

# Notes

## INTRODUCTION EDWARD SAID AND THE POLITICS OF SUBJECTIVITY

1. Abbreviated hereafter as *Beginnings*.
2. Abbreviated hereafter as *Place*.
3. Donald Hall adds: "Subjectivity as a critical concept invites us to consider the question of how and from where identity arises, to what extent it is understandable, and to what degree it is something over which we have any measure of influence or control" (3–4).
4. Abbreviated hereafter as *Orientalism*.
5. Said never wanted to be known as a postcolonialist. There is not a single book of Said where the term "postcolonial" appears even in the index!
6. Abbreviated hereafter as *Imperialism*.
7. "Colonial experience" in Said is a term that has numerous, never straightforward registers. For a discussion on the various dimensions, paradoxes, and contradictions of his colonial experience, see Chapter 3.
8. See Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology*: "If we consider, according to the axial proposition of this essay, that there is nothing outside the text. . . ." (163).
9. See Hussein, "A Copernican Revolution" (90).
10. As Nick Mansfield observes, "subjectivity is primarily an experience, and remains permanently open to inconsistency, contradiction and unself-consciousness" (6). In a sense, the major corpus of Said's writings stem from his colonial experience as an Oriental subject.
11. See Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion on Said's interface with Marxist thinkers.
12. See an elaborate discussion on contrapuntal perspective in Chapter 2.
13. Abbreviated hereafter as *Reflections*.
14. Abbreviated hereafter as *Last Sky*.
15. Abbreviated hereafter as *Representations*, *Humanism*, and *World*, respectively.

## 1 ORIENT, OCCIDENT, AND THE CONSTITUTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

1. Sabrey Hafez observes: “The disastrous Arab defeat of 1967 and the encounter with Ibrahim Abu-Lughod around the same time played a decisive role in Edward Said’s intellectual re-orientation toward his Arab identity and culture. Abu-Lughod recruited him to the Association of Arab American University Graduates (AAUG) and, at the height of the anti-Arab media frenzy in 1968, asked him to write an article about the Arab character in English literature for a special issue of the *Arab World* that he was editing” (80). Thus, he wrote “The Arab Portrayed” that looked at the image of the Arab in the media, popular literature, and cultural representations.
2. Said was one of the first critics who recognized the epistemic violence implicit in the act of comparison. While insisting on producing noncoercive forms of knowledge system, he acts as a true “comparatist” in the most progressive and democratic sense of the term.
3. See Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* 181.
4. Said’s use of Foucault and his subsequent disengagement with him will be discussed in Chapter 5. For a comprehensive analysis of the theme of origins in *Orientalism* with reference to Foucault, see Bhatnagar 3–22.
5. Hegemony tends to make the subaltern “accept inequality and oppression as natural and unchangeable” (Simon 26). See Chapter 5 for a further discussion on Gramscian hegemony and Said’s use of it.
6. As Neil Lazarus opines: “Inasmuch as Said’s own commitments to humanism, enlightenment, and what Jürgen Habermas has influentially dubbed ‘the philosophical discourse of modernity’ never wavered, there was always a disjuncture between his work and the assumptions of most of his postcolonialists (and, most generally, his ‘post’- theoretical) readers and interlocutors. . . . The disjuncture between Said and his ‘post’-theoretical readers is discernible in *Orientalism* also” (*The Postcolonial Unconscious* 187).
7. Emphasis mine.
8. It is interesting to note that the English tried out the same inventory of things on the Irish and Scots, where the English first learned to be colonizers. It’s a pattern rarely noticed in colonial thought, partly because it’s hidden behind the term “British.”
9. See Robert T. Tally Jr. ed. *The Geocritical Legacies of Edward W. Said* for a better discussion: In his introductory chapter, Tally Jr. observes: “Edward W. Said represents an important figure in the development of spatially oriented cultural criticism. Although it would be misleading and anachronistic to characterize him as a geocritic, Said remains a powerful precursor whose writings on a vast range of subjects and topoi offer indispensable resources for geocritics and other scholars interested in the relations among spatiality, representations and cultural forms” (“Introduction: The World, the Text, and the Geocritic” 1).

