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Abstract

Edward Said's *Orientalism* is one of the founding texts of postcolonial studies. Even though Said explicitly engages with the ideas of Gramsci, the book's conceptualisation of power has predominantly been seen as Foucauldian. This one-sided, Foucauldian interpretation sparked many critiques in which Said was criticised for conceptualising power as all-pervasive, lacking a theory of resistance, and thereby trapped within the very Orientalist framework he intended to dissolve. To unravel this paradox, I propose to undertake a contrapuntal reading that places *Orientalism* in a combined Foucauldian *and* Gramscian light. I analyse how the incorporation and interplay of both these intertexts informs and structures Said's approach. Conceptualising Orientalism as a discourse *and* as the product of hegemony in counterpoint allows one better to understand Said's conceptualisation of power and reevaluates the possibilities for resistance by emphasising the agency of intellectuals.

Keywords

Edward Said; Michel Foucault; Antonio Gramsci; discourse; hegemony; resistance; agency.

Bio

Nicolas Vandeviver is a PhD Fellow of the Research Foundation Flanders at the Department of Literary Studies of Ghent University working on a doctoral

thesis that analyses the conceptualisation of *literature* and *agency* in the critical practice of Edward Said. In 2017–2018 he will be a Fulbright Research Fellow and a Postdoctoral Fellow of the Belgian American Educational Foundation to study the Edward Said Archives at Columbia University. His main research interests are literary theory, theoretical genealogies, existentialism and its legacy, and debates on structure vs. agency. He has recently published an article on the ideas of Jean-Paul Sartre in Stephen Greenblatt's new historicism:

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Introduction

In the introduction to *Orientalism*, Edward Said famously indicates that throughout his work he will be employing Michel Foucault's notion of *discourse.* This is necessary, he argues, because

> without examining Orientalism as *a discourse* one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.[1]

This particular citation has caused critics to regard the Foucauldian intertext in *Orientalism* as its primary theoretical underpinning, even though Said's work also explicitly engages with the work of Antonio Gramsci. The further impact of this theoretical bias meant that Foucault's insights on the workings of texts, discourse, and the operations of power became the central methodological

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[1] Said 1978, p. 3.

toolbox in the emerging field of postcolonial theory and colonial discourse analysis.[2] But Said's formulation of Orientalism as a discourse and his use of that notion throughout his seminal text have also generated intense critical activity with regards to his work.[3] Generally speaking, Said's critics commonly seem to take for granted that because of his explicit indebtedness to Foucault's notion of discourse, his conceptualisation and analysis of power must be similarly Foucauldian.[4] Adopting such a Foucauldian stance on power means dismissing the individual human subject and its intentions, and transferring agency to antihumanist institutional wills and repressive but nevertheless productive systems.[5] Regardless of the accuracy of the interpretation, this view of power is frequently interpreted by critics, including the later Said, as one that is grim. It is a conceptualisation in which power is seen as nomothetic, unstoppable in the growth of its domination and ultimately irresistible because it exhausts all human activity, dismisses individual human agency, and empties out resistance as well as the production of counter-discursive knowledge.[6] Because Said allegedly conceptualises power in this Foucauldian way, critics have charged him with being trapped within the framework of Orientalism and even perpetuating that framework by denying the possibility of agency and

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[2] Young 1990, pp. 10–11; O'Hanlon and Washbrook 1992; Loomba 2005, p. 49; Nichols 2010, p. 120.
[3] Young 2001, p. 186.
[4] Ahmad 1992, p. 165; Bhatnagar 1986; Clifford 1988, pp. 255–74; Emig 2012; Gandhi 1998, pp. 74–5; Loomba 2005, pp. 42–53; Ochoa, 2006; Teti 2014; Young 2001, p. 387.
[5] Foucault 1976, pp. 121–35.
[6] Baudrillard 1977, pp. 45–55; Mills 2003, pp. 123–5; Said 1992, pp. 239–40, and 2000, p. 47.

resistance on the part of the colonised.[7] In short, *Orientalism* is said to lack a theory of resistance (in the same way that Foucault's work is said to do).[8] Is this truly the case though?

Taking one of these commentaries as a starting point, I want to address the problem of resistance in *Orientalism*. This chapter presents a detailed analysis of *Orientalism*'s conceptualisation of power and agency that shows how Said relies on Foucault's notion of discourse and the function of texts, but supplements these insights with Gramsci's theory of hegemony to conceptualise culture, agency and power. I argue for a contrapuntal reading of *Orientalism* that places it in a combined Foucauldian *and* Gramscian light that does not take these intertexts to be conflicting, irreconcilable or mutually undermining – as the majority of Said's critics have done – but regards them as complimentary. In doing so, my reading draws upon Said's conceptualisation of the crucial notion of counterpoint.[9] Even though the term *counter* in *counterpoint* is ostensibly a term of opposition, contrapuntal criticism's goal is not the separation and exclusion of ultimately polarised lines of thought but rather their inclusion into a mixed, hybrid form of thinking.[10] A contrapuntal reading, as Jonathan Arac has stressed, is therefore not aggressive and dichotomous, but loving and joining.[11] This is crucial because conceptualising Orientalism as a

