

GÜNTER H. LENZ

## Irreconcilabilities and Transgressions: Edward W. Said's Idea of a Wordly Criticism – An Introduction

### I.

*Orientalism*, begun by Edward W. Said after the Six Days War of 1967 and published in 1978, is a study that combines Foucault's analysis of knowledge and power with Gramsci's reflections on the workings of hegemony. It is a study of the construction of the "Orient" as Europe's "Other," of a discursive regime that, at the same time, is "an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture" (Said 1978, 2). Said's book met with a lot of polemical criticism, but was crucial for a critique of Eurocentrism in the humanities and social sciences and for the development of postcolonial criticism in the United States and other parts of the West.

The special issue of *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, "Between Worlds: The Legacy of Edward W. Said," is mainly based on a workshop on the genealogy of *Orientalism* and its impact on American Studies organized for the annual meeting of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Amerikastudien* at Mannheim in June 2004. I would like to make some introductory remarks on the scope and the direction of Said's work and begin by taking up a sentence by Said himself at the beginning of his essay "Orientalism Reconsidered" (1985) which will structure my observations (for a monographical essay on Said's work until 1990 see Lenz 1991). Said argues that he will use his essay to reflect critically on his book *Orientalism* in the wider context of four important general issues:

- 1) "the representation of other cultures, societies, histories,"
- 2) "the relationship between power and knowledge,"
- 3) "the role of the intellectual," and
- 4) "the methodological questions that have to do with the relationships between different kinds of texts, between texts and contexts, between text and history" (Said 2000, 198).

Let me refer to a few of Said's crucial ideas on these four dimensions of his work.

*The representation of other cultures, societies, histories:* In his critique of anthropology's representation of other cultures, "Representing the Colonized: Anthro-

pology's Interlocutors" (1988), Said points to the history of imperialism, the imperial context and contest, as "the true defining horizon, and to some extent, the enabling condition, of such otherwise abstract and groundless concepts like 'otherness' and 'difference,'" and he also emphasizes the disruptive force of counter-narratives (cf. Said 2000, 295, 302, 306-7, 312-4). Our relationship to others – "other cultures, other states, other histories, other experiences, traditions, peoples, and destinies" – is a "profoundly perturbed and perturbing question" that forces us to realize that "there is no vantage *outside* the actuality of relationships between cultures, between unequal imperial and non-imperial powers, between different Others" (Said 2000, 306). Said discusses some of the more recent efforts by American anthropologists to explore the strong, though often hidden "relationship between anthropology as an ongoing enterprise and, on the other hand, empire as an ongoing concern" (Said 2000, 307) by self-critically reflecting on the Western ethnocentric bias in constructing "other" cultures as inferior and in writing ethnographical texts (though he does not acknowledge the innovative power of their new ethnographic methods). He also points out that the notion of "the colonized" has expanded considerably to "include women, subjugated and oppressed classes, national minorities, and even marginalized and incorporated academic subspecialties," i.e. that the notion of "cultural difference" or "cultural otherness" has been recognized, in an "anthropology at home," as characterizing U.S. American, Western culture(s) as inherently "hybridized" (Said 2000, 295). But he also emphasizes that this critical awareness is often turned into a new version of an academic "exceptionalist" approach that "fetishizes" and "celebrates" "difference" and "otherness" without taking into account the imperial context in which anthropologists work (302-3). If "orientals, blacks, and other 'natives' made enough noise that they were paid attention to, and asked in, to speak," the intellectual, critical reaction often was to transform the "continuing, protracted, and sustained adversarial resistance [of the native point of view] to the discipline and the praxis of anthropology [...] itself" into an "ethnographic fact" or a "hermeneutic construct." Or it was transformed into a notion of "postmodernism" as an "aesthetic of quotation, nostalgia, and indifferenciation" (Lyotard) that ignored the crisis of modernism and of the "great narratives" of the Enlightenment which "foundered" to a large extent on the "disturbing appearance in Europe of various Others, whose provenance was the imperial domain" (298, 310, 312-3). What Aimé Césaire, C.L.R. James, and Frantz Fanon show us is that the "full situation of postmodernism" forces the European and American metropolis to "think its history *together with* the history of colonies awakening from the cruel stupor and abused immobility of imperial dominion," (314) to analyze the "overlapping territories, intertwined histories" (the title of ch. 1 of Said's *Culture and Imperialism*), the discrepant experiences of Western and non-Western narratives. This also means that the fixed ideas of "settled identity and culturally authorized definition" of a cultural and political "nationalism" have to be abandoned, also by the colonized people in their struggle for liberation (Césaire, Fanon). In the globalizing world of today the old models of understand-

