy against the almighty, by denying his being or providence". The word also has a more common figurative and general meaning. In figurative use we find Bacon 1605 writing about blasphemy "against learning" for which one is punished. The general meaning—slander, evil speaking, defamation is now obsolete—and the *OED* has no citation after 1656: "To speak evil of any man is blasphemy". Except for the 1768 quote most of these are not particularly helpful. How does one define "unhonestly" (Caxton), or "maliciously" (Milton)? Only Blackstone is clear: blasphemy involves denying God's being and his role as the guardian of his creation. The *OED* does not help us when it comes to representation of God. Nor does it give us citations that show the consequences of blasphemy. There is no citation from Leviticus or from Acts. When does one cross the line in representing God in art? To what extent can one rewrite or change religiously iconic and culturally endorsed representations of God? This becomes a matter not of epistemology but of law and of legal interpretation which is governed by the social mores of the time. Given our subject matter we need to turn to blasphemy in Islam.

In Islam blasphemy, although more marked, is far less doctrinal, and textual support from the Qur'an is not readily forthcoming. 'Blasphemy' in Arabic has two words: *tajdīf,* a more religiously specific term, and *sabb*, a more general word for irreverent attitudes. The first does not occur in the Qur'an, while the second does but without a religious meaning. *Sabb*, meaning 'revile', occurs in an ambiguous passage in the Qur'an where God seems to be condoning heresy (*ilhād*) and unbelief (*kufr*) which, along with polytheism (*shirk*) are unpardonable sins in Islam.

> Do not revile the idols which they invoke besides God, lest in their ignorance they revile God with rancour. (6:108)[3]

Arabic scholars, however, have pointed out that even if the two common words for blasphemy do not make their way into the Qur'an, it does not follow that the 'intent' of that word (as we understand it in Judaeo-Christianity) is non-existent. They point to Sura 7:180 where the verb *alhada* carries this meaning of the word (Netton, 1996, p. 3).[4]

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[3] All translations are from N. J. Dawood's *The Koran* (1999).
[4] The next few paragraphs draw upon Netton's work (1996).

> God has the Most Excellent Names. Call on Him by His Names and keep away from those that pervert them. They shall receive their due for their misdeeds. (7:180)

Here 'pervert' is a clear injunction against profanity. However, it is not so much the presence of a single word that is offensive (as is the case with blasphemy in the Bible) but rather the totality of relations across a number of words found in the Qur'an which is important. Thus blasphemy is not simply reviling God through language, but a Muslim's total attitude towards *kufr* (unbelief), *ilhad* (heresy) and *shirk* (polytheism) that becomes important. But above and beyond all this is the figure of Islam's prophet Muhammad. Indeed, such is his extraordinary reverence among believers that, in many ways, it is a lesser crime to 'blaspheme' against God than to doubt Muhammad's role as the ultimate and final prophet before the Day of Judgment. Although he never claimed to be anything other than mortal, Islam stands and falls on the inviolability of his personage. There is a telling Persian adage which makes this clear: bā khudā diwānā basad, bā Muhammad hoshiyār ('you may take as many liberties as you like with Allah, but beware of transgressing Muhammad').

There is much in the Rushdie Archive at Emory University that shows Rushdie's fascination with blasphemy, religion, the nature of God and the unquestionable nature of the Qur'an as the unedited word of God: nothing out of place, the words as recited by Muhammad upon the instigation of Angel Gabriel. It is like *śruti* texts of the Vedas, unauthored, unmediated, in need of no amanuensis, although no Muslim would condone this connection with the texts of a polytheistic religion. The archive is large and its entry points many. My task is limited as my aim is to explore the genesis of Rushdie's interest in the Qur'an and, concomitantly, the genesis of *The Satanic Verses* by examining what Said's new humanistic criticism would have looked like had he linked the Islamic hermeneutical tradition of reading the Qur'an with the scholiast tradition of annotation and textual criticism. For the point is that in an inclusive humanism, as Said himself had noted alluding to Vico, the world is made by men and women, and not by God. Did Rushdie, like Stephen in Acts of the Apostles, mean to offer another, synoptic, narrative of a holy book? When did his interest in the genesis of secrecy in Islam begin? Was there a conscious plan to deconstruct the Qur'an itself? And was he aware of the consequences of such an undertaking?[5] In terms of Said's humanism and democratic criticism are these not centrally questions that a humanistic critic would ask? The matter of textual authority is paramount because for the written word text and transmission constitute the two crucial elements of humanist exegesis.

In the Rushdie Archive there is an undated sheet of paper (which we may date November 1987) where we read: "I've been waiting 20 yrs to write about the incident of the satanic verses" [ca. 1987]. If we go back in time "20 yrs" this places Rushdie more or less in his final year at Cambridge University (1965-8). In *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* (2012, pp. 38-45) we read that in his final year, "at the ripe old age of twenty", he "found out about the satanic verses" (p. 38). In

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[5] The opening day is Valentine's Day, Tuesday 14 February 1989, the day of Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie: "'I inform the proud Muslim people of the world that the author of the 'Satanic Verses' book … and all those involved in its publication who were aware of its content, are sentenced to death. I ask all the Muslims to execute them wherever they find them'" (2012, p. 5).

Part Two of the History Tripos he was expected to choose three subjects from a wide list. He chose colonial Indian History since the Indian Mutiny (1857 – 1947), the first century of American Independence (1776–1877) and for his third, "Muhammad, the Rise of Islam and the Early Caliphate". Unfortunately too few students chose the last of these papers, which was cancelled. Rushdie, himself godless but after his father "fascinated by gods and prophets" (2012, p. 39), persevered and persuaded a King's College medieval historian Arthur Hibbert to supervise him. Under his guidance Rushdie read a paper which was not offered again, at least not in the foreseeable future. Hibbert, Rushdie recalls, taught him two things: historical training required one to study events inside history "analytically, judiciously, *properly*"; it also demanded that one should be able to hear the historical subjects speak (2012, p. 40). The summary that he gives about the birth of one of the world's great religions is written with these principles in mind.

The background to the genesis of Islam is to be located in the battle between a recently urbanised, patriarchal, ruling class and an older, matriarchal nomadic people denied access to wealth and power. Both were polytheists with the difference that the polytheistic gods of the new class had been transformed into kinds of tax-gatherers controlled by the rich families of the newly established city Mecca. Pre-eminent among these gods were the three Winged goddesses Al-Lat, Al-Manat, and Al-Uzza located at the gates through which caravans passed. To them offerings were made. There were hundreds of gods elsewhere and in the centre of the town in a building known as Kaaba (the Cube) there was a nonspecific 'all-rounder of a deity' called Al-Lah who would soon be appropriated by a new religion as the supreme, ever-present, omniscient, omnipotent monotheistic God. The revolution against the ruling class took the form of a new religious ideology created by an orphan, one Muhammad ibn Abdullah of the Banu Hashim family, later a merchant who journeyed with his uncle Abu Talib primarily to Syria. Here, as Rushdie's Cambridge studies showed (and Cambridge one must add has a library with an unparalleled collection on the Orient) this Muhammad came into contact with Nestorian Christians who had adapted many of the Biblical stories to suit their own local conditions. Rushdie mentions the case of the Nestorian belief that Jesus was born under a palm tree in an oasis, which is how the birth of Maryam's child in sura 19:22–25 is described. Muhammad, an astute and honest merchant, at the age of 25 married Khadijah, an older and much wealthier woman. A man prone to meditation and a desire for solitude, Muhammad would retreat into a cave on Mount Hira in search of peace of mind. It was on Mount Hira that from the age of forty onwards he begins to get visions of the Angel Gabriel from whom he receives the message of God known as the Qur'an. The message led to the formation, initially, of a small group of followers whose leader Muhammad, was both Prophet, a Messenger of God, as well as military strategist. The social dimension of the message grew out of the nomadic values of a matriarchal culture and, in part, because of this the followers of the new religion (not unlike the early Christians whose lives are extensively recounted in the letters of Saint Paul) continued to struggle for social and political legitimacy. Muhammad himself it seems, although a successful merchant, could not break into the closed circle of the Mecca ruling class.

It is at this point that Rushdie comes across the possibility of an act of compromise on the part of the Prophet of Islam. To break into the circle of the Meccan, polytheist, ruling class, might it not be desirable to accommodate some

if their gods into the new religion? A political act of compromise no doubt but might it not be worthwhile, for the moment at any rate? The evidence is tenuous and for the believer totally inadmissible but in the "Hadith, or traditions, about the life of the Prophet" one encounters what "became known as the incident of the satanic verses" (2012, p. 43). The account given, apocryphal to many but to a historian politically very possible, deals with Muhammad's recitation of a verse in his first version of sura 53 ('The Star') which contained the words: "Have you heard of al-Lat and al-Uzza, and al-Manat, the third, the other one? They are the exalted birds, and their intercession is greatly desired" (43). Later (the duration is never known) after yet another encounter with the Archangel, he returns to denounce the verses as a deception played on him by Satan who had appeared to him in the guise of Angel Gabriel. There may be many reasons for this change: his followers may have rejected the compromise; his amanuenses found the qualification contrary to the austere monotheism of the overall message; or any appeasement was a sign of weakness. Thus in the 'revised' version after the first sentence we read in Sura 53, "They are but names that your forefathers invented, and there is no truth in them. Shall God have daughters while you have sons? That would be an unjust division" (44).

A writer teases meanings out of historical and pseudo-historical material, indeed from any kind of narrative. Did the momentary compromise increase Muhammad's chances of getting a seat on the city council as orientalists like W. Montgomery Watt and Maxine Rodinson have argued? Did his religion, for the moment, attract many more pagans who preferred a modified monotheism with their beloved goddesses having a role to play alongside Allah, as angels do? Did the compromise fail because the city's grandees renege on the deal? "It was not possible to say for sure", writes Rushdie and adds, "imagination had to fill in the gaps in the record" (2012, p. 45). Two further points arise: one eschatological, the other proto-feminist. On the first score sura 22:51 reminds us that all prophets have been tempted by Satan at some stage in their careers. There is thus nothing extraordinary about the temptation of Muhammad, who like all other prophets, comes out of this temptation with flying colours. The second point is disconcerting. It was "clear", suggests Rushdie, that "it was the femaleness of the winged goddesses" which was disturbing to the new revelation (2012, p. 45). Being female they would be inferior and could not be children of God, as the angels were.

> Sometimes the birth of a great idea revealed things about its future; the way in which newness enters the world prophesied how it would behave when it grew old. At the birth of this particular idea, femaleness was seen as a disqualification from exaltation. (Rushdie, 2012, p. 45)

When Rushdie read about the incident in his final year at Cambridge he was taken in by the remarkable nature of the story. It had great potential for a novelist, something he didn't know then. He filed it away in one part of his brain. "Twenty years later he would find out exactly how good a story it was" (2012, p. 45) concludes Rushdie not without a sense of irony.