10. If Prophet Mohammed himself is represented as an imposter, one can imagine the fate of the “insignificant,” lay oriental being in the imagination of the West!
11. This has clear resonance with the Frankfurt School critique of instrumental rationality. Said was probably hinting at the instrumentalisation of the orientalist reason practiced by these Orientalists. See Chapter 5 for further discussion on this.
12. Emphasis mine.
13. It was Michel Foucault who introduced the concept of panopticism in his *Discipline and Punish*. He borrows this idea from the diagram of a prison structure (panopticon) drawn by Jeremy Bentham. This prison structure was designed in such a way that only the prison guards could observe the inmates of the prison cells and the prisoners in turn were not in a position to see the guards. However, almost all prisoners would be under the impression that they are being surveilled all the time. Hence, even without the presence of a guard, the automatic functioning of power could be ensured. Almost all disciplinary institutions, according to Foucault, operate in the modern society in this fashion.
14. See Louise Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*. “I shall then suggest that ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: ‘Hey, you there!’” (174).
15. Abbreviated hereafter as *Palestine* and *Dispossession*.
16. “To historians he is unhistorical; to social scientists he conflates theories; to scholars he is unscholarly; to literary theorists he is unreflective and indiscriminate; to Foucauldians he misuses Foucault; to professional Marxists he is anti-revolutionary; to professional conservatives he is a terrorist” (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 74).
17. See Chapter 5 for a further discussion on Aijaz Ahmad’s critique of Said.
18. As William Spanos notes, in *Orientalism* “Said overdetermines the discourse of Orientalism and the discursive / political domination it enabled. Indeed, he says almost nothing about the history of resistance to Western domination, whether theoretical or practical, by the indigenous people of the East (the “writing back” of Albert Memmi, George Antonius, S. H. Atalas, Mohandas Gandhi and Ranajit Guha, for example) or Africa (Frantz Fanon, C. L. R. James, George Padmore, and Aime Cesaire) or the tremendous significance of Sepoy Rebellion of 1859 in India, the Algerian Revolution of 1954–62, and the South African antiapartheid movement in the last decades of twentieth century, to invoke the most obvious of many instances” (*The Legacy of Edward Said* 110).
19. His notions on filiation and affiliation are inextricably linked to his ideas of exile. A more convenient and elaborate discussion on this aspect is available in Chapter 3.

20. However, the pattern set is never as fixed as it appears to be. Said would also recognize significant deviation between the French and the British. He doesn't, for sure, refer to a generic "European" at all.
21. This point is further explained in Chapter 3. For a brilliant analysis of Said's notion on secular criticism, see Aamir Mufti, "Auerbach in Istanbul" 95–125.
22. R. Radhakrishnan makes another pertinent observation that seems relevant here: "It is *not* the case that there is a region called the Orient that dictates the need for a field called Orientalism and an expert called the Orientalist. It is the other way round. It begins with a particular kind of desire for knowledge called Orientalism; and it is this desire that constructs an entire field called Orientalism that remains an unresisting captive of this desire. This foregoing formulation is Said's original contribution in his groundbreaking work *Orientalism (A Said Dictionary 78)*.
23. Said uses the phrase "dangerous to disagree" while referring to Raymond Williams. See *Imperialism 98*.
24. One has to note here the ongoing tendency among some theorists of human development to reject any kind of tradition, place, relationality, or belonging that occurs around the world as claims to "essentialism," which basically means that these claims and assertions are impediments to all forms of Enlightenment progressivism. This would further mean that the heirs of paternalistic directors of human development are still trying to civilize the savages.
25. See Al-Azm, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse" 217–238.
26. Homi Bhabha says: "I cannot read a line of Said's work without being reminded of the salience he gives to the Palestinian situation; and I do not encounter a word of his writings without being made aware of his concern of the human condition" ("Adagio" 374).
27. See Terry Eagleton, *New Statesman* February 13, 2006. He makes this somewhat laudatory remark while reviewing Robert Irwin's *For Lust of Knowing: the Orientalists and their Enemies*.

## 2 THE SUBJECT IN OVERLAPPING TERRITORIES AND INTERTWINED HISTORIES

1. See Aijaz Ahmad's critique of Said in Chapter 1.
2. Alon Confino observes: "the dual relationship between dominance and resistance appears to be one of the leitmotifs of Said's professional and personal life" (185).
3. Said continues: "Arnold believed that culture palliates, if it does not altogether neutralize, the ravages of a modern, aggressive, mercantile, and brutalizing urban existence" (*Imperialism xiii*). See also Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*.

