

Like last year, Said and Orientalism are the subject of more than one book. Of these, Ziauddin Sardar's *Orientalism* arguably marks a particular kind of recognition. While Said's book has had an acknowledged status for a number of years, Sardar's is the first study to treat the term as one of the key 'Concepts in the Social Sciences', and thus indicates a significant cross-disciplinary acknowledgement. Sardar works hard - and with credit - to create a different sort of narrative of Orientalism from that with which most of his readers would be familiar. Some of the aspects of this different narrative are among the book's definite strengths. For example, Sardar devotes a considerable amount of space to popular culture and new media forms, examining ways in which (perhaps unsurprisingly) Hollywood films continue to circulate Orientalist representations. More unusually, he discusses the extension of the scope of Orientalism via, for instance, CD-Roms, as the globalising of electronically-circulated knowledge in packages such as *Microsoft Bookshelf*, the Dorling Kindersley *History of the World* or *Encarta Encyclopedia* confirms a thoroughly US-centric vision of the past and present whose imbalance is even greater than that of the admittedly biased colonial educational models. At the same time, this discussion of contemporary and emergent forms is arguably at the expense of the more obvious international politics of Orientalism of the sort Said focuses on. While this does give a very strong culturalist complexion to the picture of Orientalism which Sardar paints, it is at least in keeping with his stress on the psychological and imaginative dimensions of the phenomenon.

The book offers chapters on the concept of Orientalism, its past, present and future, and on theory and criticism. The opening chapter, 'The concept of Orientalism,' makes interesting use of *M.Butterfly* as a text which (knowingly) instantiates and interrogates the main elements of the discourse. This device allows Sardar to interweave textual and discursive analysis in productive fashion. Certain problems arise, however, as his own

narrative builds, like that of the play, towards climax, and he over-identifies textual elements or aspects of individual psychology with features of Orientalism or Western culture. For example, “Orientalism is sustained by a consuming love of the lovely lie”, (i.e. knowing and deliberate self-deception), or, “Orientalism’s most important impact is not in the relations of power and dominance of the real world of politics, economics and military relations. Its greatest potency is within the psyche of the West itself where, as the perfect vision of perfect love, it has the greatest aesthetic power.” While these are certainly relevant to the psychology of Gallimard (the French protagonist of the play), it is difficult to see them (the consuming love of the lovely lie, or the perfect vision of perfect love) as useful generalisations about Orientalism. The final section of the second quote, “the psyche of the West itself”, is another example of a problem area. For Said, one of the things which has allowed Orientalism’s divisive and discriminatory practices to continue is precisely people’s willingness to give credence to empty and essentialising categories such as ‘the Oriental mind’, and so it is surprising to encounter the same process here: “Sexual pleasure within the Western psyche is always associated with the notion of Original Sin, within the Catholic psyche it retains the implication that the only perfect life is the celibate life, sex always has the overtones of sin and temptation.” Apart from the fact that original sin was disobedience to God’s commands and has nothing to do with sexual pleasure, and celibacy represents ‘the perfect life’ only for the Catholic clergy, not the mass of believers, this kind of over-generalised stereotype is, ironically, precisely what Sardar (correctly) objects to when it is applied to Islam.

Undoubtedly, the most disappointing aspect of the book is its treatment of Said, who rates only eleven pages in the chapter on theory and criticism. At one level, of course, it is refreshing that Said is not simply, automatically, the star and centrepiece of the book, and it is useful to be reminded of the work which preceded *Orientalism* or was appearing at the same time. However, this eleven-page slot is symptomatic of Sardar’s unfortunate tendency to

dismiss Said and to avoid any substantive discussion of his ideas or arguments. Sardar is clearly not a fan of Said, which is fine, but it is hard not to feel that *Orientalism* deserved better, at least in the sense of sustained engagement. (On the other hand, given Sardar's view that Said's contribution is derivative, "easily forgettable" compared to some other studies, and owes its success to "the very dynamic that sustained Orientalism as an arch discourse in the first place", we might consider *Orientalism* fortunate to have received such discussion as it has.) The general lack of engagement is indicated by the way in which Sardar is content simply to give space to critics of Said, such as Robert Young or Dennis Porter, rather than weigh up their assessment of him.

Where there is something like engagement with Said, it is problematic. For instance, we get the old chestnut of the absence of an alternative to Orientalism in *Orientalism*. (Yes, no doubt Said should have included something more, but then the book is intended as a study of the effects and effectiveness of a particular formation of Western power/knowledge, and Said does highlight the need for studies of alternatives as work to be done in the future.) The problem is that Sardar goes on to extend the absence textually and chronologically beyond *Orientalism*, (drawing on *Culture and Imperialism*, *The Politics of Dispossession*, and *The World, the Text and the Critic*), so that the book's problems become purported ongoing general failings of Said. Apart from the fact that he is then simply factually wrong (for example, Said devoted a substantial part of *Culture and Imperialism* to resistance to the West precisely in order to remedy the lack in *Orientalism*), Sardar develops a highly tendentious and ill-supported argument – Said, he claims, "sees no reason why there should be an alternative" - though the evidence he adduces is a quote from Robert Young, not Said. More than this, "an alternative to Orientalism is not possible for Said... because for him there is no option beyond secular humanism and its high culture. For Said, there is only one culture: European high culture. Said exhibits as much hatred for things non-Western as the Orientalists

showed towards things Oriental.” Bizarre as this may seem (and factually incorrect for the reasons just mentioned), it is not the only such example.