ing and “representing” “other cultures” have to be replaced by a new understanding of the interaction of cultures seen as “permeable,” as complex intercultural flows that meet and clash in multiple encounters and contact zones under conditions of unequal power, as historically constituted and open to change: “Exile, immigration, and the crossing of boundaries and experiences can therefore provide us with new narrative forms or, in John Berger’s phrase, with *other* ways of telling” (315). It was this continuous, and discontinuous, project and quest for new narrative forms, other ways of telling the complex, hybridized and hybridizing, multi-faceted, exploratory stories of “cultures and imperialism” in the contemporary world that over the years led Said again and again to productive contradictions, revisions, extensions, and new beginnings.

*Power and knowledge:* Said further developed and – also spatially, geographically – extended his argument of *Orientalism* in his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). The study is about the complex relationship between imperial ideology and the workings of culture, but also the response and resistance to Western dominance which culminated in the great movement of decolonization all across the Third World. *Culture and Imperialism* particularly focuses on the British empire and the role and workings of “classic” Victorian fiction in England and its imperial world, but it also explores other historical and geographical contexts, including the United States, and the different ways in which “culture” and “empire” interrelate. The scope of “Orientalism” is extended by drawing on European writings on Africa, India, parts of the Far East, Australia, and the Caribbean, and analyzing the anticolonialist movements. Again, Said is fully aware of the complexity, of the dynamics, of the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in the workings of culture and imperialism, of the crucial role culture has played in the history of imperialism, of “culture” as a “sort of theater where various political and ideological causes engage one another,” a “battleground” on which the encounter and clashes of cultures happen and on which cultural differences are often suppressed or displaced in the mechanics of unequal power differentials. Said pursues the different ways in which the cultural terrain and histories of different groups, cultures, or nations co-exist and battle one another in social and cultural discourses and in the cultural performances of the narratives of works of fiction. Responding to the debate about multiculturalism in the U.S. and the complaint about the “disuniting of America” (Arthur Schlesinger), Said addresses the specific quality of American culture and society, emphasizing that “American identity is too varied to be a unitary and homogenous thing,” that

the United States contains so many histories, many of them now clamoring for attention, [that it] is by no means to be suddenly feared since many of them were always there, and out of them *an* American society and politics (and even a style of historical writing) were in fact created. (Said 1993, xxv-xxvi)

Yet, Said does not claim something like an “American exceptionalism” of cultural difference(s), but takes the United States as a particularly challenging case study of the crucial insight that “because of empire [and one would now add,

globalization], all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogenous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic" (xxv; cf. Said 1993, 58 and Said 2000, 587).

Said develops a notion of imperialism as a historical force that "consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale," but also, unfortunately, produced the beliefs in people that "they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, Black, or Western, or Oriental," that they were "purely *one* thing" (Said 1993, 336). Obviously, Said's definitions of the terms "imperialism" and "colonialism" and their applicability to the dynamics of the globalizing (and relocalizing) world at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, as well as his primary focus on the tradition of the European realistic novel and on uncovering the imperial (or subversive) subtexts of great canonical Western texts raise some important questions (Said 1993, 12, 66). Also, even though he increasingly acknowledged the important pioneering work of "feminism or women's studies, black or ethnic studies, socialist and imperialist studies" and referred to literary works of a wider-ranging multicultural American literature or the "disjunctive formations and experiences such as women's history, popular culture, post-colonial and subaltern material," Said's engagement with these literary and critical "other" "voices," especially gender analysis, remained rather intermittent and occasional, his engagement with the wide range of American literatures rather sketchy (Said 2000, 200, 380, 458, 578-9; Said 1994, xvii; see John Carlos Rowe's suggestive essay on Said and American Studies, Rowe 2004). Yet, his firm rejection of all kinds of theoretical systems and dogmas, *including* revolutionary and anticolonialist ones, his fight against separating cultural and literary theorizing from their imperial context and political horizon, even in the name of deconstruction, New Historicism, neo-pragmatism, neo-Marxism, or postcolonialism, and his commitment to the politics of a critical approach that sees historical experiences as dynamic and complex and cultural forms as "hybrid, mixed, impure" have opened up a revisionary understanding of the interrelation of power and knowledge, of modernism and its legacies, of a plurality of different modernities and hybrid, intercultural modernisms (Said 1993, 14, 56, 60, 188-90, 242-5, 303).