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[7] These are precisely the defining characteristics of Orientalism's reductive vision of human history that robs Orientals of agency and the production of knowledge. It takes for granted that the Orient requires and even insists upon Occidental rule (Said 1978, p. 34).
[8] Clifford 1988, p. 263; Ahmad 1992, pp. 159–219.
[9] See Said 1993, pp. 59–60.
[10] Said 1993, p. 15.
[11] Arac 1998, p. 57.

discourse *and* as the product of hegemony in counterpoint allows us to understand not only the workings of Orientalism, but also to reevaluate the possibility of resistance to Orientalism by highlighting the agency of intellectuals that Said believed in.

Orientalism as a discourse

In a defining commentary on *Orientalism*, James Clifford admired the book for its pioneering attempt to apply a Foucauldian paradigm to the study of imperialism. However, he ultimately finds Said's use of discourse analysis flawed and theoretically inconsistent.[12] The problem with *Orientalism*, according to Clifford, is that Said's attempt to carry out an anti-humanist Foucauldian discourse analysis of the archive of Orientalism with the attendant deterministic vision on human agency is marred by an incompatible humanist belief in the power of individual authors.[13] This becomes clear in the introduction to *Orientalism*, Clifford argues,[14] in which Said clearly avows his indebtedness to Foucault whilst simultaneously distancing himself from the French thinker:

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[12] Clifford 1988, pp. 255–74.
[13] Clifford 1988, pp. 262–4. This criticism, which boils down to the argument that Said's analyses undermine themselves because they are too humanist and hence "not Foucauldian enough", has often been voiced by critics (see Hart 2000, p. 74).
[14] Clifford 1988, p. 269.

I do believe in the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism. … Foucault believes that in general the individual text or author counts for very little; empirically, in the case of Orientalism (and perhaps nowhere else) I find this not to be so. Accordingly my analyses employ close textual readings whose goal is to reveal the dialectic between individual text or writer and the complex collective formation to which his work is a contribution.[15]

It is precisely this humanist belief in individual human intention and the imprint of individual authors that Clifford finds incompatible with Said's use of discourse analysis derived from Foucault, who was of course a radical critic of humanism and developed the notion of discourse initially as a means of getting away from a philosophy centred on the human subject.[16] Such a philosophy presupposes a-priori unifying anthropological and psychological categories and, usually foregrounds books, oeuvres, and authorial subjects in cultural analyses.[17] Discourse analysis, on the other hand, desubjectifies and removes the entire field of psychology. It no longer regards authors as individuals with particular experiences, but considers them to be functions or labels attached to discursive statements.[18] To be clear, this does not mean that the notion of the

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[15] Said 1978, pp. 23–4.
[16] Foucault 1969, pp. 22–3.
[17] Foucault 1969, pp. 31–43.
[18] Foucault 1994.

author is banished altogether from Foucault's analyses; it does, however, entail thinking of authors transcendentally as a purely ontological principle of a text without taking recourse to personalised, psycho-biographical terms to explain any form of textuality.[19] As such, Foucault does not employ any close readings of particular statements but focuses on the conglomerate formation of discursive statements.

Said has adopted a contrapuntal approach to cultural analysis, which follows Foucault in thinking of texts not merely as expressions of ideas but also as worldly and material in ways that vary according to genres and historical periods.[20] Yet unlike Foucault, Said does not dismiss the authority of individuals and, consequently, pays attention to both discursive *and* personal statements. This becomes clear in the methodological devices Said develops for studying what he calls authority. On the one hand, he uses the term *strategic formation* to describe the ensemble of relationships of an individual text with other texts as well as the way in which these analysable textual formations acquire unity, mass, strength and thus authority in the culture at large. Said analyses both the (discursive) relations of such textual formations to other textual formations and the (non-discursive) relations to audiences, institutions and the Orient itself.[21] On the other hand, he uses the term *strategic location* to denote the way in which a particular author in a text positions himself with regards to the Oriental material he describes. Said focuses on the prior

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[19] Burke 1998, p. 107.
[20] Said 1978, p. 23.
[21] Said 1978, 20.

knowledge an author relies on and refers to, the motifs he uses, the images he conjures up, and the voice he adopts.[22] *Strategic formation* causes Said to read literature not as an isolated cultural practice but as a medium of representation connected to political tracts, journalistic articles, travel books, religious treatises, and philosophical studies. It also seems to explain what Said means by describing Orientalism *as a discourse* and conceptually mirrors Foucault's description of the regularities of discourse and the formation of strategies in *L'Archéologie du savoir*.[23] Yet the term *strategic location* is a clear sign that Said departs from Foucault by showing interest in authors not as passive labels attached to discursive statements, but as active subjects with individual intentions, experiences, and contributions who actively position themselves vis-à-vis an anonymous collective formation.[24] The term implies that individuals maintain the authority over their texts and, equally importantly, are ultimately responsible for the choices they make and the (perhaps unintended) results of those choices.