The writer, Rushdie notes, agrees to a ruined life and in an inversion of the Faustian contract, "gains, if he is fortunate, perhaps not eternity, but, at least,

posterity" (n.d.-a).[6] This humanist gesture extends to Rushdie's conscious invocation of Dante, Robert Southey (who told a friend that Byron's Don Juan should have been called 'The Satanic Verses'), Voltaire, Defoe (who provides the epigraph to the novel) and, above all, Blake whose cryptic line "without Contraries is no progression" (1988, p. 34) explains many of the notes in the archive.[7] Against the oppositions, against the active-passive, we get the old middle voice, the voice of deferral, the voice of the différance. Rushdie's archive does not mention this word, but it is clear that he has the same kind of interest in philology that Said writes about. There are a number of places in the archive where Rushdie jots down derivations of words. In one instance he notes that the word 'babble' comes from the Dutch 'babbelen' (via Latin babulus) and has nothing to do with the 'Babel' of the Book of Genesis which quite possibly is from the Assyrian babilu meaning 'gate of God.' There is an undecidable aspect to meaning which is not captured in the oppositions of 'compromise/no compromise', 'angels/devils', 'secular/profane', 'black/white' and need to be replaced or rethought through words whose semantic configurations are always in flux and are in a sense 'in process'.

A belief incapable of being metamorphosed (or to use Rushdie's own neologism 'metaphorphosed'), a belief marked by "one one one … [a] terrifying singularity" (Rushdie, n.d.-a), leads to melancholia since the singularity destroys the very idea of contraries (after Blake). The imagination is hedged in and finds little room to manoeuvre because with the loss of multiplicity, paradoxically enough, comes the death of God. The legacy of Muhammad is to leave behind a God who is dead because he and his message become more powerful than God. Notes Rushdie, "objective information about him [Muhammad] is forbidden … there is a saying: 'you can say what you like about God but be careful with Muhammad'" (1989).[8]

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[6] In *Joseph Anton* (2012) we read, "Throughout the writing of the book [*The Satanic Verses*] he had kept a note to himself pinned to the wall above his desk. 'To write a book is to make a Faustian contract in reverse, it said. To gain immortality, or at least posterity, you lose, or at least ruin, your actual daily life'" (2012, p. 91). The title of the novel, *The Satanic Verses*, when translated into Urdu (*Shaitāni Āyat*), into Farsi (*Āyat-e-Shaitāni*) or into Arabic (*Āyat al-Shaitāniyya*) gives rise to disturbing hermeneutic possibilities since the word for verse (*āyat*) is used to refer to the *suras* in the Qur'an itself. The unease one has is that such possible readings may trigger a very different kind of reception of the title of Rushdie's book in speakers of these languages. These associations are certainly not available to speakers of other languages such as Hindi where the translation is *śaitāni kāvya* or Sanskrit where the translation is *asurim śloka*.
[7] On a single sheet (Rushdie, n.d.-a) a list of 'contraries' is placed under the headings "Chamcha" and "Gibreel". So under Chamcha we get: Devil-angel, Translated ('metaphorphosed'), Reason, West (deracinated), Pale, Quiet (introvert), Doubt, Secular, Compromise, Day, Dreamless, Conquering (sullen), Shaitan, whereas under Gibreel we are given: Angel-devil, Translating ('metaphorphosed'), Fantasy, East (racist!), Dark, Loud (extrovert), Certainty, Religious, Extreme, Night, Dreamfilled, Conquered (madness), Gibril. Each of these items has its corresponding contrary (as in Blake). It is interesting that on the same page Ally is also mentioned like a mediating (feminist?) principle and linked to the pagan goddess Allāt (Al Lat) with items such as "process", "life", "hard", and "struggle", under her name.
[8] Photocopy of an interview in *The Sunday Times*, 22 January 1989, some three weeks before the fatwa.

The Satanic Verses negotiates the difficult terrain of literary representation in Islam and after René Girard's work shifts the focus from 'effects' to textuality as it examines the place of allegorical readings in literature, the nexus between the novel and belief and the need to overcome the mediator (on the part of both the narrator and the character) before a new form of knowledge can come into being (1976). In a note in the archive Rushdie referred to 'freedom of thought' in the same manner in which Said had referred to a humanist criticism that would be the property of everyone and not simply that of Europe. Rushdie continued, "I find myself thinking that one day the Muslim world will realise, as post-Enlightenment Europe has realized, that freedom of thought is precisely freedom from religious control. And I hope that the Muslim world will come to accept the truth of what I've been saying all these years—that the row over The Satanic Verses is, at bottom, an argument about power, about who has power over the Story" (n.d.-b).

I turn to Said's published lectures on humanism with which I began this essay. The penultimate chapter of the book is an essay on Auerbach's magnificent *Mimesis*, "an exile's book" (2004, p. 97), which Said says, embodies "the best in humanistic work that I know" (p. 85). Throughout the lectures Said singles out Auerbach as the exemplary humanist critic and thinker, an example of a humanistic practitioner of the highest order, a writer whose work is the "hallmark of philological hermeneutics" (2004, p. 92).The influence of Giambattista Vico too is clear: each age has its own method for "seeing and then articulating reality" (2004, p. 91) and since human beings make their own history authors enter into dialogues with each other across historical divides (2004, p. 91). In the first, and for many the most brilliant, essay in *Mimesis* ('Odysseus' Scar') Auerbach argues that Homer conceals nothing; there is no devious design in the epic poet, he is simply a harmless liar. Biblical stories and let us add Qur'anic narratives too are a different matter. Their narrator, the Elohist, or the Islamic Prophet is a political liar who presents his stories as historical truth and invests them with psychological depth and moral values. There is something terribly 'tyrannical' about this narrator who presents God's gift of death to Abraham as an absolute covenant between man and God. And yet in Stephen's retelling he supplants the Elohist and becomes the Homeric narrator who conceals nothing.

Like Homer Rushdie too seems to conceal nothing. *The Satanic Verses* is an instance of a heroic reading, one that confirms Said's own definition of a humanistic critique that is not simply the property of the West. It uncovers an alternative tradition of textual witnessing, in this instance, a critical extension of the tradition of interdependent readings called *isnad*. The *usul,* the truth, uncovered here disrupts the tradition through an extraordinary effort, through an *ijtihad* that is not culture-specific but draws on a humanistic universalism. It is arguable that in the case of Rushdie he crossed the juridical lines of permissibility and in that sense abrogated his right to engage with a great and honoured holy text. But this is exactly what Stephen had done in his re-writing of the grand biblical narrative in his legal defence. My point is that Rushdie engages in pushing humanistic boundaries, precisely the challenge posed by Said's lectures on humanism, and by Auerbach's own discussion about how Christianity shatters the "classical balance between high and low" (2004, p. 106). Regrettably when it came to Islam Said himself did not push these boundaries to the same extent, preferring to leave his observations simply as an Islamic hermeneutical paradigm that Western critics have ignored. There are many

moments in Said's reading of Auerbach when the Qur'an (which like the New Testament has also been prefigured in the Old Testament) could have been used as another proof text. Apart from a reference to Goethe's interest in the Persian poet Hafiz and in the idea of absolute submission on the part of the Muslim, Said does not push the insights of Auerbach towards an understanding of the Islamic text. It is an act which would have demonstrated how a post-orientalist critique actually works. Rushdie did not ignore the paradigm but showed that for the Islamic textual hermeneutic of a 'chain of witnesses' to enter into a dialogue with modernity it too has to incorporate precisely the modes of textual questioning enshrined in the received scholia tradition. Good theory, as in the case of Said's reflections on humanism, and great writing, as in the case of *The Satanic Verses*, engage with the same problematic: how to make the outsider an insider, and how to make the principles of humanism part of collective everyday life, how, like Auerbach's Dante, to show that the past is realised in the present through figurality and how to "reconstruct the history of [one's] own time as part of a personal commitment to the field" (2004, pp. 115-6) to make knowledge and not be its passive receptacle. Humanism is not an exclusive system restricted to a canonical understanding of the Western intellectual tradition alone; it finds exemplary form only when, as in the case of Auerbach or Rushdie, there is a clear admission that one can understand the world, humanistically that is, "from the limited perspective of one's own time and one's own work" (2004, p. 117). And in spite of Said's silence on the textuality of Islam's holy book, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* makes the Other no longer an unruly mob knocking on the doors of a Eurocentric humanism but a group which extends the boundaries of humanistic criticism and makes it part of a robust, critical, self-reflexive participatory democracy. In this context Said himself would have acknowledged our right to read his own works not as exemplary gospel truth but as works that attempt to think through what James Clifford said were the totalising habits of Western humanism.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: EDWARD SAID: INTELLECTUAL, CULTURAL CRITIC, ACTIVIST

Edward W. Said: cultural critic, activist, public intellectual

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> To ignore or otherwise discount the overlapping experience of Westerners and Orientals, the interdependence of cultural terrains in which colonizer and colonized co-existed and battled each other through projections as well as rival geographies, narratives, and histories, is to miss what is essential about the world in the past century. (Said, 1993, p. xx)

Edward W. Said is a major figure whose work spans some 40 years. It has been over a decade since he passed. On 25 September 2003, the world lost a leading public intellectual, cultural critic, activist, fighter, and scholar's scholar. This special issue draws together a range of articles from different parts of the world to examine Said's lasting influence upon critical thought. Rich, multilayered and finely textured, he offers numerous concepts, tactics, and modalities of intervention that serve us well in understanding, challenging and over-turning dominant power, subject-constituting regimes, and forms of identity-politics. Said worked, at times with much controversy, on and through a number of interrelated fronts. He countered European hegemony in his analysis of philology. He drew upon and expanded Foucault's critique of power/knowledge and intervened in Orientalist science and its effects on the current political situation. He was a tireless defender of the Palestinian cause. *The Question of Palestine* is as prescient a book today as it was when he wrote in 1979. And he productively linked the processes of imperialism to the cultural imaginary, revealing how Western literature, art, film, and pornography tend to be marked by 'latent Orientalism'. At every turn Said insisted that the production of knowledge is inseparable from politics.

For instance, in the much-cited book, *Orientalism*, Said enters the more general debate concerning the production of knowledge through a Nietzschean strategy. Intertwined in the Orientalist study is a lucid disruption to the notion that the production of knowledge is an innocent activity, and that knowledge is an innate

entity that can be discovered through the objective observation of objects. He argues that the West represents 'Orient' through its own forms of representation rather than in an Oriental form. This means that the object of study itself is transformed, and the interests of the West inevitably shape the meanings attached to the Orient as object. He states,

> 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, as Dante tried to do in the *Inferno*, is at one and the same time to characterize 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. (1991, pp. 71-72)

Thus Oriental scholarship is redefined by Said not as an exact science, as it supposes, but as a system of knowledge about the Orient that is quoted endlessly from writer to writer; it is a system repeated constantly until it reaches canonical status and becomes the truth. Oriental truths are thus "illusions of which one has forgotten they *are* illusions; worn-out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses" (Nietzsche, 1911, p. 180).