*The role of the intellectual:* At the beginning of *Culture and Imperialism* Said points out that the book is written from the position of "an exile," from in-between cultures, by someone who always felt that he "belonged to both worlds [the Arabic and the European], without being completely *of* either one or the other" (Said 1993, xxvi). Said continues the work of a "liberationist anti-imperialism" that sees "Western and non-Western experience as belonging together because they are connected by imperialism," that is energized by an "imaginative, even utopian vision which reconceives emancipatory (as opposed to confining) theory and performance," and that invests "neither in new authorities, doctrines, and encoded orthodoxies, nor in established institutions and causes, but in a particular sort of nomadic, migratory, and anti-narrative energy" (Said 1993, 278-9). *Culture and Imperialism* takes up these theoretical reflections by postcolonial critics such

as Aimé Césaire, C.L.R. James, Frantz Fanon, and Homi Bhabha *as well as* by Theodor W. Adorno and Antonio Gramsci in order to redefine the role of the intellectual in the world of today. For Said, the vocation of the intellectual is oppositional, the commitment as a public intellectual who is not de-fined by an ideological position of whatever kind, but self-reflexive, self-critical, and radically exploratory, never “at home.” In his many years of an active involvement in the cause of the Palestinians and in his extensive publications on “the question of Palestine” and the “struggle for Palestinian self-determination” (to take up the titles of two of his books), he brought all his intellectual power to the complicated issues, controversies, and activities, always responding to the changing situation, never sticking to ideological programs or positions. For him, as a Palestinian born in Jerusalem, who grew up in Egypt and lived in the United States since 1951, the experience and the positioning of *exile* is paradigmatic for the critical intellectual. “Exile,” a sense of homelessness, of displacement, of diaspora, for Said, is, on the one hand, a “painful,” terrible experience, “inevitably secular and unbearably historical,” a characteristic situation in our age of refugees, displaced persons, and mass migration (Said 2000: 174). If life in/as exile, on the other hand, is “nomadic, decentered, contrapuntal,” as he puts it in his “Reflections on Exile” (1984), it also, drawing on Theodor W. Adorno’s *Minima Moralia*, permits a “plurality of vision [that] gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is *contrapuntal*” and manifests itself in “contrapuntal juxtapositions,” in which the unsettling force erupts anew (Said 2000, 186).

*Text – intertextuality – context – history*: Said argues for what he calls “secular criticism” and the form of the essay as a “radically skeptical form” for analyzing both the colonial encounters and postcolonial interrelationships as well as the plurality of minority and border discourses in the United States. In *Culture and Imperialism*, he describes this form of criticism as *contrapuntal criticism*, a radically committed *and* open form of discourse that works out “what might be called a decentered consciousness, not less reflective and critical for being decentered, for the most part non- and in some cases anti-totalizing and anti-systematic” (Said 2000, 214). Said’s oppositional criticism is permeated and empowered by his ideal of producing “noncoercive knowledge [...] in the interests of human freedom,” “on behalf of those alternative acts and alternative intentions whose advancement is a fundamental human and intellectual obligation” (Said 1983, 29-30). It is a form of exploratory counter-knowledge, an “investigative, open analysis,” placed in “the context of problems such as globalization, violence, the politics of identity, the end of the Cold War,” that realizes that it cannot “reconcile” the “antinomies” in any kind of new synthesis (Said 2000, 214; Said in Bayoumi and Rubin 2000, 436). Instead, the intellectual has to confront them, “make them more apparent,” to “clarify and dramatize the irreconcilabilities of a particular situation” or experience (Said in Bayoumi and Rubin 2000, 437). As in his use of the term “contrapuntal criticism,” Said here explicitly