4. See Loomba 178–183.
5. Said's basic assumption on the colonized subjectivity seems to be dependent on Althusser's theory of ideology and subjectivity, to a certain extent. He combines Gramscian notions of hegemony with Althusser's ideology and Foucauldian discourse in his study on Orientalism and Imperialism.
6. See Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. London: Routledge, 2002.
7. See the last part of the first chapter where some of the major criticisms against *Orientalism* are discussed.
8. William Spanos puts it so accurately: "Said's intervention takes the form of a sustained contrapuntal reading of these novels—more specifically, of the 'structure of attitudes' or 'structures of reference' informing their rhetoric about geographic space and historical time. Said reads this cultural history from the perspective of one of imperialism's victims, the outside insider who has educated himself in the history and culture of his adopted Western 'homeland.' By using this sustained inside/outside contrapuntal perspective—his a-partness, as it were—Said intends to demonstrate more than, as he has been commonly assumed to have done, merely the general complicity of the British novel with the British imperial project or the development of this complicity from an unconscious and invisible one (as in the case of Jane Austen) to a conscious and visible one (as in the case of Kipling)" (*The Legacy of Edward Said* 113–114).
9. "Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority—its rules of recognition" (Bhabha, *Location* 114).
10. Chapter one of Said's *Imperialism* is titled "Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories."
11. Abbreviated hereafter as *Late Style*.
12. Tagore was one of the leaders of the Indian freedom movement and an acclaimed poet who won the Nobel Prize for literature from India in 1913.
13. See R. Radhakrishnan's *A Said Dictionary* (143–147) for a comprehensive analysis of what Said means by "voyage in." Radhakrishnan defines it as a "process by which the ex-colonized Third World becomes part of the First World, the metropolitan center. The voyage in begins to deconstruct borders between the worlds of the ex-colonizer and ex-colonized, creating in the process a different cartography of relationality, of distance and proximity, of belonging and non-belonging, of citizens and non-citizens, immigrants, exiles, and a whole range of unassimilable 'others'" (144).
14. See Ashcroft et al. *The Empire Writes Back*.
15. "Edward W. Said has advocated the crossing of boundaries while at the same time abjuring the existence of those very boundaries... [His] regard for nationalist movements, as having progressive and liberatory potential, stands alongside his recognition of the bleaker, more regressive, aspects of nationalism" (Bhabra 1).

16. Being an astute thinker in positioning his critique of nationalism, Said was careful not to give any kind of *carte blanche* approval to any nationalist independence movements.
17. Said is critical of both postmodernists and postcolonialists. However, critics per se have not looked at his aversion and disagreements to certain streams of postmodernism and postcolonialism carefully. Said sees a great Eurocentric bias in postmodernism. See, for example, his “Afterword” to *Orientalism*, for a further discussion.
18. A further discussion on Lukács is available in Chapter 5.
19. See the chapter titled “The Clash of Definitions” in Said’s *Reflections*.
20. See Samuel Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).
21. See Said, “Orientalism Once More.” *Development and Change* 35, no. 5 (2004): 869–879.
22. Lyotard defines that postmodernism is characterized by its “incredulity toward metanarratives” (xxiv). And, Fukuyama’s “end of history” thesis argues that history envisaged by Hegel and Marx as a process moving toward its fulfillment, ends its evolution with the advent of liberal democracy (Fukuyama 1992). Said rejects these two theses in his various writings.

### 3 POLITICS OF EXILE, ACT OF MEMORY, AND RECUPERATION OF THE SUBJECT

1. See Said’s article titled “Permission to Narrate” published in *The London Review of Books*, 6, No. 3 (February 16, 1984). <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v06/n03/edward-said/permission-to-narrate>. According to Nigel Parry, “these three words described what Said felt was most denied to the Palestinians by the international media, the power to communicate their own history to a world hypnotised by a mythological Zionist narrative of an empty Palestine that would serve as a convenient homeland for Jews around the world who had endured centuries of racism, miraculously transformed by their labour from desert to a bountiful Eden.” (See Nigel Parry, “Permission to Narrate: Edward Said, Palestine and the Internet” published in *The Electronic Intifada* September 25, 2003. <<http://electronicintifada.net/content/permission-narrate-edward-said-palestine-andinternet/4789>>).
2. Said wrote his doctoral dissertation on Conrad, which was later published as *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966).
3. Emphasis mine.
4. See Radhakrishnan’s cogent elucidation of Saidian idea of filiation and affiliation: “What is at stake for Said in the affiliative enterprise is the possibility of human home that will be more than just a Jewish or a Palestinian or an

Arab or a Christian or a male or a female or a Eurocentric or an Afrocentric home. That is exactly what Said has in mind when he thinks of filiation as a failed idea and affiliation as compensatory. The entire history of mankind, in so far as it has been an attempt by a dominant group to naturalize and nativize the entire world within its own filiative schemata, has been a sorry history of violence, exploitation, alienation, and colonization. As such, it is a failed idea" (*A Said Dictionary* 3).