Alongside his critique of Orientalist science, Said insisted that a 'latent Orientalism' continues to be reproduced today. He continued to ask: is it possible to disconnect the effects of Europe's imperialist expansion from cultural production and political processes today? Take the example of Australia. Said's ideas require us to understand that Australia's history of dispossession and genocide is a precondition for the contemporary social and political arrangement. Yet despite the enduring sense of injustice that remains an integral part of Aboriginal cultural memory and identity, the present white generation doesn't see itself as responsible for, or implicated in, these injustices. Within this generation, there is a distinct sense that the present and the past are disconnected, or, at the very least, that we live in a liberal present that has displaced a harsher and more brutal illiberal past. At any rate, both of these senses permit white Australia to distance itself from the present situation. In fact,

> almost 50% of white Australians believe Aboriginal people are given unfair advantages by the government. One in five people say they would move away if an Aboriginal Australian sat next to them. Almost 10% of non-Aboriginal people admit they would not hire an Aboriginal jobseeker. More than a third of people surveyed conceded they believe Aboriginal Aussies are 'sometimes a bit lazy'. (Creative Spirits, 2014)

These common responses by dominant sectors of society have been taken up by governments who increasingly acknowledge, if only symbolically, the injustices of the colonial past. It was precisely in such terms that Australia's Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, delivered an apology to Australia's stolen generation in 2008. The apology is obviously an important moment in the context of Australia's history, but, crucially, the terms upon which this apology were justified by the government of the day keep open the question of this connection of the present to the past. In public discussion about the apology, the stolen generation continues to be a "blight on the nation's soul" (McMahon, 2008), as Kevin Rudd put it, but the enduring injustice of this blight remains ambivalent within the White cultural imaginary. To be sure, recent statements by the current Prime

Minister, Tony Abbott, as part of a newly launched "defining moments project" (Hurst, 2014), suggest such a blight can and ought to be tempered by focusing upon particular aspects of Australian history. British settlement, Abbott claims, provided the foundation for Australia to become one of the "freest, fairest and most prosperous societies on the face of the earth" (Hurst, 2014). And while Abbott acknowledges settlement did "dispossess and for a long time marginalise Indigenous people" (Hurst, 2014), a more solid foundation for understanding contemporary society is to be found through colonial figures such as Governor Philip. This figure, Abbott announces, "raised the union flag at Sydney cove" in 1788, and "encouraged all the new settlers including the convicts to work hard for the benefit of the community" (Hurst, 2014).

Said's work provides a powerful and subtle analysis of how enduring imperial injustices are a crucial aspect of economic and political dominance today. He requires us to confront history in such a way that the colonial past is more than just a 'blight'. It is also the precondition for the complex cultural and economic stratifications that mark the present. If liberalism articulates a myth of progress through the on-going emergence of liberty and self-government, Said provides a materialist account of the complex relation between white governance and the enduring injustices this produced. The use of the term 'blight' by Kevin Rudd, for instance, suggests that there are aspects of colonial history that can be removed or cut out. The overall effects of settler colonialism are thus left untouched. Said's argument with respect to the processes of imperialism is, I think, more radical.

This special issue takes up Said's radical understanding of culture. It is precisely Said's reworking of Nietzsche's and Foucault's insistence on the connection of knowledge and power that animates Coeli Fitzpatrick's article in this special issue, "Said matters: Teaching Edward Said to the non-humanities undergraduate". Fitzpatrick outlines how Said's critique of representation directly challenges the straightforward, common sense view of culture and meaning. Said is particularly useful, Fitzpatrick tells us, because his work engages with specific, everyday examples. Moreover, in the context of an increasingly neoliberalised university, which places value on quantitative, non-humanities forms of knowledge, this challenge is particularly pertinent. Said opens up powerful ways for the non-humanities student (for us all) to critically think about their relationship to and their place in the social world. Maryam Khalid's article, "Gendering Orientalism: Gender, sexuality, and race in post 9-11 global politics", also builds upon Said's critique of representation. Khalid draws upon feminist concerns and reveals how 'war on terror' discourse is constructed around gendered binary divisions. The Bush administration tellingly evinced a masculinist anxiety in its desire to protect homeland and, as a result, constructed a contradictory image of the enemy other. The other emerges in this construction as a calculating and dangerous threat, as well as an irrational coward. Khalid demonstrates that this contradictory formulation is useful for US military power. The enemy other is both known and unknown, or, in the words of Donald Rumsfeld, a known unknown. This interplay provides the basis for the military perpetually being on high alert.

Camie Augustus's article, "The corporate institution of mixed race: Indigeneity, discourse, and *Orientalism* in Aboriginal policy" correspondingly draws Said's account of the 'corporate institution' into a trenchant critique of 'mixed race'

discourse. Augustus maintains that the contradictory assimilationist and segregationist policies of Canada, the USA, and Australia emerged for specific reasons, rather than as a result of economic or political uncertainty. The colonial state sought to manage populations by eliminating racial ambiguity. Hsu-Ming Teo's article, "American popular culture through the lens of Saidian and post-Saidian Orientalist critiques" explores America's fascination with the orient. Extending Said's critique, Teo calls for a post-Saidian analysis of culture and historically traces various examples of "self-orientalisation" as expressed through mediums such as sexual fantasy, spirituality, and gender identity. The upshot is an account of culture as hybrid, as Said would put it. In Teo's terms, Orientalist tropes figured as a powerful resource in the construction of the myth of exceptionalism in the US's cultural imaginary. Similarly, Krista Banasiak's ethnographic perspective in "Dancing in the West: Orientalism, Feminism, and belly dance" finds that feminist and Saidian criticisms of Westernised forms of belly dancing fail to account for the complexities of the practice. For Banasiak, belly dancing would be a form of "self-orientalisation", as Teo's article puts it. Banasiak reveals how the feminine body is reconfigured and empowered.

Anna Carastathis's article, "Is Hellenism an Orientalism? Reflections on the boundaries of 'Europe' in an age of uncertainty" obliquely defends Said against the claim, by Bernard Lewis, that the argument presented in *Orientalism* is *reductio ad absurdum*. Lewis claims it makes no more sense to politicise Orientalist scholarship than it does classicists studying the ancient Greek world. Despite Said's retort that Hellenism and Orientalism are irreducible, Carastathis argues that Hellenism can actually be understood as a form of Orientalism. The article outlines how Hellenism parallels an Orientalist structuring in its aim to make the other known.

John Drummond's article, "Said and Aida: Culture, Imperialism, Egypt and Opera" examines Said's mapping of Orientalist tropes in Verdi's 1871 opera, Aida. From a musicology perspective, Drummond argues that Said's account is a reductionist take on the work. Drummond reveals the work's complexity, particularly the musical aspects that are, for most part, ignored by Said. And Vijay Mishra's article "Edward Said, Salman Rushdie and spectres of humanism", takes up the question of Said's scholarship with respect to Islam. In a powerful comparison of Rushdie and Said in relation to the humanist scholastic tradition, Mishra argues that Said tends to temper his account of Islam, despite his commitment to this scholarly tradition. A fuller and more critical account of Islam is to be found, Mishra maintains, in Rushdie. In effect, Rushdie goes where Said fears to tread.

As can be seen, there are many trajectories opened up by the range of perspectives/critiques gathered for this special issue. There is, however, one thread that remains prominent throughout and which I will briefly explore here. This thread is Said's account of 'latent Orientalism' and its connection to European imperialism and the construction of the other. What is at issue is an underlying ethical concern with systems of representation and political practices that refuse, wittingly or unwittingly, to recognise the other's being, as he argues in his last book *Freud and the Non-European* (2003). So in Said's terms, imperialism—the theory, practice, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre *ruling* distant territories—is an ethical failure. As Michael Doyle argues, "imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an

empire" (as cited in Said, 1993, p. 9). Moreover, imperialism and its ethical failure doesn't disappear in the face diminishing colonialism, it "lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices" (Said, 1993, p. 9). It is precisely this insistence on lingering that links Said's thought directly to the Australian refusal to think the present in terms of its colonial past.

I want to develop this link by briefly examining *Culture and Imperialism*. What is most striking about this book is that it links cultural production to the West's imperialist activity. At the time of the writing of the book, 1993, Said argued that the cultural effects of Western imperialism had been largely ignored by criticism. Given its global pervasiveness, he maintained it should be foremost in any analysis of culture and society. He writes,

> in much recent theory the problem of representation is deemed to be central, yet rarely is it put in its full political context, a context that is primarily imperial. Instead we have on the one hand an isolated cultural sphere, believed to be freely and unconditionally available to weightless theoretical speculation and investigation, and, on the other, a debased political sphere, where the real struggle between interests is supposed to occur ... A radical falsification has become established in this separation. Culture is exonerated of any entanglements with power, representations are considered only apolitical images to be parsed and construed as so many grammars of exchange, and the divorce of the past and the present is assumed to be complete. And yet, far from this separation of spheres being a neutral or accidental choice, its real meaning is an act of complicity, the humanists choice of a disguised, denuded, systematically purged textual model over a more embattled model, whose principle features would inevitably coalesce around the continuing struggle over the question of empire itself. (1993, pp. 56-57)

In *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Said also denounces contemporary critical theory, especially poststructuralism, for what he claims is its lack of "worldliness" (1983, p. 35). Of course, it wouldn't be drawing too long a bow to say that poststructuralism no longer dominates critical thought today. There are many reasons for this toppled influence, which I will to leave to one side, and it remains to be seen, I think, whether or not current developments—such as actor network theory, speculative realism, Žižekian Marxist-Hegelian-Lacanianism, Badiouian set theory, Malabouian plasticity, and so on—are more 'worldly' in the sense intended by Said. At any rate, what Said poses most surely has resonances within contemporary contexts. What is needed, writes Said, is "a sort of spatial sense, a sort of measuring faculty for locating or situating theory" (1983, p. 241) in relation to specific instances of cultural production.

In order to recapture 'worldliness' Said proposes nothing less than a materialist understanding of texts and political practices. Curiously, in the context of recent developments in critical thought—with the call to get back to the object, the assault upon correlationism, non-philosophy, rethinking of Althusser's work, etc.—this materialism seems to have more resonance today than it did in the early 1980s when Said wrote *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Said develops this 'worldiness' in *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. I am paying attention to the latter here. In the 'contrapuntal' reading strategy that Said employs in *Culture and Imperialism* we find a fully formed materialism, and I am

taking this as coterminous with his call for 'worldliness'. "Contrapuntal reading", Said explains,

> means reading a text with an understanding of what is involved when an author shows, for instance, that a colonial sugar plantation is seen as important to the process of maintaining a particular style of life in England. ... contrapuntal reading must take into account both processes, that of imperialism and that of resistance to it, which can be done by extending our reading of the texts to include what was forcibly excluded. (1993, p. 66)

Reading contrapuntally thus involves examining the conditions that enable various things to be written and understood. It is worth pointing out that 'contrapuntal reading' bears more than a casual resemblance to the aims of Marxist models of literary production. Here I am thinking of Pierre Macherey's *A Theory of Literary Production*, in which Macherey outlines an approach to reading that views the author as a user of devices, and writing as the practice of manipulating pre-existing codes (1978). Since writing involves making connections between the elements that make up reality, it can only be an incomplete, incoherent presentation with gaps and exclusions. Informed readers, however, can see this textual symptom and thus fill in the gaps to make the text cohere (Althusser & Balibar, 1970). Writers rely upon this tacit gap knowledge. It is impossible to represent everything.