draws on “exiled” Theodor W. Adorno’s philosophy of music and his “negative dialectics,” on Adorno’s suggestive analysis of Schoenberg’s ascetic and “intransigent” logic of “new music,” on his “notion of tension, of highlighting and dramatizing what I call irreconcilabilities.” Said concludes: “[I]t seems to me that the role of the intellectual is to give these situations a voice, to try to articulate them, try to clarify them so that one knows on what ground one is treading” (Said in Bayoumi and Rubin 2000, 437-8; on Adorno see Said 1994, 54-9).

Thus I think the legacy and provocation of Said’s work, in spite of, or because of, the shortcomings, contradictions, and gaps in his arguments, lies in the radical questioning, articulation, and openness for revision in his critical and theoretical thinking as well as in his political commitment. In his essay “Traveling Theory Reconsidered” (1994), he acknowledges his earlier failure to realize that a radical theory need not be “domesticated” when it travels, but that it can *also* attain new power as radical critique in different contexts. That is to say, theory as a fixed body of analytical concepts and methods should be supervised by a “critical consciousness,” a sort of “spatial sense [...] for locating or situating theory,” a “resistance” to “theory,” an awareness that is always dialogical, changing, transgressive, never complete (Said 1983, 241; Said 2000, 451; see my reflections on the “dialectics of international American Culture Studies” in Lenz 1999). Said writes: “The work of theory, criticism, demystification, deconsecration, and decentralization” which intellectuals like Lukács, Adorno, or Fanon imply

is never finished. The point of theory therefore is to travel, always to move beyond its confinements, to emigrate, to remain in a sense in exile. Adorno and Fanon exemplify this profound restlessness [...]. (Said 2000, 451)

In his last book, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004), Said confirms this notion of a radical humanism that is “a process of unending disclosure, discovery, self-criticism, and liberation” and that is always “radically incomplete, insufficient, provisional, disputable and arguable” (Said 2004, 12, 21-2).

## II.

The following essays are conceived as critical studies of major aspects and problematics of Said’s work that reconsider some of the crucial concepts of his career and set out to revise and extend his critical thinking in facing the different challenges of the globalizing world at the beginning of the new century. In her essay, “The Literary Presence of Atlantic Colonialism as Notation and Counterpoint,” Gesa Mackenthun takes up two analytical concepts Edward W. Said elaborates in his seminal book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) to uncover and discuss the often hidden or displaced presence of colonialism and empire in antebellum American literary texts. She suggests that “geographical notions,” “space,” and the “geographic dimensions of plot” played a much more crucial role in American culture and literature than in the works of British literature of the 18th and 19th centuries analyzed by Said. Through “strategies of topographical displacement” of