5. Here is the relevant part from the "Sixth Thesis on the Philosophy of History:" "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. . . . Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious" (Benjamin *Illuminations* 247).
6. Emphasis mine.
7. See *Reflections* 554–568.
8. "Instead of dodging, denying, or smoothing over the contradictions, entailed in his critical positions, [Said] has opted to confront them and radicalize them" (Hussein, *Criticism* 296).
9. For a full-length study on Said and Arendt, see William Spanos's *Exiles in the City: Hannah Arendt and Edward W. Said in Counterpoint*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012.
10. William Hart in his *Edward Said and the Religious Effects of Culture* claims that he "read[s] Said against the grain, idiosyncratically, by accenting the religious-secular problematic underlying his work" (x).
11. Interestingly, during my email conversation with Professor Kenneth Surin, he pointed out how some of his German friends who knew Adorno reported about him being so appalled by America that his sojourn there was more like an animal's hibernation than an exile—he formed a burrow in his consciousness and hibernated there, hence no "pleasures of exile" for him!
12. See LeBlanc 241.
13. See Weiner. "My Beautiful Old House and Other Fabrications by Edward Said." *Commentary* 108, no. 2 (1999 September): 23–31.
14. See Edward Said, "Defamation, Zionist Style." *Al-Abram* (August 26, 1999).
15. See "My Right of Return," in *Powers, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said*, ed. Gauri Viswanathan, where Said concludes a discussion about home, belonging, and exile with a surprising announcement: "I am the last Jewish intellectual. . . the only true follower of Adorno." He further clarifies: "Let me put it this way: I am a Jewish-Palestinian."
16. Mufti also adds that Said's usage of the word *secular* is "catachrestic . . . that is, it is a meaningful and productive *misuse*" ("Auerbach in Istanbul" 107).
17. See Edward Said, "Thoughts on Late Style." *The London Review of Books* (2004 August 5). <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n15/edward-said/thoughts-on-late-style>

(See also Edward Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature against the Grain* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006)).

## 4 INTELLECTUALS AS SUBJECTS OF ACTION IN THE AGE OF NEW HUMANISM

1. Very recently, in “Speaking Truth to Power,” Etienne Balibar makes this significant observation: “The bearer of the ‘parresiasitic’ function . . . must be an *individual subject*, or it must be the ‘contingent’ coming together of several (perhaps many) individual subjects who *individually* dissociate themselves from the common.” The abstract of Balibar’s article in the *Journal of Contemporary Thought*, 39 (Summer 2014), quickly summarizes this argument as follows: “Making a distinction, a la Foucault, between two modes of parresia, ethical and political, Balibar makes the recommendation that in our own times of confused modalities and diffuse, overlapping, overdetermined, and contradictory constituencies, the subject bearing the burden of ‘parresia’ has to be the heterogeneously marked individual subject in dissent from facile notions of the common.” See Balibar, “Speaking Truth to Power” (15–31).
2. In an interview with David Barsamian, Said notes: “I believe very much in the individual consciousness. That is the root of all human work. Human understanding cannot take place on a collective scale unless it first takes place on an individual scale. The individual consciousness in our age is bombarded, if it isn’t also stifled, by vast amounts of organized and packaged information” (Barsamian and Said 1998). However, “in Said’s hands, the concept of affiliation suggests that the intellectual is independent.”
3. Said says: “By oppositional I mean to be able to sift, to judge, to criticize, to choose so that choice and agency returns to the individual” (Barsamian and Said 99).
4. See Edward Said, “The Public Role of Writers and Intellectuals.”
5. Abbreviated hereafter as *Peace*.
6. Said quotes this passage from C. Wright Mills. *Power, Politics and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills*. Ed. Irving Louis Horowitz. (New York: Ballantine) 1963: 299.
7. *Portrait* is a *Kunstlerroman* (“artist-novel”) an important subtype of *Bildungsroman* (“novel of formation”). See M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* 132–133.
8. Interviewed by Nirmala Lakshman and titled as “The Road Less Travelled.”
9. Emphasis added.
10. “Scrupulous.” Def. *Merriam-Webster*. Web. 29 May 2015. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/scrupulous>>.
11. Radhakrishnan treats the notion of between-ness almost like a category in Saidian protocols. He observes: “The space of the between is not just any



indeterminate or allegorical between. By dangling Culture and System on either side of the between, Said is able to interrogate both the absolutism of identity (by way of culture) and the authoritarianism of professionalism (by way of system)" (*A Said Dictionary* 12).