Said's focus upon literature in *Cultural and Imperialism* "actually and truly *enhances* our reading and understanding" (1993, p. xiv) of Europe's major cultural texts. The aim is thus not to reject the works of the Western tradition outright, but to re-examine mostly its literary works—Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Kipling's *Kim*, Camus' *L'Étranger*, and Austen's *Mansfield Park*, among others. His contention is that these works were produced at the height of colonialism. Foregrounding this relationship exposes structures of imperialist "attitude and reference" (Said, 1993, p. 62). It is precisely these attitudes and extra-textual references that underpin the gap filling aspects of reading. Take for instance the work of Conrad. As Said posits:

> Conrad's tragic limitation is that even though he could see clearly that on one level imperialism was essentially pure dominance and land-grabbing, he could not then conclude that imperialism had to end so that 'natives' could lead lives free from European domination. As a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the natives their freedom, despite his severe critique of the imperialism that enslaved them. (1993, p. 30)

Likewise Rudyard Kipling's work, whilst it grapples with the experience of colonised peoples in India, "assumes a basically uncontested empire" (Said, 1993, p. 134) as the context for such elaborations. For Kipling, Said argues, "the division between white and non-white, in India and elsewhere, was absolute, and is alluded to throughout *Kim* as well as the rest of [his] work" (1993, pp. 134-5). Despite Kipling's own hybrid experience in India, a sahib always remained essentially a sahib and "no amount of friendship or camaraderie [could] change the rudiments of [such] racial difference" (Said, 1993, p. 135). It seems that Kipling "would no more have questioned that difference, and the right of the white European to rule, than he would have argued with the Himalayas" (Said, 1993, p. 135).

This sense of not questioning the situating of Europe as a privileged location is brought out in Said's analysis of Jane Austen. Austen wrote some time before the outset of massive colonial expansion yet Europe remains privileged in her texts. Her fiction engages with questions relating to moral values and order, and seeks to posit various positive ideas. But this attempt to validate a particular European moral order also devalues the moral order of the peoples outside Europe. Although there is no direct reference to empire in the fashion of Conrad and Kipling, Said finds in the margins of Austen's texts references which function to underscore "the importance of an empire to the situation at home" (1993, p. 89). In *Mansfield Park*, for instance, Sir Thomas's wealth is established through a reference to Antigua. Said argues that the function of this reference could only be understood by the readers of the day in terms of the historical reality of sugar plantations maintained by slave labour in the Caribbean. Austen's fiction thus draws upon, and enters the question of empire uncritically, as if this reality is something that is normal and can be taken for granted. This 'reference' underscores the 'attitude' that "no matter how isolated and insulated the English place, it requires overseas sustenance" (Said, 1993, p. 89).

In more recent times Albert Camus, despite the beginnings of the end of colonial occupation, produced work that drew upon earlier and more overt French imperial discourses. Camus wrote at a time when France occupied Algeria, and the location of his fictional stories in Algeria is not by accident or without imperial overtones. In fact the space of works, such as *L'Étranger*, could not be possible without the historical reality of French imperialism. It could be said that the absurd identity expressed in the work is undermined by the colonial realities surrounding it. Said writes,

> whenever in his novels or descriptive pieces Camus tells a story, the French presence in Algeria is rendered either as outside narrative, an essence subject to neither time nor interpretation, or as the only history worth being narrated *as history*. Camus's obduracy accounts for the blankness and absence of background in the Arab killed by Meursault; hence also the sense of devastation in Oran that is implicitly meant to express not mainly the Arab deaths but French consciousness. (1993, pp. 179-180)

Thus a work which was once carried around in the back pockets of students, a work which champions the 'absurd' ("the confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world" [Camus, 1955, p. 29]) as the moment in which human integrity is found ("the absurd man feels released from everything outside" [Camus, 1955, p. 51]), is now rendered as a philosophical point made at the expense of Algerian Arabs.

The upshot of Said's contrapuntal take upon these literary works has resonances for the question of culture in general. As all of the articles gathered here attest, cultural productions consist of complex entanglements of politics and aesthetics. What is at issue is that Said seeks to contest cultural theories and political practices that assume that cultures are essentialised monolithic wholes, and that colonial violence is merely the exception rather than the rule. Because of the pervasiveness of imperialism, "a new integrative or contrapuntal orientation in history that sees Western and non-Western experiences as belonging together" (Said, 1993, p. 279) is required. The cultural identity of both the West and the non-West are "contrapuntal ensembles, for it is the case that no identity can

ever exist by itself and without an array of opposites, negatives, oppositions" (Said, 1993, p. 52). What this means is that the literary canon, and by extension cultural production in general, is not just an account of life in Europe, or the articulation of a distinctly Western history and identity, but also the history of the non-West and the excluded and oppressed colonies that are an integral part of these articulations.

These are the connections a contrapuntal reading aims to foreground. To read contrapuntally is thus to probe the text, to bring out the dialectic (coloniser/colonised) that makes the text's structure possible. For Said,

> as we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally but *contrapuntally*, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts. (1993, p. 51)

If we labour the point it is to extract as much as we can. Our aim is to underscore the dialectical nature of this account of culture in relation to the connection between the past and the present. Said posits imperialism as a kind of grand narrative that affects everyone to some degree. It is the West's disease, still lingering, that finds its way into discourses that appear at first glance to have nothing to do with imperialism. It is the non-West's curse; every articulation of cultural life must be articulated in relation to it. Thus culture emerges in a hybrid form, born out of the interaction between the coloniser and colonised in the act of domination and resistance.

It is precisely this materialist account of the hybridity of culture that White Australia finds difficult to countenance. This is why Kevin Rudd's apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples uses terms such as 'blight' to explain history as aberration rather than rule. And, in turn, we now find Tony Abbott making the case for the pure British settler who, admittedly, made mistakes but was mostly benevolent. The key point here is that the white subject's speaking position takes the form of an exnominated purity in a power relation with a pure native other. Said's account of the very material intertwining of histories and the cultural hybridity this produces remains repressed. Present day dismissals of urban Aboriginals for not being native enough reveal the residues of this repression today. But we must be careful to distinguish Said's materialist hybridity from that of Bhabha. For Bhabha the coloniser/colonised dialectic is constantly shifting and is thus not essentialised at its base. Resistance involves shifting the terms of the dialectic in order to transform power ratios (Nicholls, 1997). For Said, the dialectic appears much more monolithic in its form. Resistance to the act of domination finds its basis

> in the rediscovery and repatriation of what has been suppressed in the natives' past by the process of imperialism … To achieve recognition is to rechart and then occupy the place in imperial cultural forms reserved for subordination, to occupy it self-consciously, fighting for it on the very same territory once ruled by a consciousness that assumed the subordination of a designated inferior Other. Hence, *reinscription*. (Said, 1993, p. 210)

The hybrid form that emerges thus occupies the same space in the dialectic. Resistance is carried out 'head on', as Fanon wrote, "it is precisely at the moment he realises his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with

which he will secure his victory [sic passim]" (1990, p. 33). In reconstructing the history of imperial encounter, the space of domination, the colonised finds a voice and is able to fight. In contrast, the West, in the act of domination, assumes a hybrid form. But this hybridity empowers rather than disempowers, or frustrates, the colonial endeavour. For Said the West's hybridity is a hidden factor. It has arisen through the West's plundering of the products and ideas that have been encountered during the colonial process, and then through a manipulation of history made to appear as if these products and ideas are purely Western (Said, 1993, pp. 15-16). Hybridity is thus, contra Bhabha, considered a moment in which the West is empowered and the non-West robbed of a history. Resistance therefore aims to reclaim and then reinscribe this history of plunder back into the cultural imaginary of the colonised. It is a reclaiming of a history that is not the sole property of the West.

As I have suggested, the form of monolithic Western culture championed by figures such as Australia's Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, is a fiction that is built upon a suppression of the realities of colonial plunder and the intertwined and interdependent nature of cultural identity. The colonised is able to find a voice in terms of the shared history that has been effected through colonialism. The justice that emerges from this tends toward the right of the colonised to articulate wrongs, damages, and the loss of territory and culture, or, at the very least to articulate how colonial interference in the past cannot be disconnected from contemporary identity. Said's resistance thus departs sharply from Bhabha. The former seeks to reclaim the silence that has been inflicted upon the colonised, the latter implies that the colonised has always had a voice, or some form of agency that is expressed in the setting up of hybrid sites.

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SPECIAL ISSUE: EDWARD SAID—INTELLECTUAL, CULTURAL CRITIC, ACTIVIST

American popular culture through the lens of Saidian and post-Saidian Orientalist critiques

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This essay provides a historical evaluation of how scholars have employed Saidian Orientalism to analyse the representation of Arabs, Muslims, the Middle East and North Africa in American popular culture from the revolutionary period to the present day. The scholarship examined here focuses on the American media, film, literature, material culture, world fairs, the expansion of the westward frontier, and consumer culture. I argue that whereas academics in the 1980s were concerned primarily with the extent to which European stereotypes of the Middle Eastern Arab/Muslim other proliferated in contemporary American popular culture and politics, this concern with negative stock images failed to provide a compelling and satisfactory explanation for how Americans actually engaged with 'the Orient' in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A historical approach to studying Orientalism in American culture has produced what I am calling post-Saidian analyses showing that American society has not merely been constructed in contradistinction to the Oriental other; rather, traditions of self-Orientalising have also played a vital part in creating multiple American selves.

Keywords: Orientalism, American popular culture, American media, Arab/Muslim stereotypes, consumerism, gender

Introduction

It should come as no surprise to anyone to learn that American popular culture is replete with negative, racist stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims. As Edward Said commented in the final section of *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1978/1991), after the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973 and the subsequent oil crisis resulting from the OAPEC embargo, the stock figure of the evil Arab/Muslim proliferated in American cartoons, comics, songs, film and television (1991, pp. 284-288).