American territorial engagements before the Civil War, American fiction often generated a national narrative that “disarticulat[ed] the actual links between American colonial (Atlantic) and imperial (continental, Pacific) activities.” Other texts, however, dramatized and critiqued these territorial engagements, the American involvement in slavery, in the slave trade, and in imperialist expansion more explicitly. Said’s critical strategy of a comparative, “contrapuntal” reading of literary texts helps to reveal the hidden “colonialist” and “imperial” subtexts in works of American literature in pursuing their complex interplay of different voices. Mackenthun emphasizes the close interrelationship in Said’s approach between the negotiations of empire in the literary works he discusses and their aesthetic complexity as well as his emphasis on the changing “structure of location and geographical reference” of literary theory. In her readings of 18th and 19th century American fiction, she shows, taking up and “transculturating” transnational critical approaches pursued in their dynamics and their ambiguities by recent postcolonialist criticism, how the strategies of “disarticulations of locations and geographies beyond the national and continental boundaries of North America” work. In her reflections on Said’s concept of “counterpoint” and “contrapuntal reading,” Mackenthun explores its genealogy in musical theory (Adorno) and its potential as well as its limitations for a critical, “worldly” reading of American literature that is aware of the power differential and the inequality of voices in the literary documents of a colonizing and imperial world. Whereas she finds the metaphor of “counterpoint” less useful as a *positive* description of the geographical and ideological ambivalence of colonial texts and cultures and of the “tensions, ruptures, inequalities, and dissonances created by the colonial situation,” she acknowledges its powerful analytical potential as a *critical perspective*, a “processual” and “comparative” notion that dramatizes the *critical, counterhegemonic activity* of retrieving the imperial subtext of “classic” Western novels in a “decolonizing critique” as well as the dialectic of texts that expose their contrapuntal qualities. Drawing on Bakhtin’s distinction between different forms of “hybridity” of/in texts and more recent versions of postcolonialist criticism, Mackenthun concludes by taking up Said’s demand to “locate” and “situate” theory in “critical consciousness” and the critic in the “awareness [...] that no system or theory exhausts the situation out of which it emerges or to which it is transported.” She reclaims the challenge that his open, self-critical “humanism” poses through the critical reflection of the intellectual as an “exile, an unhoused figure who ‘will not make the adjustment, preferring instead to remain outside the mainstream, unaccommodated, uncoopted, resistant.’”

Susan Winnett, in her essay “Writing in Place: Edward Said’s Constructions of Exile,” analyzes “certain motifs in Said’s autobiographical self-presentation that might illuminate the work that he needs the term ‘exile’ to perform in his thinking.” For Said “homelessness” already “begins at home; the counterpoint of all-encompassing love and precipitous rejection that constitutes his mother’s relation to him gives him both the experience of and longing for a ‘safe haven’ and the knowledge of its impermanence.” His experience of ‘exile’ “began *within* his

relation to his mother,” whereas the “distancing enforced by his father” provided the “impetus for the intellectual project devoted to the study of exile and homelessness that bears the name ‘Edward Said.’” The examination of *Out of Place* shows an ambivalence that permeates the meaning of “exile” that is constructed in Said’s work. This exile needed “to be both brutally real and figurative” and was employed by Said, Winnett points out, as “a metaphorical condition” to construct a “genealogy of intellectuals that includes himself.” It may be difficult to challenge Said’s notion of the “‘intellectual as outsider,’ but his blurring of the distinction between real exile and the ‘metaphoric sense’ that he ends up foregrounding is both troubling and misleading.” Winnett insists that “[t]here is a difference between a restless, unsettling, unaccommodating exile and a restless, unsettling, unaccommodating intellectual misfit.” Although Said himself has objected to the use of exile as a metaphor for general alienation and estrangement, his life and work provide ample evidence of the “seductiveness of such blurred distinctions” and can be seen as a perpetuation of “a romantic appropriation of the pathos of exile for forms of intellectual alienation – his own included – that demand more rigorous examination.”

Winnett elaborates some implications of these ambivalences in Said’s use of the concept of exile in a critical reassessment of his “contrapuntal reading” of *Mansfield Park* that, as he writes in *Culture and Imperialism*, is to interrogate “positive notions of home, of a nation and its language, of proper order, good behavior, moral values” (Said 1993, 81). But Said’s contrapuntal reading, in its “blindness” to the constructions of “gender,” fails to realize Jane Austen’s “meta-language of dissent.” Following a number of feminist critiques of the novel, Winnett argues that it can be read, in contrast to Said’s analysis, as

a demonstration more devastating than a more direct critique of the force of empty forms, of the ability of a dominant ideology to determine the course of affairs, even those affairs intent on exposing and resisting it.

In particular, she focuses on the similarities between Fanny Price’s strategies in moving from an exile status into a position that endows her with social power within the community of *Mansfield Park* and Said’s ambivalent positioning towards the cultural production of Western civilization, whose inherent complicity with the structure of imperialism he criticizes from an ‘exilic’ point of view while cherishing its aesthetic quality as one of its most influential academic representatives. Despite Said’s warnings against an uncritical usage of the notion of exile,

[i]t is difficult to escape the suspicion that Said’s investment in a ‘modern culture’ of whose historical constitution he is bitterly critical necessitates this ambivalent construction of exile: he can only partake of this culture to the extent he requires if he declares himself essentially in exile from it.