12. See how Ella Shohat describes this time in one of her very recent tribute to Said: "During that first Intifada period I remember strolling with him after lunch at Columbia University when I expressed concerns about the death threats he had been receiving. I made the mistake of raising the possibility of his wearing a bulletproof vest. He instantly stopped, turned to me, and, with a bemused smile, looked at me as if I were out of my mind. He gestured toward his elegant suit as if to say, 'Where would the vest go? How would it fit? How would it look?' His dandy-like preoccupation with his sartorial decorum trumped my concern for his life. Edward preferred simply to go on living life with all its pleasures rather than give in to fear. Anxiety and exile were to be transformed into a creative intervention" ("In memory of Edward Said: The Bulletproof Intellectual" 18).
13. Edited by Gauri Viswanathan.
14. It would be important to look at what Radhakrishnan says about the affinity between Said and Fredric Jameson at this juncture: "Said's position here could be compared to that of Fredric Jameson's understanding of the term 'totality.' At a time when 'totality' had become a tainted word, suggestive immediately of 'totalization,' authoritarianism, Fascism, and abuse of the part or the fragment by totality, Jameson as a postmodern Marxist kept insisting that just because in our postmodern times the totality is not immediately sensible, perceptible, and intelligible does not automatically mean that we are rid of totality or that totality does not exist any more. If anything, there is all the more reason for the human subject as producer, consumer, and a seemingly impersonal global nodal point in a vast and ever-ramifying network to insist on wanting to know what her connection is with a totality that is un-sutured, unhinged, or paradoxically present as absent. Similarly, when we are lost in the world of specialization and professional calculations, we make our peace with the small cubicle where do we our work, with that jargon or argot or specialized discourse that sustains our work, and are indeed quite happy not to know what is happening in other cubicles or how all the different locations of work connect to create a total scene" (*A Said Dictionary* 93).
15. "For those marked by such terrible displacement, truth telling is likely to seem an urgent necessity, rather than an epistemological quandary. Said sought to tell the truth of what had happened to his people and to 'inventory' the traces of power that had made him and Oriental subject of the West" (See Sean Scalmer, "Edward Said and the Sociology of Intellectuals" 42).
16. "Said's great suspicion of organizational entanglements is situated, of course, in the sense that he is both a prominent Palestinian in exile and a Left intellectual in a country where red-baiting is a national pastime and he is one, let it be said, who has made great organizational sacrifices... there is nevertheless a shrewd politics that comes with a rejection of party entanglements as a