> In the films and television the Arab is associated with lechery or bloodthirsty dishonesty. He appears as an oversexed degenerate, capable, it is true, of cleverly devious intrigues, but essentially sadistic, treacherous, low. Slave trader, camel driver, moneychanger, colorful scoundrel: these are some traditional Arab roles in the cinema. (Said, 1978/1991, pp. 286-287)

The prevalence of the 'evil Arab' in American popular culture has been such that, in the early 1980s, ABC news correspondent Jim Cooley remarked:

> Arabs are probably still the only group in the U.S. that anyone dares to portray in pejorative terms. This kind of thing would never be tolerated by other ethnic groups in the United States—Italians, Jews, Blacks, Irishmen, whatever. (as cited in Ghareeb, 1983, p. 211)

Since then, a whole body of scholarship—spearheaded by Jack Shaheen (1984, 1987, 1994, 2001, 2008)—has appeared documenting the ways in which 'Arabs' have been conflated with 'Muslims' in the American mind, Orientalised, and cast as the inferior and dangerous other. Diverse peoples with multiple languages, cultures, religions, and various ethnic and national identifications in the Middle East and North Africa have been subsumed into the image of the sinister, seemingly stupid, sensuous, licentious Arab/Muslim other. It seems that Said was right after all; Orientalism—the discourse that, according to Said, constructs the 'Oriental other' as the feminised, exotic inferior of the western subject—is pervasive in American society and culture.

Yet what has changed since the 1990s is the simplistic interpretation of American Orientalism as a late-twentieth century derivative of European Orientalism, resurrected primarily to serve the neo-imperialistic ends of American oil and geopolitics in the Middle East (Said, 1978/1991, chap. 3). Scholarship produced around the turn of the twenty-first century that focuses on how Orientalism actually functions in American popular culture is beginning to analyse how factors such as gender, consumerism, immigration, westward expansion and different codes of religious beliefs in America have influenced the discourse of Orientalism in many unexpected ways. Collectively, this body of work shows that there is no simple, singular tradition of Orientalism in the United States. Although the scholarship on American Orientalism encompasses representations of, and engagement with, East Asia and within Asian-American societies (Klein, 2003; Leong, 2005; Ma, 2000), those topics are beyond the scope of analysis here. This essay provides a historical evaluation of how scholars have employed Saidian Orientalism to analyse the representation of Arabs, Muslims, the Middle East and North Africa in American popular culture from the revolutionary period to the present day. I argue that whereas scholars in the 1980s were concerned primarily with the extent to which European stereotypes of the Middle Eastern Arab/Muslim other proliferated in contemporary American popular culture and politics, this concern with negative stock images failed to provide a compelling and satisfactory explanation for how Americans actually engaged with 'the Orient' in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[1] A historical approach to studying Orientalism in American culture has produced what I am calling post-

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[1] 'The Orient' is clearly a western-constructed geo-fantasy rather than an actual geographical location, but for ease of reading, I will omit scare quotes from this term in future references.

Saidian analyses showing that American society has not merely been constructed in contradistinction to the Oriental other; rather, traditions of self-Orientalising have also played a vital part in creating multiple American selves.

Saidian analyses of Orientalism in American popular culture

Said was notoriously uninterested in popular culture. An erudite, highly literate and musically gifted man trained in classical piano, his personal preferences and professional focus with regard to the arts concentrated on 'high' culture, whether in literature, art or music. Said's analysis of Orientalism in 'high' culture drew many critiques from scholars such as Dennis Porter (1991) or John M. MacKenzie (1995) who objected to a simplistic interpretation of western representations of the Orient in literature, music and art that framed it primarily through the lens of a western will to differentiate, subjugate and dominate. It would undoubtedly have been easier for Said to construct his argument in relation to the stock imagery and standard Orientalist stereotypes of Arabs/Muslims wheeled out to add exotic and/or menacing content and characters in comics, music hall, genre novels, and Hollywood films, yet his lack of interest in the popular was palpable. In *Orientalism*, Said devoted a meagre three pages to discussing Orientalism in American popular culture before turning to the question that was more absorbing for him: how American scholars inherited and perpetuated the neo-imperial agenda of Orientalism in the United States after the Second World War. His argument with regard to images of the Oriental in American culture was simple. First, the long legacy of negative European representations of the Oriental other was adopted and adapted by Americans, who began to engage more fully in the Middle East after the Second World War as a result of: (i) America's growing oil interests in the region; (ii) entanglement with the new state of Israel; and (iii) the process of decolonisation, which got caught up in Cold War geopolitics (1991, pp. 284-291). Second, anti-Semitic stereotypes that had been applied to Jewish people in Europe were now being attributed to Arabs/Muslims as "Oriental Semites" (pp. 285-286) while, simultaneously, Arabs/Muslims were also cast as "the disrupter of Israel's and the West's existence" (p. 286). What followed in the 1980s was an amplification of Said's argument above with regard to the conflation of the terms 'Middle East' with 'Arabs' and 'Muslims' in the American media and popular culture.

Critiques of media representations of conflated Arabs/Muslims actually preceded Said's *Orientalism*, sparked by concern over the way the American media reported the 1967 Six-Day War with an often pro-Zionist perspective. In 1975, Baha Abu-Laban and Faith Zeady's edited collection *Arabs in America: Myths and Realities* brought together fifteen essays that contrasted the differences between more 'balanced' European accounts, and more crisis-oriented, pro-Israeli American media coverage of the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars. Empirical analyses of mass media communications, social science text books and representations of 'Arabs' that amalgamated them with 'Muslims' in magazines, books, radio and television programs produced the overall conclusion that Arabs in America were a stigmatised and victimised immigrant group consistently portrayed in a negative light. An abridged version of Said's essay 'Shattered Myths'—which would form the basis of his thesis in *Orientalism*—appeared in this volume, connecting negative media portrayals of Arabs/Muslims to the work of American Orientalist scholars.

However, Said's attack on Orientalist scholars failed to gain much traction apart from those who actually worked in the field of Orientalism, whether American or otherwise. Scholars such as Donald Little (1979), David Knopf (1980), Bernard Lewis (1982) and many others tried to rebut Said's attack on Orientalist or Middle East studies (see Teo, 2013), while others such as Christopher Miller (1985), Rana Kabbani (1986) and Patrick Brantlinger (1988) enthusiastically extended Saidian discourse analysis of Orientalism (soon to evolve into a more general colonial discourse analysis) to other realms of British and French literature and scholarship. Yet those who were more immediately concerned with contemporary American engagement in the Middle East ignored Said's attack on Orientalist academics, focusing instead on media representations of Arabs/Muslims, the Arab-Israeli conflict and Middle Eastern conflicts such as the Lebanese civil war or the Iran-Iraq war. Throughout the 1980s, studies of the American media such as Michael Hudson and Ronald Wolfe's *The American Mass Media and the Arabs* (1980), Said's *Covering Islam* (1981), Soheir Morsy's "Politicization Through the Mass Information Media: American Images of the Arabs" (1983), and Issam Suleiman Mousa's *The Arab Image in the US Press* (1984) continually reiterated that the American media's portrayal of Arabs/Muslims was biased, negative, and "in favor of the Zionist cause, to the almost complete exclusion or the systematic distortion of the Arab point of view". Coverage was positive only when, as in the case of Anwar Sadat's Egypt, the agenda of its leaders aligned with American foreign policy goals in the region (Morsy, 1983, pp. 93-95).

Critiques of American media reportage of Middle Eastern events looked to American popular culture to explain the evident bias against Arabs/Muslims, and it was in this body of work that Said's thesis in *Orientalism* had a widespread impact. Said may not have been the only scholar to connect contemporary images of Arabs/Muslims to an earlier European tradition, but he was the most widely read. Subsequently, compiling evidence from television (Adams, 1981; Naber 2000; Shaheen, 1984), Hollywood films (Konzett, 2004; Naber, 2000; Semmerling, 2006; Shaheen, 1986, 2001, 2008), jokes, popular songs (Michalak, 1988), and comics (Michalak, 1988; Shaheen, 1994), scholars confirmed Said's claim that Arabs/Muslims in American popular culture were overwhelmingly portrayed negatively. They were depicted as evil, stupid, dirty, lazy, sex-crazed, maniacal, primitive, violent, war-mongering, terrorists, dictatorial leaders and abusers of women, or destitute and oppressed masses in need of western intervention and redemption even though they were largely anti-western. Studies of Arabs/Muslims in American popular fiction (Christison, 1987; Orfalea, 1988; Simon, 1989, 2010), especially in the genres of spy novels, thrillers and epics such as Leon Uris's *Exodus* (1958) and *The Haj* (1984) or James Michener's *The Source* (1967), corroborated these stereotypes and showed, moreover, that pro-Israeli politics pervaded much American popular fiction dealing with the Middle East. Little attempt was made to portray Palestinians as individuals or to explain their perspective as a dispossessed people.

Like Said, many argued that American Orientalism was simply the most modern incarnation of a centuries-old European Orientalism developed to justify western power in the East. For instance, Kathleen Christison (1987) argued that because Americans had a limited experience of the Middle East until the twentieth

century, "Americans learned second hand, imbibing the ethnocentrism of European orientalists" (p. 399). She repeated Said's point that "the images that once served anti-Jewish polemicists and cartoonists now serve those who caricature Arabs" (1987, p. 397). Laurence Michalak (1988) also agreed that the

> Arab stereotype did not originate in America. A negative stereotype of the Middle East has existed in Europe at least since the spread of Islam … The Middle Eastern stereotype can be seen in European proverbs, novels, plays, travelogues, poetry and painting. Such prejudices are simply part of America's European folk heritage. (p. 33)

Delia Konzett (2004), meanwhile, traced the influence of European Orientalist discourse on American popular culture by delineating the influence of John Ford's British film *The Lost Patrol* on American combat films during the Second World War. There were other factors contributing to this negative view of Arabs/Muslims, some scholars conceded: Americans' ignorance and suspicion of other people who are different; the small size of the Arab American population, few of whom have made inroads into the entertainment industries to represent themselves (Michalak, 1988, p. 34; Orfalea, 1988, p. 126); Americans' "particular emotional affinity for Israel and Israelis" (Christison, 1987, p. 125) stemming from a longstanding tradition of biblical pilgrimage to the Holy Land (Suleiman, 1999, p. 34); sympathy for the Jewish people and their plight during and immediately after the Second World War, and the 'underdog' status of the nascent Israeli state (Orfalea, 1988, p. 125); hostility towards Soviet-sponsored Arab nationalist struggles against European imperialism; American sponsorship of dictatorial regimes to secure oil supplies and for geopolitical and military strategic ends during the Cold War (Suleiman, 1999, p. 35); the effects of the 1973 OAPEC oil embargo imposed because of American support for Israel in the October War, resulting in skyrocketing energy costs in the United States (Orfalea, p. 126); and, not least of all, the hijacking and kidnapping of 'soft' civilian targets during the 1970s and 1980s (Suleiman, 1999, p. 35). During this period, negative images of Arabs/Muslims proliferated and scholars responded by compiling long lists of the stereotypes being generated in American culture, so much so that by the late 1980s, Gregory Orfalea (1988) commented that "Analysis of popular culture's stereotyping of the Arab has become something of a cottage industry" (p. 110).