A different kind of problem is represented by claims such as: “Said borrowed and built upon the earlier studies of Tibawi, Alatas, Abdel Malek, Djait and others such as Abdullah Laroui, Talal Asad, K.M. Pannikar and Romila Thapar, but he did not acknowledge any of them.” Again, this serious imputation of unprofessional behaviour and intellectual parasitism is simply wrong: apart from Djait, Alatas and Thapar, all of them are referenced in *Orientalism*, while Djait’s book was published in the same year as *Orientalism* and so in no way constitutes an ‘earlier study’; (Alatas’s book, it is true, appeared one year previously, though that hardly leaves time for Said to ‘build and borrow’ as imputed.)

If all of this gives the impression that Sardar’s *Orientalism* is not a very accurate book, that is unfortunately the case, and examples range from grammatical mistakes to historical inaccuracies. While the assessment of a book clearly needs to be more than a catalogue of its errors, it is significant that Sardar accuses Said of incompetence - and worse - on the basis of what he (wrongly, as suggested) claims are errors. The implications, on his own terms, for his own work are indeed unfortunate, then. Although, as mentioned, there are definite strengths to the book, it does not fulfil its potential. For a work in a ‘Concepts in the Social Sciences’ series, it is not very strong conceptually, and although it has a theory and criticism chapter, there is little of the sort of theory - social theory, political theory or post-colonial theory - which might have been expected to inform its discussions.

Ashcroft and Ahluwalia’s *Edward Said: the paradox of identity* represents the first book-length study of Said, and as such, it is a pity that it is such a short book. The brevity also makes the claims to provide a ‘comprehensive introduction’ somewhat problematic. There is, for example, nothing on the pre-*Orientalism* Said, and while that period may be of less interest to post-colonial scholars, its omission scarcely makes for comprehensiveness. The six

chapters of the book each focus on a key theme - Orientalism, intellectuals, Palestine, culture as imperialism – and the discussion is usefully introductory, broken down into sub-sections on related texts or issues. (There are signs that an even more user-friendly approach has been abandoned: for example, the highlighted block of text on p.68 offering a potted definition of discourse is the sort of thing which students find helpful, but which is for some reason the only one of its kind in the book.) One of the central concepts throughout, as the book's subtitle indicates, is the paradoxical nature of identity, especially Said's own, though the authors' contention that "This identity is itself a text that is continually elaborated and rewritten by Said" comes dangerously close to endorsing the scurrilous assertions that Said 'reinvents' himself (i.e. repeatedly lies about his past) made by various Zionist 'scholars'. This emphasis on Said himself also leads the authors into a number of rather questionable positions, such as: "Contrapuntality emerges out of the tension and complexity of Said's own identity, that text of self that he is constantly writing..." Rather than being an effect of Said's own psyche, however, the need to interpret texts and histories contrapuntally is the product of centuries of cultural contact, colonial rule, etc. as Said makes abundantly clear. Ashcroft and Ahluwalia also argue that Said sees culture as imperialism, which - even though Said perhaps over-emphasises the links between Western culture and empire in *Culture and Imperialism* - is a form of reductivism to which he never descends. The relation between text and world, discourse and materiality recurs throughout, though what is being proposed can appear contradictory: at one moment, material circumstances are being properly prioritised, their (asserted) avoidance by post-colonial critics in favour of discourse rightly deplored. At another moment, however, we are told, apropos of the text's 'worldliness': "That is to say that the way in which the postcolonial text exists in discourse determines what can be said..." - whether by it or about it is not clear, but the presumed all-determining power of discourse – rather than material circumstances – unfortunately is.

There have been a number of books on Fanon in recent years: single-author studies like Ato Sekyi-Out's *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience* (Harvard UP, 1996), and edited collections such as *The Fact of Blackness* (ed. A. Read, ICA, 1996), but the volume edited by Anthony Alessandrini, *Fanon: Critical Perspectives*, is probably the best, and is certainly the most useful for students and lecturers. The book is divided into sections on 'Rereading Fanon's Legacy', 'Fanon and/as Cultural Studies' and 'Fanon and the Future of Cultural Politics', a fact that would seem to leave it open to accusations of a 'culturalist' approach – which is partly true, but arguably quite beside the point, given Fanon's awareness of the crucially important role of culture in the fight for national liberation. One of the book's strengths is the variety of debate and dissent – not only with those outside its covers, but also among those within. Nigel Gibson, for example, in an interesting and polemical piece on 'Fanon and the Pitfalls of Cultural Studies', takes issue with just about everyone, including other contributors (especially Françoise Vergès), arguing for the continuing relevance of a revolutionary Fanon in the face of what he sees as the liberalising appropriation undertaken by cultural studies. Gibson concludes: "Against the 'inventions', I claim an authentic Fanon", and whether or not you accept the claim, such boldness can be refreshing. E. Anne Kaplan discusses 'Fanon, cinema and trauma', specifically cinema as (modernist) trauma, though unusually for such an astute and experienced critic of cinema, the evidence is slight and the case overstated (for instance, in aligning cinema and colonialism as traumas of modernity) or ill-founded (for instance in "The very title of the chapter in which this experience is detailed, 'The Fact of Blackness', echoes the phenomenological side of trauma: its facticity..." – when 'The Fact of Blackness' is a poor translation of the original, and cannot therefore carry the weight placed on it). A different perspective on Fanon's relation to the visual is found in Kobena Mercer's 'Busy in the ruins of a wretched phantasia', which looks at the relevance of a polyvocal, multi-accented Fanon for a contemporary diasporic aesthetics, especially in the