Alfred Hornung, in his essay “Out of Place: Extraterritorial Existence and Autobiography,” likewise focuses on Said’s self-declared status as an intellectual exile in his autobiography *Out of Place* (1999) and reads it in conjunction with autobiographical texts by two other postcolonial authors, Michelle Cliff and Feridun Zaimoglu. He characterizes these texts as very different versions of

“extraterritorial autobiographies” in postcolonial times that “seem to request a bicultural context for the construction of a national frame of reference in the same way in which it seems to require a hybrid literary form.” Hornung argues that Said’s gesture of imaginatively locating himself beyond the confines of any national identity, claiming an ‘exilic’ identity instead, “serves to accentuate the uncertain national status of many autobiographers as well as the extraterritorial space of the genre of autobiography.” Like Michelle Cliff’s autobiographical novels *Abeng* (1984) and *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987), Said’s autobiography *Out of Place* recollectively formulates a postcolonial identity that also posits a challenge to conventional literary forms: “Generic and geographical border crossings form the basis of the autobiographical enterprise and represent definitory features of major autobiographical texts.” Hornung suggests the term “extra-territorial” for assessing the texts of Said, Cliff, and the German-Turkish writer Feridun Zaimoglu whose creative efforts, in his books *Kanak Sprak* (1995) and *Kopf und Kragen* (2001), to “elevate the language of German Turkish people to a literary status” and to contribute to a reconceptualization of German society as an increasingly multiethnic and multicultural society he discusses at the end of his paper. In focusing on Cliff, Hornung points out the crucial significance of memory and of “geographical locations” as “sites of memory which exist in lieu of and besides the historiography of the colonizers.” The explicit spatial organization of Cliff’s texts, which reconfigures the colonial world as a “triangulated” postcolonial space, is then set off against Said’s quite different extraterritorial self-positioning and his discovery of an Arab identity between the twin poles of the foundation of Israel and the Six Days War of 1967. It is this imagined extraterritoriality, Hornung argues, which explains Said’s emphasis on the cultural work of music which, “next to the motif of displacement [...] represents a sort of a leit-motif in *Out of Place*.” Referring to Said’s dissertation on Conrad, Hornung concludes that already this early text displays the major themes – home, exile, geography – that would stay with Said throughout his intellectual life:

From the perspective of his autobiography, which now after his death appears to be his legacy, all of his critical work has an autobiographical ring to it. In the Conradian sense, autobiography is the secret sharer of his life work. When he characterizes the work of Western orientalis in *Orientalism* as lacking representative quality and being defined by exteriority, this also seems to pertain to his own status of extraterritoriality.

Uwe Schulenberg’s essay, “Humanistic Criticism, Prophetic Pragmatism, and the Question of Antifoundationalism – Remarks on Edward Said and Cornel West,” addresses the question how a “worldly” and “oppositional criticism” can be conceived in our present time, how the antifoundationalist and antiessentialist thrust in American neopragmatism can be transformed from a questionable move “against theory” into a viable, radical cultural criticism. Schulenberg sees Said’s work as a crucial contribution to this worldly, oppositional criticism and black philosopher Cornel West’s “prophetic pragmatism” as its extension that mediates different theoretical and political discourses on behalf of a multicultural creative democracy. Schulenberg’s notion of an “antifoundationalist and anti-