This body of work was vital because it showed that Orientalism was alive and flourishing in America, explaining and justifying in reductive ways the U.S. government's foreign policies in the region. It documented and continually reminded Americans that Arabs/Muslims were stereotyped and vilified in overtly racist ways that erased their individuality and created them as America's collective bogeyman. In the more complex and creative analyses, such as Tim Jon Semmerling's (2006) skilful reading of Orientalism in six Hollywood films from the 1970s to 9/11, the task of simply compiling negative images of Arabs/Muslims gave way to arguments about how narratives constructing the American self against the Arab/Muslim other proliferate especially during historical moments of national insecurity, and how the American self that is envisioned as modern, civilised, secure and heroic is a profoundly male-gendered one. As Semmerling's work shows, classic Saidian analyses of American representations of Arabs/Muslims continue to this day. But by the 1990s other scholars were beginning to question the argument that American Orientalism was

simply an offshoot of European Orientalism, conveniently developing when the United States got engaged in military, oil and political ventures in the Middle East. The pattern of Saidian Orientalism that seemed so evident in the late twentieth century was more problematic when applied to an earlier age, or when issues of gender, ethnicity, westward expansion or consumerism were taken into account.

Post-Saidian analyses of Orientalism in American popular culture

Americans have engaged imaginatively and physically with the Middle East since the Revolution. Independence resulted in Britain withdrawing naval protection from American merchant ships, putting them in a precarious position in the Mediterranean, where they were vulnerable to 'Barbary corsairs'—privateers from the sultanate of Morocco and the North African regencies of Algiers, Tunis and Tripolitania. Paul Baepler (1999) and Mark Kamrath (2004) have shown that the abduction of Americans by Barbary pirates resulted in a flurry of popular novels, 'abduction memoirs' and stage plays denouncing Barbary enslavement of Americans. The Barbary problem eventually resulted in the construction of the American Navy and the American victories in the two Barbary Wars between 1801 to 1815 (Oren, 2007, pp. 17-79, 155). During the nineteenth century, especially after the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was established in 1810, Americans began to travel to the Middle East and North Africa, producing paintings, lithographs, pilgrimage accounts and travel narratives about the region (Oren, 2007, p. 87, p. 90). As Bruce Kuklick (1996) and others (McAlister, 2001; Oren, 2007) have argued, nineteenth-century Americans claimed the spaces and histories of the 'Holy Land' as their own, creating a popular understanding of the Middle East that was framed "through acts of religious, especially Protestant, appropriation" (McAlister, 2001, p. 21).

From the post-bellum period, however, popular understanding of the Middle East began to change, taking on a more consumerist rather than religious tone. Americans' fascination with the Orient was exhibited in shopping, fashion and entertainment. William Leach (1993) was among the first scholars to explore Americans' consumerist engagement with the Orient in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century—a period preceding direct and sustained American military and political intervention in North Africa and the Middle East.[2] What Leach discovered caused him to challenge Said's argument that American cultural interest in the Middle East derived from European discourse; that Orientalism consistently distinguished between a superior American culture and the inferior culture of the Eastern 'other'; and that American Orientalism necessarily denoted a desire to dominate the East. For Leach, American interest in all things Oriental was a home-grown phenomenon that began in the second half of the nineteenth century in response to the rise of consumer culture, and to a growing dissatisfaction to the rigidity of dominant Christian culture and the ascetic values of the Protestant work ethic. The traditional racist tropes that belittled Orientals still circulated, it was true, and Leach acknowledged that European and American Orientalism often "distorted and demeaned non-Western cultures" (Leach, 1993, p. 105). However, he pointed out that there were also those like L. Frank Baum—the well-known author of *The Wizard of Oz*—who

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[2] Although American troops were involved in the British invasion of Egypt in 1882.

admired 'Oriental' countries such as Balukistan and contrasted the 'free and wild' Balukistanis favourably against 'stiff', 'scheming', 'deceiving' Westerners (1993, p. 107). This account of Balukistanis versus Westerners in Baum's novel *Daughters of Destiny* (1906) certainly maintains the dichotomy between the two, but it subverts the moral judgement of the characteristics ascribed to each. Where Saidian tropes of the luxurious, sensuous Orient were invoked, these served to underscore the superiority of Oriental culture over American culture. Leach argued that Orientalism in American popular culture

> exposed an underlying sense in Westerners themselves that they lacked something vital that 'Orientals' had. Orientalism was symptomatic of changes taking place within Western society—and especially in cities—that had little to do with imperialism or with the desire to appropriate somebody else's property, but that symbolized a feeling of something missing from Western culture itself, a longing for a 'sensual' life more 'satisfying' than traditional Christianity could endorse. (1993, p. 105)

Orientalism in pre-Second World War American popular culture was about consumption and extravagant fantasy. Unlike previous crazes for the East in Europe—the province mainly of the wealthy elite and of artists, intellectuals and philosophers—American enthusiasm for the Orient was demotic and market-driven, fed by businessmen keen to make a quick buck by cashing in on the consumer desire for new colours, textures, sensuousness, opulence, and exoticism with a touch of the 'impermissible': the seedy underside of life (Leach, 1993, pp. 104-105). If Orientals were characterised by "luxury, impulse, desire, primitivism, immediate self-gratification" (Leach, 1993, p. 107), then this was what Americans increasingly desired in their non-working lives, and what American businesses strove to provide. By the early twentieth century, America was awash with 'Arabian Nights' themes in fashion (turbans, Turkish harem pants, brightly coloured and richly textured clothing), furniture (divans), furnishings (Persian carpets and lamps), architectural motifs, design, novels, theatre, films, and costume balls where wealthy Americans donned the attire of "pashas and rajahs, harem dancers and Persian princesses" (Leach, 1993, p. 105-106). By providing authentically Oriental or American-Orientalised commodities with which Americans could decorate themselves or their homes, entertain themselves, and refashion their identities (temporarily, at least), "American business furnished the principal means" for the transmission of Orientalism, and "for the creation of a new national dream life for men and women" who used it as a therapeutic release from the mundanity and drudgery of their daily lives (Leach, 1993, p. 107).

Leach's work was important primarily because of three things he accomplished. First, he took the study of American Orientalism and popular culture back to the period before the events of 1967-1973 that had provoked Saidian critiques of the negative representations of Arabs/Muslims in American popular culture. These representations were particularly damaging in the wake of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinian terrorism, and the widespread condemnation of 'greedy Arabs' for perpetuating the pain of high energy prices and inflation in 1970s America, not to mention the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis and the sporadic hostage-taking that took place in the 1980s during the Lebanese civil war and the Iran-Iraq war. Second, when Leach asked why Americans were fascinated by the Orient, he found American culture lacking. He identified a discontent that

could only be satisfied by adopting the cultural trappings and even values of a greatly simplified and reductive Oriental other as understood through *Arabian Nights* fantasies. He showed that American Orientalism did not merely create Oriental others abroad but, rather, that Americans were actively involved in widespread self-orientalising practices (admittedly in a fairly superficial manner) that enabled them to experiment with alternative identities. Third, he showed that *fin-de-siècle* American Orientalism was driven by market capitalism and the consumer economy at home, rather than any express desire to exert imperial influence abroad. Leach's observations were subsequently expanded by scholars of American Orientalism.

The connections between *Arabian Nights* fantasies and American consumer culture were explored in twenty-first century studies of American Orientalism in works by Edwards (2000a) and Caton (2000), but they were comprehensively elaborated in Susan Nance's *How the Arabian Nights Inspired the American Dream, 1790-1935* (2009). Nance traced how the introduction of the *Nights* tales to the new nation state at the end of the eighteenth century triggered a vogue for Oriental tales in the lead-up to the Second Barbary War of 1812-15. Her main focus, however, was on how the *Nights* influenced nineteenth-century ideas about masculinity and American popular culture. Nance explored fraternal organisations that deliberately adopted Oriental fashions or motifs to signify their connection to 'Eastern wisdom'; Americans' fascination with Oriental tableaux and performances of Oriental life staged in travelling circuses, vaudeville acts and 'wild west' shows; and, of course, the famous 1893 Columbian Exposition or Chicago World's Fair where "Ottoman entrepreneurs and official representatives of the Sultan provided carefully managed but easily appropriated Eastern identities" (2009, p. 20). At this fair, Sol Bloom introduced the infamous 'hoochy coochy' belly dance that so scandalised Americans who nevertheless could not get enough of it. In an echo of Leach's argument, Nance contended that between 1790 and 1935, "Americans saw their acquisitive desires brought to life in the *Arabian Nights* and developed a consumer's Oriental tale to enact fantasies of contented, leisured consumption" (2009, p. 20).

In Nance's work, as in Leach's, the accusatory thrust of Saidian Orientalism was considerably blunted. It seemed as though nineteenth-century American Orientalism was simply a harmless form of Americans unleashing libidinal energies and emotions by dressing up in costume, indulging in play-acting and constructing obvious fantasies of the East that were not tangibly connected to geopolitical realities or European imperial expansion in the region. What was missing from both accounts was the broader acknowledgement that it was precisely European colonial penetration into North Africa and the Middle East that provided American businesses with the Oriental consumer goods that furnished their fantasies, entertainment and exploration of alternative cultural, class and sexual identities. In these accounts, as in Edwards' (2000b) exploration of American Orientalist art and vernacular expressions of Orientalism in American mass-market culture, American Orientalism functioned primarily as "a therapeutic response to changing circumstances" (p. viii). Apparently, care of the American self and psyche made Americans oblivious and indifferent to the penetration of European imperial power into the Maghreb and Middle East that enabled their Orientalist fantasies.

Twenty-first century analyses of American Orientalism were also shaped by greater attention to gender than had been the case in the Saidian accounts of the 1980s where, if gender was considered at all, the East was usually posited as either degenerately feminine or hyper-maniacally masculine (as in the case of terrorists). These binaries were broken down when gendered Orientalist images and cultural practices were located within the context of American political and social history. For instance, Edwards (2000a) suggested that when *fin-de-siècle* Americans engaged in self-Orientalising practices through the consumption of Oriental goods, they went well beyond individual pleasures and affected social questions about the nature of femininity, masculinity and sexuality. In an age dominated by the 'Woman Question', the campaigns of women for greater rights and liberties, and perhaps even a crisis in masculinity, Orientalist images of despots, harems and victimised concubines "served as a safety valve for gender friction by providing imagery for male wish fulfilment and idealization" (Edwards, 2000a, p. 23).