area of black visual art. Like Kaplan, Mercer is perhaps too ready to privilege his preferred area: “Reading Fanon today, there is a pervasive sense that the forward march of liberation came to a halt precisely around the ‘interior’ spaces of sexuality...” Well, maybe. If so, it certainly puts those routinely accused of halting the forward march (global capitalism, imperialism, etc) firmly in their place. One of the questions which concerns Mercer is black gay and lesbian identity, representation and cultural production. That is also pursued (differently) in Terry Goldie’s ‘Saint Fanon and “Homosexual Territory”’, and Mercer himself is the starting point for Goldie’s discussion of Fanon’s problematic homophobia, for example in his depiction of ‘homosexual territory’ as “fault, guilt, refusal of guilt, paranoia...”, and above all his inability to recognise it as a space where people might lead happy lives. Neil Lazarus’ ‘Disavowing Decolonisation: Fanon, nationalism and the question of representation in postcolonial theory’ is an interesting and substantial piece, but it has appeared in various guises before, and does so again in Lazarus’ own book *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (see below). John Mowitt’s ‘Breaking up Fanon’s Voice’ discusses (as does Kaplan) Fanon’s writings on the role of radio in the anti-colonial struggle, and relates the importance of remembering Fanon to the condition of the contemporary university.

The question of remembering Fanon turns up again in one of the pieces in *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism*, edited by Benita Parry and Laura Chrisman. Given the breadth suggested by the title, and the range of material which might have been included, this is a rather thin collection of half a dozen essays. That is matched by the disappointing brevity of the introduction (4pp.), when, given the experience and political stance of the editors, one might have expected a substantial intervention. The Fanon piece is Gautam Premnath’s ‘Remembering Fanon, Decolonising Diaspora’, and its focus is the ethical question of which Fanon we choose to remember. Premnath’s answer is “definitely not Homi Bhabha’s Fanon”, and he goes on (as increasing numbers of critics currently do) to dissect the problems in

Bhabha's approach to Fanon (and not only to Fanon). Premanth is also somewhat more sympathetic to Paul Gilroy than others such as Lazarus and Chrisman have recently been. Vilashini Cooppan's 'Whither Post-Colonial Studies? Towards the transnational study of race and nation' is the most ambitious of the essays (as its title suggests). It is also unusual in its use of the hyphenated form of post-colonial, in conscious repudiation of the 'unicity' and consequent elision of colonialism in the increasingly popular unhyphenated form. Cooppan feels that "race and nation seem to have fallen along the historical wayside of post-colonial studies", though there is not a lot of evidence (apart from Paul Gilroy, not the most obvious post-colonialist) to support that. She does, however, recognise that post-colonial studies must acknowledge the extremely variable forms and locations of race, and the historically distinct strategies of racialization. Like many others, Cooppan worries about the institutional location/cooptation of post-colonial studies, but feels it remains important for its 'transformational potential'. In 'Listening to the Subaltern: postcolonial studies and neo-colonial politics', Fernando Coronil sets out to articulate a different form of subalternity from that famously proposed by Spivak (not least in that he can talk of 'subaltern states', which would make no sense in her terms). In particular, this is a more active and variable subalternity – the subaltern as "an agent of ideological construction that participates, under determinate conditions within a field of power relations, in the organisation of its multiple positionality and subjectivity". Also, "at any given time and place, an actor may be subaltern in relation to another, yet dominant in relation to a third". Insisting that it is essential to listen to the voices, and the silences, of the subaltern within the cracks of dominant histories, Coronil addresses subaltern speaking via the close analysis of a speech by a Venezuelan politician. Sukhev Sandhu's 'Pop Goes the Centre: Hanif Kureishi's London' may be less obviously concerned with post-colonialism than most of the other essays, but is not afraid to criticise it: "Post-colonial criticism bandies about concepts such as 'centre', 'margin' and

‘metropolis’ with decontextualised and hectoring abandon.” Despite such sweeping (and decontextualised) denunciations, this is a readable discussion of Kureishi. Ato Quayson’s ‘Instrumental and Synoptic Dimensions of Postcolonialism’ is, once again, just a chapter from a forthcoming book, in this case, his *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?*(again, see below).