essentialist worldly and oppositional leftist criticism” draws on Said’s strong concern for defining the function of criticism, a radically self-critical humanism, and the worldliness of the public intellectual, an antidogmatic, open philosophical approach he characterizes as “almost Adornian” in its “vigor and tension-ridden complexity.” In pointing out the differences between theory and critical consciousness, “Said argues that the latter is synonymous with an awareness of the resistances to theory.” Critical consciousness radically historicizes and situates theory and opens it up toward historical reality and contingency, which always means to the articulation of resistance and the desire for change. Said’s commitment to the concepts of resistance, hope, and social change is crucial within a “dialogical, nondogmatic, and dialectical theoretical framework” that situates literary texts and worldly criticism in the force-field of the contexts from which they arose and the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted, pursuing the “social goals [of] uncoercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom.” Cornel West’s “prophetic pragmatism” envisions a “post-universalist cosmopolitanism” that is “critique *and* praxis, theory *and* practice, rhetoric *and* struggle or resistance,” as Schulenberg puts it, an “attempt to create adequate mediations between these poles.” In contrast to Rorty’s neopragmatism, it strives to have political, ethical, and social consequences and to connect with “black, feminist, single-issue, and third-world oppositional social movements.” As West writes, these specifically American processes of “mediation” happen in a “discursive space” which is “a *dramatic site* of dialogical contestations and clashing narratives over which blood, sweat, and tears flow.” Its subversive worldliness, its dialogical, experimental, nondogmatic quality that keeps it open to changes is permeated by a “commitment to polyphonic inquiry and improvisational conversation,” to a “self-styled allegiance to American pragmatism and American jazz,” as West has characterized it, that organizes his texts in their “jazz-like quality [of] the polyphony of voices,” all of which strive, as Schulenberg puts it, “after the goal of a multiracial creative democracy.”

Holger Rossow, in his essay “Orientalism, Globalism and the Possibility of Alternative Systems of Representation,” pursues the question in how far and in which way Said’s concepts of Orientalism and imperialism and his methodological framework can be used to grasp and analyze the contemporary processes of globalization and the uses and functions of the ideological construct of globalism. Following major theorists of “globalization,” Rossow distinguishes between the “materially founded relations of power and domination” of globalization and globalism as a “culturally constructed discourse,” as a complex “hegemonic discourse” that “claims to provide a description and an explanation for the current processes and phenomena commonly subsumed under the term “globalization.” Globalism is a (neoliberal) discourse that conceals the relations of power and domination and claims that the processes of globalization have to be seen as unavoidable, quasi-natural, agentless processes in the economy and in communication that have long-term positive effects.

Rossov's paper focuses on those aspects of Said's work that might help provide a better understanding of the workings and the implications of the discourses of globalism and envision and produce "alternative systems of representation." He shows that Said's notions of Orientalism and imperialism can illuminate the "overlapping territories" of "intertwined histories," their continuities with the processes of globalization and the discourse of globalism, but that they fail to account for their new and specific aspects in the contemporary world. Rossov points out that Said corrected the geographic limitations of *Orientalism* in his book *Culture and Imperialism* by extending the analysis to describe the general pattern of adversarial relationships between the modern metropolitan West and the "Orient," but he argues that Said fails to take into account that globalism as a hegemonic discourse is "based on discursive inclusivity and not exclusion." Also, Said's extension of the notion of imperialism or neocolonialism does not enable us to grasp the repercussions of the impact of today's major non-state actors, the IMF, the World Bank, etc. Still, Said's reflections on the problems of representation, the role of the critical, oppositional intellectual, the question of the (re-)constitution of knowledges and the perspectives and modes of *alternative* systems of representation provide productive challenges for analyzing the contradictory and complex dynamic of globalization and its critical discourses. Said's awareness of the problematics involved in representation, in representing others and the ideological character of knowledge production can enable us to understand the complex and highly contradictory processes of globalization and to project alternative, "more inclusive, participatory, collaborative and non-coercive knowledges," as Rossov puts it. Said's more recent work rearticulates the role of the "secular," oppositional intellectual in the contemporary world, but he leaves it to us to work out more concretely what the sources and the strategies of knowledge production and political involvement in achieving more participatory, multicultural, and equitable social and cultural structures in the globalizing world of today could be.