Orientalism was always a medium for the exercise of extravagant sexual fantasies, but in late nineteenth century America, both women as well as men incorporated these fantasies into a new understanding of their bodies and sexual behaviour. Romanticised and sexualised notions of the harem dancer—popularised by the 'hoochy coochy' performed by the various 'Little Egypts' (the stage name of Syrian-born dancers)—served the obvious function of titillating voyeuristic men. However, it also allowed American women to think about their bodies in a new way that was deeply disturbing to mainstream society, especially, Edwards contended, "when viewed in the context of the history of corsetry and women's attire in America, all of which conspired to camouflage, restrict, and generally deny the free flow of energy at the core of the female body" (2000a, p. 39). Nance (2009) concurred, adding that the *danse du ventre* or belly dance became popular at the precise moment when crusades for moral reform got underway in the United States. The dance was regarded as scandalous because it asked audiences—both male and female—to "reimagine the proverbial Eastern 'harem' not as a prison of helpless, exploited women but as the world turned upside down, a hedonistic space where male desire put women in control" in the manner of the beautiful, clever and passionate Scheherazade (2009, p. 171). Some American women were even inspired to learn these dances, and a 'prominent minority' went on to make a profitable living from 'cootch' and strip tease performances in amusement parks, circuses and burlesque houses (Nance, 2009, p. 172). For the many others who did not perform these dances (at least in public), playing with Orientalism by wearing veils, turbans, scarves, 'harem pants' and luxurious materials helped them experience the sensuousness of their bodies at a time when the sexualised femininity of the New Woman and, later, the Flapper posed challenges to a more traditional, modest, restrained, maternal femininity. Thus the embrace of popular Orientalism was used by women to empower and liberate themselves physically even though the fantasy of the harem and the harem dancer was, ironically, a deeply patriarchal one. That these developments took place at the precise moment when crusades for moral reform were being carried out suggests that American Orientalism was implicated in the subversion of attempts to reimpose older, more conservative, more religious social standards and gender ideals in an ultimately futile attempt to rein in secular, hedonistic, market-driven forces transforming traditional American society.

The post-Saidian scholars of Orientalist culture also argued that American notions of masculinity were influenced in significant ways during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Along with the eastern mysticism that accompanied archaeological finds in Egypt, *Arabian Nights* images of 'wise men of the East' furnished fantasies of alternative masculinity for fraternal orders such as the Freemasons, Shriners (members of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine) and any number of smaller 'Arabian' or 'Oriental' style fraternities which gave American men a chance to experiment with other forms of spirituality, mysticism, and alternative 'Oriental' masculinities through a temporary performance of self-Orientalising. Orientalism mediated and facilitated American men's relationships with each other in these fraternal organisations. The desire to self-Orientalise again highlighted a vague dissatisfaction with mainstream Protestant masculinity, a sense that it was lacking something that could only be found in the Orient. This did not mean that these American men wished to surrender the class and racial benefits of belonging to the mainstream, of course. Nance suggested that:

> They did not play Eastern or Muslim in a narrow attempt to demonize or feminize a Muslim 'Other'. Rather, American fraternalists sought to enjoy two identities at once: authentically masculine wise man of the East and successfully affluent man of the West. (2009, p. 81)

Furthermore, Nance argued, the popularity of the Orient in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided an avenue for North African and Middle Eastern immigrants to fit into and re-interpret American ideas of Oriental masculinity. Immigrants from Morocco, Algeria and Ottoman Syria from the 1870s onwards performed in circuses and wild west shows in the role of 'Bedouin Rough Riders'—the Oriental counterpart to that all-American icon, the cowboy. Far from viewing the Orient as passively feminine, these Bedouin Rough Riders displayed feats of horsemanship, 'military bravery' and a wild free-spiritedness (albeit often in villainous roles) that Americans already recognised and admired in the cowboy (2009, pp. 114-121). Conforming to such Orientalist roles certainly reduced people from the Maghreb and Ottoman empire to 'Arabs' and 'Bedouins', doing little to foster American understanding of North Africa and the Middle East. Nevertheless, the refraction of these 'Arabs' through the white cowboy's Oriental counterpart may perhaps have helped convinced Americans that Arabs were also white – as was eventually determined in a series of landmark federal court cases culminating in the landmark 1915 *Dow v. United States* that declared Arabs, Syrians, Lebanese, and Turks legally white and eligible for American citizenship (Gualtieri, 2001, pp. 42-46).

By far the most innovative and original reading of the ways in which discourses of Orientalism, race, whiteness, immigration, class and masculinity intertwined in early twentieth century American popular culture was Stephen Caton's study of the 'spectacularised Orient' in American popular culture during the 1920s, focusing particularly on the ambiguous gender, racial and ethnic identity of Rudolph Valentino in his eponymous role of *The Sheik*. A few short American studies (Chow, 1999; Hansen, 1986; Raub, 1992; Studlar, 1993) had appeared in the 1990s on the Orientalism of E.M. Hull's *The Sheik* (1919) in its book and Hollywood forms, and on the significance of Valentino in his signature role. Caton went beyond these to demonstrate the instability of the racial and gender identity of the immigrant male in America. He argued that Valentino, an Italian

immigrant, was so incompletely white to the extent that he could believably portray an Oriental man; and so incompletely masculine because of his ethnic-racial otherness that his gorgeously turbaned, lavishly bejewelled sheik persona affronted white middle-class American men who accused him of effeminacy. The question posed by Valentino in his role of the sheik was not simply a racial question of miscegenation (overturned at the end when the Arab sheik is revealed to be the son of an English nobleman), of white versus black, but of white versus all other 'lesser' categories of whites: Jews, Italians, and other immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who found their entry into the United States restricted according to the quota system of the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924. Caton argued that *The Sheik* showed that immigrant men

> could become a 'bourgeois' citizen of the country with the helping hand of the patronizing white woman … He must learn to act white (that is, become 'Christian' and 'bourgeois'), learning to tame his savagery in order to become a fit mate for the white Diana. And so, libidinal attraction to a dangerous type is justified and legitimate for the sake of a national melting pot, paid for by the exclusion of the black man. And this is also part of the story of how immigrants in the United States constructed themselves as 'white' in contrast to 'black' Negroes. (2000, p. 116)

Popular Orientalism in Hollywood could thus mediate white, mainstream American men and women's relations with immigrant men, assimilating them into the white, bourgeois body politic at the expense of black men. This, as I have argued elsewhere (Teo, 2012), was a crucial difference in early twentieth century American Orientalism: the acknowledgement that Arab men could be white, in contrast to the common understanding in Britain that Arabs were 'black'.

The existence of America's internal ethnic and racial others problematised the idea that Arabs/Muslims were America's Oriental other—a point explored by Melani McAlister in her book *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000* (2001). McAlister returned to the well-trodden ground covered by those who had been working on Saidian analyses of negative images of Arabs/Muslims. She used the same geopolitical framework of American oil and military interests in the Middle East and she agreed that American popular culture—films and novels—accustomed Americans to the exercise of power in the Middle East as well as creating in the Middle East "a stage for the production of American identities—national, racial, and religious" (McAlister, 2001, p. 3). However, she argued that Saidian critiques of American mass-market culture were incomplete if they did not account for the fact that American popular culture was more obsessed by its internal domestic diversity, particularly its racial distinctions. Historically, the politics of black-white relations structured American relations with its internal population, positioning black Americans as the white mainstream's other first and foremost, rather than Arabs/Muslims. Moreover, the problem of arguing that Orientalism in American popular culture created a superior white self to an Oriental other was that a significant portion of the American polity—black nationalists such as the Black Panthers—deliberately chose to identify with the Oriental other.

> Thus in the postwar period, the us-them dichotomies of Orientalism have been fractured by the reality of a multiracial nation, even if the reality was recognized only in its disavowal. In other words, there was never a simple, racial 'us' in

> America, even when, as was generally the case, whiteness was privileged in discourses of Americanness. (McAlister, 2001, p. 11)

Not only was there never a homogeneous racial 'us' in America, the American 'us' was, from the beginning, a partially self-Orientalising 'us', as Richard Francaviglia has shown in his book *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* (2011). Francaviglia argued that as Europeans settled the New World and as Americans moved westward, the process of expansion was also a process of geographical Orientalisation and cultural self-Orientalisation. Explorers, geographers and settlers imposed on America's landscape the imagined past of the Holy Land, christening new towns and regions with biblical names (Salem, Canaan, Mount Zion, Bethlehem, etc.), descrying in the western desert landscape—the 'American Zahara' (2011, chap. 1)—a biblical landscape. Alternatively, they invoked the glamour and mystique of ancient Egypt, from the naming of Pyramid Lake, Nevada, to the construction of the Luxor complex in Las Vegas with its gleaming pyramid and gaudy sphinx. This was by no means an innocent act of nostalgia or desire to bestow history upon new places of settlement. Francaviglia connected the Orientalising of the American continental empire with the European Orientalising of the Middle East during colonial expansion in that region. The American Indians that explorers and settlers encountered and displaced were figured as Oriental people—whether the Lost Tribes of Israel, or as Assyrians, or 'Bedouin Arabs'. In 'an area that was solidly controlled by Native Americans, the newly arriving European Americans imagined that the increasingly strange landscapes and peoples they encountered were as much of the Orient as they were of the New World' (Francaviglia, 2011, p. 21). In this way, popular Orientalism in America facilitated and justified the displacement of Native Americans by ascribing to them those 'Oriental' characteristics that Europeans used to rationalise their colonisation of the East. Francaviglia argued that "by Orientalising its own frontier, the United States found Americanising Oriental frontiers easier" in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries when the government became involved in East Asian and Middle Eastern geopolitics (2011, p. 292).

Yet Francaviglia suggested that Americans' relationship to Orientalism was more complex than this, especially when it came to the Mormon migration from the eastern states to Utah. In their narrative of exodus

> the Mormons themselves were figuratively transformed into peoples from, or of, the Middle East (Israel). By adopting the identity of Israelites, the Mormons became the Oriental "other" despite the fact that they were white northern Europeans—and Christian. (2011, p. 99)

To their critics, however, the Mormons represented another, more disparaged Oriental other: Arab Muslims who practised polygamy and enslaved their women. Both narratives—whether new Israelites or new Ishmaelites—created parallels between the landscape of the American west and the Middle East. By Orientalising the American Frontier and transforming it into, variously, a new Garden of Eden, a prophetic desert space where God spoke to man, or the New Zion (2011, p. 89), American Mormons—utilising a longstanding trope of the Chosen People first invoked by the Puritans in the New World—cast themselves as surrogate Jews. They were an oppressed people migrating into their Promised Land in the Great Basin, where the Utah Lake came to represent the Jordan

River, the Great Salt Lake the Dead Sea, and Salt Lake City the New Jerusalem (pp. 95-97). In another deliberately self-Orientalising gesture, the Mormons later incorporated Islamic motifs into their architecture, as in the domes and minarets of the Moorish-style Saltair pavilion (2011, p. 121), so much so that late nineteenth century travellers to Salt Lake City commented on its 'Oriental' appearance and significance. British traveller Phil Robinson, for instance, remarked on the different, intertwining strands of Oriental religious histories and identities—Jewish and Muslim—when he called the Mormon capital "the young rival of Mecca, the Zion of the Mormons, the Latter-Day Jerusalem" and "a beautiful Goshen of tranquillity in the midst of a troublous Egypt" (as cited in Francaviglia, 2011, p. 103). Thus in this particular instance, the American West functioned as a surrogate for the Middle East in complex and contradictory ways. Despite the Mormons believing Native Americans to be the Lost Tribes of Israel, they displaced these peoples by Orientalising themselves, casting themselves as the new Israelites colonising their Canaan and transforming it into a new, flourishing Zion. Orientalist discourse circulating in pamphlets, travel literature, posters and other artworks was used to dispossess indigenous peoples and to rationalise the Mormon colonisation of Utah. Meanwhile, it was simultaneously used by critics to denigrate the Mormons as akin to polygamous Muslims—a tenuous connection the Mormons themselves reinforced when they constructed Oriental-style buildings using recognisably Islamic designs and motifs.