Neil Lazarus’ *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* would have been called *Hating Tradition Properly* if the publishers had not been afraid of such an ‘unsexy’ title, but the phrase from Adorno remains Lazarus’ preferred encapsulation of the book’s project (though arguably there are problems with the way he reads Adorno as regarding modernity as tradition). As Lazarus says in the introduction, his aim is “to try to alter somewhat the existing balance of forces in the field of postcolonial studies, by way of making the field as a whole accountable to philosophical and political claims, interests and demands to which it (to its own detriment) it is currently little attuned”; and even if he underplays the amount of materialist analysis done under the heading of postcolonial studies, it is hard to disagree with Lazarus that much more needs to be done. The book is a combination of the old and the new, with chapters like ‘Disavowing Decolonisation’ (mentioned above) and ‘Unsystematic fingers at the conditions of the times’ (on Afropop) having already appeared elsewhere. That is inevitably disappointing, though Lazarus is in the very best of company here (cf. Spivak, below), and it has to be said that what he writes is more deserving of reprinting for its combination of intelligent analysis and oppositional stance. The chapter titles suggest a move from the global to the local, but even when discussing ‘local’ phenomena like cricket or Afropop, Lazarus is keenly aware of the broader political dimensions of cultural production and practice. The chapter on cricket, for example, aims to extend and update CLR James’ groundbreaking analysis in *Beyond a Boundary* of the relation between sport, national culture and international capitalism and politics, especially

through critical engagement with recent writing such as Ashis Nandy's *The Tao of Cricket*. Importantly, however, rather than looking at how we might have 'got beyond' James, Lazarus argues for the continuing relevance of James' approach and politics. The more obviously 'global' chapters are particularly wide-ranging as Lazarus critiques a whole spectrum of theorists and critics, including many on the Left. In particular he is - here and throughout the book - very properly concerned to defend or reinstate Marxist concepts of universality and totality (without which any appropriate understanding of 'global' phenomena could hardly take place). The recipient of Lazarus' most sustained critique is Paul Gilroy - though to his credit Lazarus devotes more space to setting out Gilroy's position with relation to black culture and modernity than he does to taking it apart. In particular, Gilroy's failure, while proffering would-be revisions of modernity and internationalism via slavery and the Black Atlantic, to engage with, for example, Marxism or world systems theory - precisely as analyses of modernity and internationalism - is seen to undermine the coherence of his analysis.

Ato Quayson's *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?* represents the latest attempt to explicate the conflicted field. It has the distinct merit that it does not simply adopt a strategy of do-the-same-but-better in relation to the texts which have preceded it. Quayson approaches a number of issues differently from other competitor volumes, for instance in chapters on "Postcolonial Historiography and the Problem of Local Knowledge" or "Feminism, Postcolonialism and the Contradictory Orders of Modernity"; he tackles different questions, such as "Instrumental and Synoptic Dimensions of Interdisciplinarity"; he also draws on different exemplificatory texts, especially from his Africanist background, and has some interesting things to say about them. Quayson offers a broad and flexible image of postcolonialism, particularly in terms of 'postcolonializing' as an active process: "the critical process by which to relate modern-day phenomena to their explicit, implicit, or even potential

relations to this fraught heritage [colonialism and its aftermath].” (Immediately, however, there is the danger of useful breadth turning into unhelpful vagueness, as postcolonialism becomes a strategy for righting wrongs everywhere, or - even more vaguely - “a project to correct imbalances in the world”.) The less satisfactory side of the book has to do with the gap between claims and performance. Quayson situates himself as a Marxist, which is great – the more the merrier. The problem is that it is hard to see how that translates into what follows: whether he is analysing texts intelligently or discussing theorists informatively, without the statement of position you wouldn’t know what Quayson’s politics were, other than broadly progressive. The question of the dialectic can stand as representative of the general problem. Quayson boldly stresses the indispensable analytical role of the dialectic; unfortunately, he then does not appear to produce any dialectical analyses as such, (c.f. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* for examples of this difficult process): discussions may offer opposing points of view, but there is no sense of dialectical process or synthesis, (while the fact that he can talk about a “dialectical continuum” suggests an uncertain grasp of what the dialectic involves); at the same time, there is an indication of a dialectic approach in the chapter on “Postcolonialism and Postmodernism” (“I move...to merge the two and explore postcolonialism as postmodernism, and vice versa”), but a) I’m not sure that this is done (and certainly not dialectically); and b) there is no sense of how deeply problematic such a move might be (especially to a Marxist). (It is instructive – though perhaps a little unfair – to set Neil Lazarus’s book alongside *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?* in terms of what two authors writing from an explicitly Marxist standpoint produce by way of analysis, also because of Lazarus’s demonstration of just how a Marxist perspective makes a difference, which is absent from Quayson.) All of this is very unfortunate, because there is much that is useful and informative in Quayson’s book. It is also altogether avoidable, because the book would have retained its many good qualities without the political/analytical claims. It remains

a readable, generally accessible discussion of salient aspects of postcolonialism; it's just not the book it says it is.