- matter of principle, while doing one's duty in practice" (Brennan, "Places of Mind" 87).
17. For a discussion on Said's critique of humanism, see Radhakrishnan's observation: "When Said maintained that it is possible to critique humanism in the name of humanism, he was operating as a supreme deconstructionist. There is no *hors-texte* to humanism, or to secularism for that matter. Eurocentrism, the white man's burden, patriarchy and a whole series of manmade calamities are deplorable parts of human history, yet, Said saw a way to reengage 'innocently' with humanism and claim it in the name of its better half. Like Fredric Jameson, who maintained that Marxism is the ultimate horizon that subsumed every other struggle and political practice, Said used humanism as an inclusive umbrella rubric to cover universal history" ("Edward Said and the Possibilities of Humanism" 436).
  18. For an interesting take on what Said means by secular criticism, see Harold Aram Veesser. *Edward Said: The Charisma of Criticism* (New York: Routledge: 2010). "No one has yet fully understood Said's phrase *secular criticism*," says Veesser. And a couple of paragraphs later he adds: "Said's first pleas for a secular criticism coincided with his surprising abandonment of literary theory" (84–85).
  19. See "Edward Said Remembered on September 11, 2004: A Conversation with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak," Interviewed by Ben Conisbee Baer. in *Edward Said: A Legacy of Emancipation and Representation*. Ed. Adel Iskandar and Hakem Rustom. (London: University of California Press, 2010).
  20. See Habermas's famous essay "Modernity—an Incomplete Project," where he attacks post-structuralist thinkers such as Derrida and Foucault for destroying the ideals of truth, progress, and reason.
  21. *Buildungsroman* is a specific variety of novel that concerns itself with an individual's formation and development narrating his/her cross-cultural experiences and encounters.
  22. Spivak writes: "The range and diversity of the Islamic diaspora is immense. It is altogether appropriate that Comparative Literature should undo the politically monolithized view of Islam that rules the globe today, without compromising the strong unifying ideology potentially alive in that particular cultural formation" (*Death of a Discipline* 87).
  23. Although philology is about language, it does not ignore artistic representations in any culture. It rather considers them part of how language is shaped and how it functions. Ganguly may also be running with the etymological sense of philology as "love of the logos" (more or less). But that is way too restrictive in defining the actual subject matter of philology—which most often works alongside archeology to boot.
  24. Said seems to disregard all New Critical concerns about the "intentional fallacy." For a short discussion on this, See Daniel Rosenberg Nutters who notes: "After Barthes's 'Death of the Author,' first translated in 1967, and Foucault's vision of the author function from a few years later, not to mention the New Critical intentional fallacy, Said seeks to recover that 'beginning connection' between the author and his work insofar as such a connection will allow him

to investigate the influence that texts exert in the world” (“Back to *Beginnings*: Reading between Aesthetics and Politics” 87).

25. See David Bartyne’s useful discussion on this: “As developed in much of his work, Said’s desire to introduce—via a borrowing from counterpoint in music—a ‘different kind of reading’ that would challenge some assumptions of Western cultural dominance was realized in many ways. Especially in the early articulation of that different kind of reading, it is evident that Said envisioned a kind of reading in which the reader is encouraged to be prepared to challenge or offer resistance to ‘assumptions of Western cultural dominance’ at any point in the reading process. However, by the time we reach *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, the reading process prescribed for a critique of humanism in the name of humanism has modulated into a clearly delineated two-stage process in which the challenges of resistance are not to begin until the process of reception is complete” (“The Contrapuntal Humanisms of Edward Said” 82–83).

## 5 A SHIFT IN INTELLECTUAL TRAJECTORY: THE MARXIST CONNECTION

1. Said does not subscribe to the antihumanism of either Althusser or Foucault, though he draws from both. Althusser’s celebrated works emphasize a hiatus between the presumably idealist and Hegelian early Marx and the full-blown later Marx of *The Capital* and others. His project is part and parcel of his larger criticism of liberal humanism in its various avatars from the left. This has to be seen as quite distinct from Foucault’s critique of Enlightenment humanism and rationality. Foucault, true to his neo-Kantian agnosticism is skeptical about the validity and even the possibility of true knowledge.
2. Emphasis added.
3. See “Knowing the Oriental” in *Orientalism* (31–49).
4. Said discusses this episode in an article titled “Diary” in *London Review of Books* (Volume 22 Number 11) published on November 1, 2000. See the link: <<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v22/n11/edward-said/diary>>.
5. See Karl Racevskis for a brief discussion on this event. Quoting from Imre Salusinsky’s interview with Said, Racevskis notes: “The seminar turned out to be deeply disappointing and Said was forced to conclude that de Beauvoir and Sartre ‘knew nothing about the Arab world and were both fantastically pro-Israel’” (*Interviews with Edward Said*: 75). “Said did meet Foucault on this occasion but the conversation he had with him also was very disappointing. ‘I could tell he was withdrawing from politics.’ Said remembers, ‘he had lost interest in politics’” (“Edward Said and Michel Foucault” 84–85).
6. Both Thompson and Hobsbawm subjected questions about race to those of class, rather than viewing race independently as a separate kind of analysis. It is to be noted that so much racial theory has run into some really serious