Most studies of Orientalism in American popular culture have focused largely on the activities and cultural productions of American men with the exception of feminist scholarship on the novel and film versions of *The Sheik* as landmark cultural productions influencing western women's fantasies about Arab men and the North African and Middle Eastern deserts (Ardis, 1996; Blake, 2003; Chow, 1999; Gargano, 2006; Melman, 1988; Raub, 1992). It was only from the 1990s onwards that feminist scholars began to examine contemporary sheik romance novels—a subgenre that sells in the millions worldwide—as a late twentieth/early twenty-first century cultural phenomenon shedding light on western women's production and consumption of Orientalist fantasies. Saidian analyses of Orientalist stereotypes continue to be utilised in these scholars' works, particularly where the portrayal of sensual, despotic men are concerned (Bach, 1996; Haddad, 2007; Taylor, 2007; Teo, 2012). Connections between the perpetuation of Orientalist discourse and American foreign policies in the Middle East are sometimes explicated (Haddad, 2007; Teo 2012). However, as many feminist scholars of Orientalism have pointed out (Lowe, 1991; Melman, 1995), because Saidian Orientalism is profoundly gendered, interested only in the relationship of western men to the Orient, it is an inadequate framework to fully understand and analyse western women's discourses about the Orient. For instance, women's Orientalism in these romance novels invert the traditional East-West/feminine-masculine binary because the western world and western men are often portrayed as over-civilised and effete, whereas the Maghreb and Middle East and the men from this region are ultimately superior specimens of 'alpha' manhood, especially once they have been westernised and made assimilable into multicultural American society. The 'inferiority' of Arab/Muslim culture is by no means taken for granted in these novels; western individualism resulting in isolation, loneliness or anomie fares badly in comparison to the cohesiveness of the Arab/Muslim family with its traditional structure and strong family ties (Teo, 2012). The genre of romance also subverts the establishment of clear-cut cultural and racial or ethnic differences because: (i) the narrative arc

works towards rapprochement and romantic love which overcome these differences (Taylor, 2007), and (ii) some historical romances set in the Orient take pains to point out the similarities between early modern western and Oriental cultures, particularly where the restriction of women's freedom was concerned (Teo, 2012). It is certainly true that women's employment of Orientalism in sheik romance novels perpetuates stereotypes of the Middle East—particularly the oppression of Arab/Muslim women and governments characterised by despotism (whether brutal or benevolent) rather than democracy—that dovetail with, for example, the claim that the war on terror is also a war to liberate Arab/Muslim women (Bhattacharyya, 2008). However, the subgenre has also served as a vehicle for American women to argue against racism and to voice (admittedly mild) criticism of American foreign policy and the effects of the War on Terror on Arab-Americans (Teo, 2012, chap. 8).

Saidian critiques of the proliferation of Orientalism in American political and cultural discourse are still relevant today. We still need scholarship that identifies the ongoing perpetuation of negative stereotypes of Arabs/Muslims and that exposes these as a monolithic construct that does little to aid understanding of the different groups in the Middle East and North Africa: their social, cultural, economic and political difficulties and achievements; the various forms of conflicts, insurgencies, and terrorism; and the ambivalence towards the United States—the liking for American popular culture and the loathing of American foreign policy. However, analyses of Orientalism in American popular culture that simply collate negative images of Arabs/Muslims and connect these to Americans' support for the U.S. government's foreign policies, American neo-imperialism or discrimination and hate crimes against Arab-Americans fail to account for the complex ways in which discourses of Orientalism have shaped American society and culture. Post-Saidian studies of American Orientalism have shown that it was never simply an offshoot of European Orientalism (even if European Orientalism could be reduced to a single set of ideas or discourse, which it cannot). From the start, American Orientalism was different because its 'others' were internal: black Americans, and Native Americans who, as we have seen, were Orientalised in an attempt to make sense of them, and then displace them. The Orientalising of the American landscape served the same purposes of rationalising imperial expansion in the American continent as it did for European powers in North Africa and the Middle East. However, biblical Orientalism also helped Americans to differentiate themselves as a Chosen People in a new Holy Land, while 'Arabian Nights' fantasies increasingly served to highlight Americans' discontent with mainstream Protestant American society and culture. Commodity Orientalism allowed Americans to experiment with new gendered and sexual identities through the consumption of Oriental fashions and fads in popular culture. Orientalist discourses could even serve as critiques of American culture and neo-imperialist foreign policy, even as they wittingly or unwittingly affirmed the strength of this culture and provided support for American interventions in the Middle East.

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BOOK REVIEW

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Deleuzian Encounters: Studies in Contemporary Social Issues is a collection of essays exploring the application of the work of postmodern French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) to contemporary social, political, cultural and philosophical issues. Deleuze's philosophy, Paul Patton reminds us in his excellent piece, is not to be pinned down; it is to be used. Deleuze himself, in an oft-referenced moment, said theory is "exactly like a box of tools" (in Foucault 1977: 207). In many ways, this sentiment is the catch-cry of this collection, which puts Deleuzian thought to work in a diverse range of fields and practices. The book is divided into four parts of four chapters each: Politics Beyond Identity; Ethico-Aesthetics; Socio-Spatiality; and Global Schizophrenia, each representing a particular Deleuzian 'project'.

Deleuze himself always denied his work was systematic, preferring to think of it as a series of encounters, and this collection acknowledges this from the outset. Given the complexity of Deleuze's work, this is a considerable strength of this collection, which uses the four parts to explore particular encounters rather than attempting to reveal a 'whole' in his thought. It is clear in its intent—to explore applications of Deleuze in contemporary socio-cultural and political settings, rather than to interrogate the historical-philosophical lineage of his thought, or critique the concepts. The essays take up his creative philosophy—the critique of negativity, denial of interiority and denunciation of power—and puts it to work. This is not to say that the collection does not engage critically with some of the more difficult Deleuzian concepts. It is not 'theory-shopping', as some Anglo-American Deleuzian commentators were accused of by Jones & Roffe in a recent exploration of the lineage of Deleuze's work (2009: 2). There are numerous chapters in this collection that attempt to think through some difficult Deleuzian concepts. Flaxman on non-being; Roffe himself on dividuality; and Manning on

sensing, are all examples of a sincere and sustained engagement with denser aspects of Deleuze's work.

Part One, Politics Beyond Identity, attends to Deleuze's critique of identity politics. For Deleuze, identity is fluid, partial, becoming, and constituted via processes that are beyond the individual. Identity politics (played out along gender, sexuality, race or religious lines, for example) are therefore restrictive of a body's capacity for change. The four chapters in this part explore a range of interpretations of this idea. Flaxman presents a conception of non-being as based in positivity. Although non-being is not a central tenure of Deleuze's work, Flaxman traces its appearance from *Difference and Repetition* to *What is Philosophy*, demonstrating how the concept be used to can avoid binary thinking. Indeed, much of the work across *Deleuzian Encounters* as a whole is devoted to avoiding such binaries. Mussawir's exploration of inter-sexuality, through the example of 'Alex', an Australian child who went to court to fight for the right to begin hormone treatments to transition from his female body to what he felt was his natural male one, explores the blurring of the male/female binary.

Part Two, Ethico-Aesthetics, provides examples of Deleuze's thinking on ethics, via aesthetic practices. For Deleuze (and his collaborator Guattari), ethics is bound to a body's capacity to act, which they deem its affect. The ability to (re)constitute one's self by 'actualising' different capacities of the body is critical to ethical practice. These processes are aesthetic. A question at the heart of their thinking, and most of the chapters that constitute this part, therefore, is 'what can a body do?' (Deleuze & Guattari 1988). This question is explored through several examples; Hickey-Moody via the *Restless* dance theatre, which includes physically and intellectually disabled dancers in experimental composition; Albrecht-Crane & Daryl Slack on the potential of a 'pedagogy of affect'; Manning on a politics of touch; and Coleman on the implication of affect in politics, through an exploration of the ways in which terrorism is conceived.

Part Three, Socio-Spatiality, deals with Deleuze's interpretation of space, and its impact on subjective and social phenomena. The Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts of smooth and striated space are brought to bear on a number of socio-political issues, such as eco-tourism (Halsey), drug use in urban Melbourne (Malins), Australia's processing of refugees (Frichot), and the 'revival' of ritual activities in China (Dean & Lamarre). Each of these chapters also deals significantly with the way the body interacts with and is constituted by spatiality. For Deleuze, space is not an empty shell to be populated with objects. Rather, it is dynamically constituted by multiple forces interacting with each other. It can be both smooth (incorporating the intensity of subjective experience) or striated (regulated, or to use Deleuze's terminology, molar). These different kinds of spatiality manifest subjectivities in different ways, and are modulated by these subjectivities. Malins' chapter in particular highlights the way in which the folding of bodies into spatiality constitutes particular subjectivities through her example of drug-users' use of urban space.

In Part Four, Global Schizophrenia, the four chapters explore the use of Deleuzian theory in political discourse. Although it has been said by some critics that Deleuze's work lacks a politics (see for example Badiou 2000), the contributing authors to this part demonstrate ways in which his thought can be used to understand political events in new and arguably more ethical, ways.

There are diverse examples of this in this final part. Bignall argues for the application of Deleuze's productive understanding of difference to the process Reconciliation in Australia; May draws out Deleuze's use of scholars like Prigogine and Stengers in his later work to understand the way in which two very different Palestinian intifadas came about; Papadopoulos & Tsianos apply the idea of becoming to migratory patterns; and Chesters provides a reading of 'alter-globalisation' movements via Deleuze's work dealing with intensive virtual structuration to propose that so-called 'anti-globalisation' movements are not oppositional to globalisation, but rather offer an alternate structure of capital.

All-in-all, this collection of essays is insightful, accessible, and relevant, filled with critical and articulate work from leading scholars of Deleuze. There is an increasing appetite for Deleuze in a growing number of fields, and *Deleuzian Encounters* provides good examples of Deleuzian analysis that avoids the trap of 'theory-shopping' that liberal and uncritical applications of Deleuze's work based on early translations has been accused of. This collection will be of interest to anyone working in the social sciences, particularly practice-based fields, whether previous readers of Deleuze or not.

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