It would be possible to say the same of Gayatri Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present*, at least to the extent that it is extremely difficult to see just what might constitute 'postcolonial reason', and the object of the critique therefore remains at best obscure, at worst absent. Nor is there any help to be had from the index: a few entries for reason; none for postcolonial reason. Perhaps that is to make the reader work harder. Not that there is any need; particularly in the early stages, the book is very hard going; also, its 450 pages are divided into just four chapters (Philosophy, Literature, History, Culture); impossible to dip, skim or indulge any other habits of the lazy reader. Spivak, of course, is not unaware of the difficulty, and says: "My implied reader...will be obliged to consult lexicons". (If only the difficulty were merely lexical...) There is a rather paradoxical quality to the difficulty, however, given that half a dozen previously published pieces reappear here, including some of Spivak's best-known work ('Can the Subaltern Speak?', 'Imperialism and Sexual Difference', 'The Rani of Sirmur', 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism'), and familiarity ought to breed content. However, the effect of their integration into long chapters is frequently to diffuse the clarity of the original argument, while their reworking disturbs any feeling of knowing what comes next. This is somewhat disappointing, since Spivak's work in the 90s seemed to be heading in the direction of greater accessibility and comprehensibility. (Spivak clearly feels that her work has become more accessible – lexicons notwithstanding – as she refers dismissively to a phrase like 'epistemic violation' as belonging to "my more turgid phase".) What undoubtedly does continue from the 90s is her laudable determination to highlight real life issues, contemporary struggles and injustices, and in the context of her final narrative/case study – child labour in the South, particularly in Bangladesh – she considers that her own book is 'trivial'. This aspect of the

book (its activism, not its ‘trivial’ nature) comes increasingly to the fore in the final chapter, where she locates the hope for the future in the ‘globe-girdling’ movements (anti-systemic, non-eurocentric) for environmental justice.

Overall, the book traces, as Spivak puts it, “a practitioner’s progress from colonial discourse studies to transnational cultural studies”, (though arguably the former need not be very different from the latter). It also traces the mutations of the figure of the ‘native informant’ under colonialism, postcolonialism and globality. Spivak notes that references to postcolonialism in the book have multiplied in the course of its writing; these, however, tend to remain scattered insights which arguably get us no closer to understanding the elusive postcolonial reason. Spivak also wants the book to be an advance on Aijaz Ahmad’s type of critique of postcolonialism: “less locationist, more nuanced, with a productive acknowledgement of complicity”. Recognition of complicity (with the capitalist West, for example) appears as a necessary basis from which to critique – or at the very least, not an insuperable obstacle to the production of that critique. This is potentially liberating for many, since accusations of complicity (with Eurocentric ideologies, elite institutions, or whatever) have increasingly been used to try to undermine postcolonial writers and critics. Not that anyone will be able to breath a sigh of relief about their complicity – Spivak has some very uncomfortable things to say to metropolitan feminists, ‘theoreticists’ and academic postcolonialists in this regard.

*Third Text* 46 (Spring 1999) includes a long essay by Rustom Bharucha, ‘Interculturalism and its Discriminations: Shifting the Agendas of the National in the Multicultural and the Global’ (pp. 3-23). Bharucha traces his own beginnings in Indian theatre and his first recognition of ‘intercultural’ activity watching a folk dance, Chhau, along with ‘interculturalists’ with zoom lenses and video cameras. His example unsettles assumptions about ‘cultural belongingness’ and begins a critique of First World ransacking of Third World

intellectual property, especially where individual ownership of a cultural production is imprecise, as with a communal folkdance. In a piece in which he strives to read the potentialities of interculturalism as set against the other terms of his title, Bharucha reminds us of the ways in which academics present the search for knowledge as apolitical, and tries to address this propensity in each section of his argument. Bharucha's aim is to discriminate between the 'intercultural' and the 'global' (including the freedom to resist globalisation within Third World cultures unavailable to first World nations); between the 'national' and nationalism in all its degenerate forms (remembering Stuart Hall's reading of Fanon); and between interculturalism (via Kobena Mercer's ironic take on England's 'negation of the dynamic exchanges' that have rendered English culture 'English') and multiculturalism with all its contradictions (via Slavoj Zizek's subversive readings and Satya Mohanty's defences). In the section of the essay devoted to multiculturalism, Bharucha provides a nuanced reading of Shohat and Stam's *Unthinking Eurocentrism* and Charles Taylor's 1994 essay 'The Politics of Recognition', tellingly critiquing the apparent erasure of racism in different multicultural agendas. This is a refreshingly open and engaging essay.

The agenda for the journal *Postcolonial Studies* has been purposefully broad, as outlined by the editors in the 1998 opening issue. In 2: 1, this general tendency is revealed through a forum on ethnography in which two classic essays are reprinted. Siegfried Kracauer's essay from the 1920s, 'The Hotel Lobby' (pp. 289-297), is accompanied by a 1962 piece, 'Crowds' (pp. 299-302) in which Claude Levi-Strauss encounters the crowds of Calcutta on leaving the lobby of his hotel. In this way the editors hope to begin to break open Fredric Jameson's seminal analysis of the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles and address the hotel lobby as a site from which to think about the postcolonial. Joanne Finkelstein's short 'The place of place in sociology' (pp. 285-287) which prefaces the reprints, runs through the beginnings of the discipline and those classic early twentieth-century studies which 'brought

the exotic and invisible within reach', reminding us how the desire to imagine the Other became established as a site of analysis.