- problems these days. Avoiding class and focusing on race projects the sense that all whites are privileged, and all blacks disadvantaged and oppressed. Both of these are, to my mind, demonstrably false.
7. Said also attacked Max Weber and a host of other sociologists and anthropologists for perpetuating the myth “that there was a sort of ontological difference between Eastern and Western economic (as well as religious) ‘mentalities’” (*Orientalism* 259).
  8. Emphasis added.
  9. This is very relevant particularly in the context of Fukuyama’s “end of history” thesis. Here, one is also reminded of the contemporary American Marxist Fredric Jameson’s call to “always historicize!”
  10. In his introduction to *Orientalism*, Said notes: “The exteriority of the representation is always governed by some version of the truism that if the Orient could represent itself, it would; since it cannot, the representation does the job, for the West, and *faute de mieux*, for the poor Orient” (21).
  11. Ross Abbinnett in his essay titled “Fellow Travellers and Homeless Souls: Said’s Critical Marxism” observes: “. . . [Said] argues that Marx, despite his inherent “sympathy for the misery of people,” perpetuates a messianic vision history in which the reality of colonial intervention (expropriation of property and resources, de facto perpetuation of slavery, destruction of cultural identities) is treated as a precursor to the decisive intervention of the Western proletariat. Thus, the impossibility of self-representation is inscribed at the core of Marx’s analysis of Oriental civilization, and functions to erase the difference of its culture from his concept of universal humanity (91). See Ranjan Ghosh, *Edward Said and the Literary, Social and Political World* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009).
  12. It is Francois Lyotard who defines postmodernism as incredulity toward all grand narratives. Marxism being such a grand narrative fails to address the differential problems of individuals according to him. Said, however, is not drawing on these lines to critique Marxism.
  13. See Benita Parry’s response to this: “His move to separate Marxists whom he esteemed from the dialectical core of their thought is troubling in its very opacity: unlike those post-Marxists who contemplate communism without Marxism, he reveals no commitment to communism with or without Marxism, but all the same made it known that he despised the warriors of the Cold War, especially those from the professoriat and the intellectual community” (“Edward Said and Third-world Marxism” 119).
  14. This is Chomsky’s phrase.
  15. “[t]he idea of hegemony is what allows him to do a sort of theoretical balancing act—what some of his critics, including Aijaz Ahmad, believe is a contradictory balancing act-between Marxism and poststructuralism” (Brantlinger 65).
  16. While Foucault’s discourse theory failed to historicize the relations between discourse and power, Gramsci’s thrust is on the historical process whereby he relates power to ideas such as the ruling class and the dominant interests.
  17. However, one can argue that, since “culture” is often divorced from “political economy” in Said, a proper understanding of the social division of labor,

- property relations, class antagonism, and exploitation is probably lacking in his analysis.
18. It is worth quoting Shaobo Xie at length here: “Edward Said never ceased to battle with what is called Hegelian historicism, a temporal mode of understanding which invokes opposition only to be reconciled in the end. The Hegelian historicist perspective always seeks to secure a core identity underneath myriad divergent, contradictory literary, social, and historical phenomena, resorting to all kinds of temporalities to resolve threats to that core identity... In Said’s view, all types of discourse prioritizing identity over difference or universality over locality do or can be deployed to justify the ongoing power relations between East and West or South or North. The one exception that Said asserts in contrast to Hegelian historicism is Antonio Gramsci, whose geographical and spatial mode of thinking not only conceives of social life and history as discontinuously and unevenly shaped, but always undertakes to expose the world as a stage for struggle for rule or hegemony” (77).
  19. The power relations Said sees between Mansfield Park and Antigua in his *Imperialism* is “similar to that Gramsci sees between southern Italy and northern Italy: a metropolitan center depends on a despised, exploited, inferiorized periphery for material and economic sustenance” (Xie 84).
  20. Timothy Brennan notes: “[Said] flirted with the necessity of economics when fixating on the territorial problems of *land* and *space* in *Culture and Imperialism*, but never mounted a serious assault on the problem of the economic logic of expansion, accumulation, and the creation of new markets that is so fundamental to the colonialism he so effectively diagnosed in other respects ( “Edward Said as a Lukácsian Critic” 21).
  21. See Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* 324.
  22. See Stephen Howe, “Edward Said” 82. He refers to Said’s presentation of Gramsci’s ideas to Palestinian students at Bir Zeit in 1998.
  23. See Abdirahman A Hussein’s *Edward Said: Criticism and Society* 177.
  24. It is important to note Williams’s blurb for Said’s *World*: “It is a pleasure to read someone who not only has studied and thought so carefully but is also beginning to substantiate, as distinct from announcing, a genuinely emergent way of thinking.”
  25. Abdirahman Hussein notes: “Williams coined the phrase in order to describe a form of practical social consciousness similar to hegemony but less burdened with negative associations and more sensitive to historical change” (*Criticism* 253).
  26. As Patrick Brantlinger observes, on a broader plain, “[f]or both Williams and Said, ‘culture’ names the key site or condition of hegemonic struggles over economic resources, political power, and representation. For both, though no doubt in different measures and ways, culture is simultaneously inclusive and exclusive, the very stuff of modes of domination throughout history and at the same time the stuff of human hope and possibility. It is this last, positive or potentially positive aspect of culture that helps to explain why both Williams and Said privilege—if that is the proper term—great works of