Finally, Gisela Welz, in her essay "Transnational Cultures and Multiple Modernities – Anthropology's Encounter with Globalization," engages the concept of the "pluralization of modernities," its potential for interdisciplinary research agendas, and its methodological consequences and repercussions. She analyzes the implications of Said's critique of anthropology in his essay "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors" (1989) for redefining the Western project of modernity, the revisionary insights of recent anthropological work on the cultural dimensions of globalization, and the objectives and the methods of a future anthropology. Said's book *Orientalism* had a powerful impact on anthropologists; it made them aware of the intricate interrelations of power and knowledge and of the complicity of their discipline with colonialism and imperialism and the project of "othering" non-Western cultures as "primitive," different in the negative sense, and lagging behind Europe and America in their development towards "modernity." When, during the 1990s, globalization became a central topic of anthropologists' research agenda, they found that the common notion

that it was a normative, universal process of “modernization” that inevitably leads to an increasing homogenization of the world, is fundamentally mistaken, that it is the expression of a shortcircuited, reductive, ideological Western ethnocentrism. Instead, they showed that “globalization” comprises a *plurality* of (de-centered) versions and processes of “modernity” and “modernization,” a plurality of different processes of transculturation and relocalization of the “worldwide diffusion of commodities, technologies and media products, as well as the increase of immigration and other forms of transnational mobility.” Welz shows how the turning away from established patterns of doing fieldwork and writing ethnography and the critical engagement of anthropology with these challenges of globalization and of transnational processes of migratory individuals, kinship groups, or social movements led to important insights into the *increasing cultural diversity* all over the world that results from the various processes of globalization: “The globalization of modernity has produced both sameness and difference; uniformisation and differentiation are evolving side by side.” The global cultural economy, as Arjun Appadurai and other scholars have pointed out, links globalization with modernity and projects a new pluralized, decentered social theory of modernity that reconstitutes anthropology as an “anthropology of modernity,” beyond the traditional study of other cultures as relics of pre-modern traditions. Welz reads these complex, hybridizing, and discontinuous processes of the “globalization of modernity” as showing that “modernization and globalization are but two sides of the same coin.” Talking of multiple, plural, or alternative modernities acknowledges the fact that in each society there is a “social and discursive space in which the relationship between modernity and tradition is reconfigured” (quoting Bruce Knauft). If the notion of multiple modernities means to “explore the possibility of a heterogeneous account of the emergence of colonial modernity,” to look at the local sights “where the modern is realized and continually translated, in its articulation with and production of the non-modern” (quoting Timothy Mitchell), anthropologists must not, however, fall into the trap of merely celebrating the “hybridity” that is generated by local-global encounters, as this would reconfirm the older habit of “essentializing non-Western cultures as ‘others.’” Instead, anthropologists must “historicize and cross-culturally compare their very own versions of modernity,” a project that can be seen as redefining Said’s challenge of exploring the complex and demanding relationship between “anthropology as an ongoing enterprise and [...] empire as an ongoing concern.”

### Works Cited

- Bayoumi, Moustafa and Andrew Rubin (2000). “An Interview with Edward W. Said.” Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin, eds. *The Edward W. Said Reader*. New York: Vintage: 419-44.
- Lenz, Günter H. (1991). “Edward W. Said.” Hartmut Heuermann and Bernd-Peter Lange, eds. *Contemporaries in Cultural Criticism*. Frankfurt/Main et al.: Peter Lang, 443-70.

- (1999). "Toward a Dialogics of International American Culture Studies: Transnationality, Border Discourses, and Public Culture(s)." *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 44.1, 5-23.
- Rowe, John Carlos (2004). "Edward Said and American Studies." *American Quarterly* 56.1, 33-47.
- Said, Edward W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.
- (1983). *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- (1984). "Reflections on Exile." *Granta* 13, 159-72.
- (1985). "Orientalism Reconsidered." *Cultural Critique* 1, 89-107.
- (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf.
- (1994). *Representations of the Intellectual*. New York: Pantheon.
- (1999). *Out of Place – A Memoir*. New York: Knopf.
- (2000). *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- (2004). *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Said, Edward W. Orientalism, 1. East " Study and teaching." To speak of Orientalism therefore is to speak mainly, although not exclusively, of a British and French cultural enterprise a project whose dimensions take in such disparate realms as the imagination itself, the whole of India and the Levant, the Biblical texts and the Biblical lands, the spice trade, colonial armies and a long tradition of colonial administrators, a formidable scholarly corpus, innumerable." Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other.