The 'Forum' section of *Postcolonial Studies* (2: 1) comprises a colloquium on the problems of editing a journal with a broad remit but a specific agenda without closing down possibilities. The editors of *positions* (Tania Barlow), *Interventions* (Robert Young) and *Postcolonial Studies* (Michael Dutton, Sanjay Seth and Leela Gandhi) each provide significantly different perspectives on the process. The latter assess the complex issues of power and knowledge at the end of their journal's first year of publication in 'Postcolonial discernment or was that deceit?' (pp. 13-18). They examine their doubts as to whether 'postcolonialism' as it is currently understood can reflect the concerns of non-Western academics and how these doubts underpinned the 'radical democratisation of knowledge' promised at the journal's inauguration. They worry that such promises may have become a 'cosmopolitan conceit'. These are, as the editors admit, familiar objections to the 'romantic intensity' that belies commitment to 'subjugated knowledges', especially when those who assess submissions to journals inevitably privilege their own knowledge paradigms. Understandably, the editors turn to Žižek as a model for cracking open the tenacious hold Western theory has on knowledge formation and its dissimulation. They also examine the triptych of Said, Bhabha and Spivak, their status as ur-theorists and the extent to which they are involved in a 'postcolonial deceit', the best strategy we have to begin to see the 'side effects' within the knowledge systems to which we are each intimately connected. In pursuing the 'chimeral outsideness' of the postcolonial, they founder on the 'burial ground' of western epistemology. Despite the rhetoric, this is self-critique of the kind the editorial collective have advocated since the journal's inception. Tania Barlow, who follows with 'Founding *positions*' (pp. 19-28), plays metaphorically with the terms 'field' and 'site' and the equation between them to ask whether it is possible to attempt to stabilise one's field of inquiry as 'postcolonial

studies' while simultaneously trying to extricate oneself from the stranglehold definitions exert. She does not present any answers for editors, however, but explains that *positions* refused to define itself in relation to a specific field (though it does define itself by region - East Asia). Following Spivak, she places her faith in indeterminacy, seeing the journal form as a montage of lines of argument, and the journal itself as a 'site' rather than a 'field'. More usefully, Robert Young takes up the case of editorial accountability in 'Academic activism and knowledge formation in postcolonial critique' (pp. 29-34). He centres on political crime and international law with the telling example that on the day *Interventions* was first published, British Law Lords decided General Pinochet should be extradited to face charges of crimes against humanity in Chile. He addresses the extent to which postcolonial studies forms part of a 'larger social and political nexus'. He cites a tradition of intellectuals for whom activism was a key feature of their intellectual work: Gandhi, Fanon, Cabral, Padmore and Said. Indeed, the title of the journal has what he terms an 'activist resonance'. In a tightly argued essay, Young underpins his discussion with examples of the importance of decentralization in the journal's quotidian operations: regional editors, international consultants, special issues, and the 'Situations' forum for activists in the field. In this way, the forum 'On editing a postcolonial journal' raises material issues and knowledge formation, the space for critical dissent, transnationalism and the crossing of disciplinary boundaries as editorial preoccupations. The propensity for self-critique continues in the 'Focus' section of the same issue, where Iain Chambers interrogates his location as a postcolonial intellectual whose home is England's pastoral 'green and pleasant land'. In 'History after humanism: responding to postcolonialism' (pp. 37-42), Chambers posits that the postcolonial is a 'critical disturbance' which 'reverberates through different worlds' including his own, so that 'I live my history as an ethical opening'. In a meditation on the limits of modernity and of the self, he speculates on the postcolonial as post-humanism.

There are two articles by Arif Dirlik to consider this year. The first, 'How the grinch hijacked radicalism: further thoughts on radicalism' (*Postcolonial Studies*, 2.2, pp. 149-63), addresses questions relating to the identity of postcolonial critics/intellectuals and debates the identity of postcolonial criticism itself 'as an intellectual mode of inquiry and explanation'. The second piece can be found in *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (1.2). This issue contains the second batch of responses to Robert Young's original editorial/position paper in 1998/9, 'Ideologies of the Postcolonial'. Notable responses include Harish Trivedi's 'The Postcolonial or the Transcolonial? Location and Language' (pp. 269-72) and Patrick Williams' 'Totally Ideological' (pp. 282-85). Dirlik's 'Response to the Responses: Thoughts on the Postcolonial' (pp. 286-90) synthesises a number of views expressed rather than responding to any in detail. Dirlik calls for an internal mapping of postcolonial criticism, believing that such a move could avoid what he sees as generalisations in a field of study that 'by now covers such a wide ground, and is so incoherent internally, that even those that endow it with the status of theory fail to explain what such a theory might look like'. He argues that it is imperative to introduce, in a non-reductive way, an element of historicization in order to rescue the postcolonial from 'ideological complicity in the legitimation of contemporary forms of power'. Furthermore, in refusing to offer a nuanced historical analysis of the postcolonial, postcolonial criticism 'invades history with its particular mode of consciousness by extending it over the past, erasing both the past and present alternatives to its own reading of the past, and disallowing future history by rendering postcoloniality into a timeless and placesless condition'. For Dirlik the role of the postcolonial critic/intellectual should not involve an escape from the 'limits of past radicalism' but rather an engagement with past radicalism in such a manner that both complicates and enriches, because radical legacies of the past still have crucial relevance as they continue to 'inform current structures of domination'.