- literature (whether western or nonwestern), even as they combine literary and social criticism” (68).
27. See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 125–126.
  28. Patrick Brantlinger summarizes the affinities between Williams and Said: “[A] number of key concepts developed by Said owe at least something to related ideas in Williams. Besides their general insistence that neither literature nor any other form of culture can be fully understood in isolation from the social context within which it is produced, and that therefore ‘secular criticism,’ as Said calls it, must necessarily be, in part, social criticism, Said’s ideas of ‘filiation’ and ‘affiliation,’ for example, are at least akin to Williams’ ‘knowable community’ versus its antithesis in the abstract, in some ways ‘unknowable’ and anonymous experience of the modern city and of mass society. So, too, ‘travelling theory’ is an extension, perhaps, of several patterns or lines of thought in Williams; Said makes Williams’ reception of the Marxist-structuralist sociology of Lucien Goldmann a key illustration of what happens or can happen to theories as they ‘travel’ from context to context. But if Williams is usually close at hand when Said is discussing such concepts, there are also differences—ones suggested by the contrast, which is potentially also an antithesis, between Williams’ emphasis on ‘community’ and Said’s emphasis on ‘the world’ and ‘worldliness’” (60).
  29. He quotes Varadharajan’s phrase here.
  30. Said further says in an interview: “I was transformed by my reading of *History and Class Consciousness*, just as I was transformed by my reading and teaching of *The Prison Notebooks* and later of Adorno, especially his musical work” (Katz and Smith 649).
  31. See the relevant part where Brennan discusses Said’s reinvention of the concept of modernism: “By introducing the term ‘beginnings’ as a substitute for ‘origins,’ Said re-injected the historical sense into the inquiry surrounding modernism. The language of the ultra-modern—in both its high modernist and postmodernist variants—is in this way used against itself by Said with intentional subversion. For if his audience circa 1975 would be expected to think of modernist experimentalism as the result of an artistic directive for making one’s own rules and rupturing all contact with the rotten legacies of the human past (“making it new,” in Ezra Pound’s famous phrase), he uses ‘beginnings’ in the Vichian sense of the *making* of our past. In other words, his emphasis is not on rupture but agency, and at the very same time that our inevitable obsession with causes, points of departure, influences (all of what is implied by the term ‘origins’) is underscored” (“Edward Said as a Lukascian Critic” 27).
  32. Said notes: “We must take seriously Vico’s great observation that men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities—to say nothing of historical entities—such locales, regions, geographical sectors as ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ are man-made” (*Orientalism* 5).
  33. See Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory* 164, 166, 187, 211.

## CONCLUSION TOWARD A SAIDIAN PARADIGM

1. See Timothy Brennan's commentary on this: "Although firmly situated in the pantheon of postcolonial studies, Said often struggled with the morphological variants of the tropes of 'hybridity' and 'migrancy' that dominated the postcolonial critical scene in the early 1990s. He supported hybridity, of course, in the humane sense of inclusiveness or lack of pedigrees by blood, but not in the almost sacral way that it was posited by some postcolonial scholars as the measure of all value: a fetish of migrancy and the subaltern" (see Young 1995). There it referred to a racial subject sublimely poised between registers, where one could enjoy, as it were, every identity simultaneously and without risks and take positions that could also, at the same time, conveniently be taken to be their opposites. The term "contrapuntal criticism" . . . was devised as a counter to hybridity. Said considered it an act of bad faith that postcolonial theory had transformed cultural messiness and mixture into a new purity, emptied of the political conflicts underlying national, class, and racial affiliations" ("Edward Said as a Lukácsian Critic" 19).
2. "The strength of ideology derives from the way it gets to be common sense; it goes without saying" (Sinfield 64).
3. See Edward Said, "Michel Foucault as an Intellectual Imagination" (1–36).

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