Bart Moore-Gilbert's article 'Postcolonial Cultural Studies and Imperial Historiography: problems of Interdisciplinarity' (*Interventions* 1: 3, pp. 397-411), exposes the critical suspicions that have emerged between two divergent academic camps, the 'sub-fields' of literary critics and imperial historians when tussling over postcolonial studies. He maps the tensions: those imperial historians who 'most stridently condemn the rise of postcolonial theory'; literary critics who worry about its hegemonic theoretical position; objections to its political character and to its obfuscatory style; postcolonial critics' distrust of conservative and traditional historians and their continued lack of theoretical models. He addresses the charges, most notably those levelled at Said, Spivak and Bhabha and allows for some of them but the impetus of the article is toward dialogue and for differentiation within the field. He outlines the work of post-Orientalist historians and the Subaltern Studies group to elucidate the points at which postcolonial theory converges usefully with revisionist historiography (the cross-fertilisation present in work by Guha and Bhabha, Chakrabarty and Spivak, and Prakash and Said, for example). Moore-Gilbert calls for greater historical accuracy on the part of postcolonial critics and a more rigorous engagement with methodology on the part of imperial historians - and more attention to the 'cultural' on all levels. But this article does not seek to reach an accommodation. Rather, it acts as a proposal for 'healthy disagreement' over disciplinary borders to become self-consciously enabling rather than reductive and disabling.

Stephen Morton's 'Postcolonialism and Spectrality: Political Deferral and Ethical Singularity in the Writing of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak' (*Interventions* 1: 4, pp. 605-620) returns to Spivak to argue that her 'powerful rearticulation' of deconstruction, Marxism and feminism, and her catachrestic analysis of her own intellectual and geopolitical location, offers us the kind of 'situated knowledge' that in his view is adequate to the task of analysing the effects of transnational finance capitalism. Morton reads across her work to examine her recoding of use value and analysis of the Free Trade zone. Overall, it is the spectre of the

subaltern woman's body that charges Spivak's ethical complication of postcolonial knowledge. This general article represents a re-reading of much of Spivak's *oeuvre*.

'Beyond Unicentricity: Transcultural Black Presences' (*Research in African Literatures* 30: 2, pp. 96-109) sees Carole Boyce Davies arguing that 'unicentricity' or one-centredness is 'the logic of *Eurocentricism* as well as its counterdiscourse *Afrocentrism*'. She outlines and dismisses the attendant discourses of diversity, multiculturalism and pluralism to assert that what she calls 'crosscultural African Diaspora discourses' reflect 'the variety of movements ushered in by migration' but also 'the reproduction of different modes of being in the world'. She seeks to dismantle the residue of belief in a monolithic African culture so 'we can assert multiple, transcultural presences within and outside Africa'.

*Wasafiri* 30 (Autumn 1999) includes articles that explore postcolonial theory and its applications but Ali A Abdi's 'Frantz Fanon and Postcolonial Realities: A Temporal Perspective' (pp. 51-54) adds little to debates around Fanon's work. It sets itself up as a re-evaluation but reads as a somewhat naive appreciation. It serves only as the broadest kind of introduction to Fanon's work. Tabish Khair's 'Why Postcolonialism Hates Revolutions' (pp. 5-8) examines the shift postcolonial studies has made from departments of political science and history to departments of literature and cultural studies to argue that in its new academic context postcolonialism has developed into an orthodoxy 'that is not only blind to its own internal contradictions' but 'increasingly hostile' to voices outside of its discursive context. Khair deploys two conferences as paradigmatic of the shift and its problems. He remembers a paper delivered by Terry Eagleton on postcolonialism's bias against universality and critiques postcolonial critics' dismissal of 'universalism' with a 'holier-than-thou attitude and a delicious shudder'. Following Eagleton and with a nod to Marxism, he expresses his dissatisfaction with

what he sees as a tendency to celebrate the local without proper recourse to its political relationship to the universal and calls for a return to broader conceptual frameworks.

This position is typical of a number of articles this year which hit back at the focus on literary texts in postcolonial studies. Maria Fernandez in her essay 'Postcolonial Media Theory' in the summer 1999 edition of *Third Text* 47(pp. 11-17), bemoans the fact that in her view postcolonial theory and media analysis have tended to remain discrete. The editors address this apparent impasse by including essays on pirate electronic cultures in India (Ravi Sundarum) and techno-orientalism and Japanese animation (Toshiya Ueno). Like Khair, Fernandez attributes the disjunction in theoretical positions to a general focus on literature over electronic media and tries to find ways in which divergent theories might be reconciled. She runs through a series of examples. The focus on the virtualisation of the body by cyber-theorists contrasts markedly with the emphasis postcolonial critics place on the realities of subjection as inscribed on the physical body through torture, rape and other forms of colonial violence. Similarly, the racialised body as explored via representations (mimicry, exoticism, primitivism) is underdeveloped in electronic media theory, 'in part because theorists are predominantly white and middle class' but also because the emphasis on anonymity is possible in cyberspace. Donna Haraway's work is, predictably enough, exemplary of the ways in which one might bridge the gap, basing her cyborg on the *mestizaje* and postcolonial feminist practices. Similar differentiations are mooted with regard to identity and history and in a surprisingly short conclusion, considering the number of issues that the essay raises, Fernandez provides examples of those artists who use digital media with specific relevance to postcolonial preoccupations (Esther Parada, Roshini Kempadoo, Keith Piper among others). She hopes that more cultural work of this type will be undertaken.

In 'The Ethical Turn in Postcolonial Theory and Narrative: Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven*' (*Ariel*, 30.4, pp. 109-33) Maureen Moynagh's starting point is Kwame Anthony Appiah's 'Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?', deploying Appiah's call for an 'ethical orientation of postcolonial theory' whilst also suggesting that such a move is fraught with tension since the search for an 'ethical foundation for postcolonial theory appears to be vitiated by its other post-foundational affiliations'. She doesn't venture to say what these other post-foundational affiliations might be, but instead moves into a short summary of Homi Bhabha's position vis-a-vis ethics. For Bhabha the work of Emmanuel Levinas, particularly his concept of 'proximity', is most illuminating. Moynagh argues that Bhabha seeks 'an ethics that can account for the ambivalence of minority identifications in heterogenous national societies' whilst reminding the reader that 'the nation... is for Bhabha at once inadequate and exclusionary as an ethico-political category'. Moynagh worries that a focus on the ethical in postcolonial criticism highlights an 'anxiety about the political efficacy of postcolonial theory and doubts about anti-imperialist projects of various kinds, including uncertainty about once cherished emancipatory categories such as the nation'. Monika Fludernick is interested in imagology and in particular autostereotypes and heterostereotypes as exemplified in Indian fiction in her article, 'Cross-Mirrorings of Alterity: The Colonial Scenario and its Psychological Legacy' (*Ariel*, 30.3, pp 29-62). In what is basically an application of the concepts of hybridity and ambivalence, Fludernick examines five scenarios which, she believes 'define typical constellations of image transfer': colony, exoticism/orientalism, exile, globalization/cosmopolitanism and third party. She concludes her article with the assertion that 'cross-mirrorings' of alterity constitute 'unending processes of projection that apparently never get resolved; they merely intensify the doubling by yet one more turn of the screw'.

Alberto Moreiras' 'Hybridity and Double Consciousness' (*Cultural Studies* 13.3, pp. 373-407), deals with the reification of ethnicity and its counter-concept hybridity, recognising that hybridity retains its associations with the colour line and is limited by the critical categories into which it has been inserted. Moreiras tests ways of expressing subaltern resistance by moving through and beyond theorizations of hybridity into a political programme committed to economic justice. The article develops into a phased discussion of transculturation (via Garcia Canclini); of neoliberalism (via Bourdieu) *vis-a-vis* identity politics (Lisa Lowe); the local and the global (Slavoj Zizek and Stuart Hall); and Michael Walzer's 'thick' and 'thin' morality. It concludes that seeing hybridity as 'a recipe for perpetual flexibility' fails to reconcile the concept with its propensity toward the reification he uncovers in each formulation (from Lowe's material hybridity to Bhabha's savage hybridity and Laclau's cultural hybridity). He turns to Gilroy and to Balibar and his concept of 'unconditional insurrection' to test the extent to which a subaltern position 'undoes hybridity', and, in its refusal to narrativise, asserts itself as a force outside problematically circumscribed categories of hybridity.

**Books reviewed:**

Alessandrini, Anthony. *Fanon: Critical Perspectives*. Routledge. pp.xii + 292. pb. ISBN 0-415-18976-4

Ashcroft, Bill, & Ahluwalia, Pal. *Edward Said: the paradox of identity*. Routledge. pp.166. pb ISBN 0-415-19671-X

Chrisman, Laura, & Parry, Benita (eds). *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism*. D.S.Brewer. pp.xi + 156. hb ISBN 0-85991-554-9

Lazarus, Neil. *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*. Cambridge University Press. pp.xiii + 294. pb ISBN 0-521-62493-2

Quayson, Ato . *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?* Polity. pp.vii + 208, pb £14.50, ISBN 0-7456-1713-1

Sardar, Ziauddin. *Orientalism*. Open University Press. pp.viii + 136, pb.£ ISBN 0-335-20206-3

Spivak. Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Harvard University Press. pp. xiii + 449. pb. £15.50, ISBN 0-674-17764-

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