Said's application of discourse analysis differs from Foucault's in that Said holds on to individual intentionality as an explanatory category of the mechanisms of power articulated in discourse. Even though Said, like Foucault, is interested in the circulatory network in which power produces knowledge

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Foucault 1969, pp. 41, 87–91. Discourse analysis has a threefold focus: first, it studies the internal formative relations between statements, next, the relations between different groups of statements thus established (discursive formations) and, finally, the relations between these groups of statements and events of a different kind (technical, economic, social, political) (Foucault 1969, p. 41).

[24] A prefiguration of this crucial term to think authority in the context of a pre-existing and at first sight even overwhelming tradition of writing can be found in the concepts of *beginning* and *intention* which Said had developed earlier in *Beginnings* (Said 1975).

and knowledge imposes power on the Oriental, he approaches these networks from a different perspective. Even if Foucault argues that power is intentional and has certain goals, he does not take that to mean that power is the result of an individual's choices or decisions.[25] An explanation of the effects of power cannot be found at the level of individual intentionality given that all human volition is constituted by structures of discourse. Ultimately, Foucault is not interested in the statements of individuals, but focuses instead on the relations of statements in a field and the underlying *dispositif* – the enabling rules of discourse and its underpinning interests.[26] For Said, on the other hand, power is something one possesses – something Foucault deems impossible –[27] with an intention or will to use, exploit or abuse these power relations.[28] Orientalism, Said writes, is not simply a discourse but also

> a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world.[29]

While for some critics this may at first sight be nothing more than Said's adaptation of Foucault's anonymous *will-to-know* for his own work,[30] Said's analyses also seek to take into account those forces that drive individuals, such

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[25] Foucault 1976, p. 125.
[26] Foucault 1976, p. 16.
[27] Foucault 1976, p. 122.
[28] Racevskis 2005, p. 92.
[29] Said 1978, p. 12.
[30] Mills 2003, p. 71.

as profit, ambition, ideas, and even the sheer love of power,[31] as well as explicitly treat the historical phenomenon of Orientalism as a form of '*willed human work*'.[32]

Critics reading *Orientalism* in a Foucauldian light have argued that Said's interpretation of discourse analysis is the result of a somewhat careless and unmediated reading of Foucault.[33] I, however, want to argue that Said's focus on personal statements in addition to discursive statements and his belief in the power of individuals are precisely well-thought out critical responses to Foucault that explicitly draw upon Gramsci's theories and insights on power, agency and culture. In doing so, I am not the first to draw attention to this Gramscian intertext in *Orientalism*.[34] It is by now a commonly held view that the influence of Gramsci on postcolonial studies is precisely due to *Orientalism* and the Subaltern Studies Group of the early 1980s.[35] But although these allusions are well known, most critics downplay Gramsci's importance as the stamp of Foucault on *Orientalism* is time and again highlighted as the work's single most important theoretical influence.[36]

Timothy Brennan is perhaps the staunchest advocate of recognising the importance of the Gramscian intertext in *Orientalism*. In fact, he has argued multiple times that even though Foucault's theories are important for Said's

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[31] Said 1983a, p. 222.
[32] Said 1978, p. 15.
[33] Ahmad 1992, p. 165; Chuaqui 2005, pp. 99–100; Clifford 1988, pp. 271–2; Emig 2012, 140.
[34] See Brennan 2006 and Hussein 2002.
[35] Bhattacharya B. 2012, p. 83.
[36] Clifford 1988, pp. 255–74; Kennedy 2000, p. 25; Loomba 2005, pp. 42–53; Niyogi 2006, p. 135; Racevskis 2005; Young 2001, p. 387.

early work – *Beginnings*[37] most notably – they hardly have anything to do with the argument made in *Orientalism*.[38] *Orientalism*, Brennan feels, should therefore not be understood as Foucauldian but as Gramscian, and the central concept of the book to him is not the Foucauldian concept of *discourse* but the Gramscian or Chomskyan notion of *institution*.[39] Although Brennan provides a more than necessary counterweight in the debate about *Orientalism*'s theoretical underpinnings and rightly asks us to pay attention to the Gramscian line of thought in that work, he bends the stick too far the other way and thereby obscures the book's Foucauldian underpinnings. The stick is bent less far – but still too far, in my view – by Neil Lazarus who, in line with Brennan, argues that even though Said echoes Foucault's speech, he clearly does not echo his thinking. As such, Lazarus argues, we should translate Said's notion of *discourse* into something resembling Raymond Williams' notion of *hegemony*, which he sets out in Gramscian terms in *Marxism and Literature*.[40] I think both wrongfully construct a one-sided, Gramscian Said. As I have already stressed, Orientalism should be analysed as a discourse in the Foucauldian sense of the word and is even marked by the same disciplinary vision that characterises the punitive discourse that Foucault analyses in *Surveiller et punir*.[41] By this, I mean that it orders, synchronises, categorises, makes intelligible, and essentialises

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[37] Said 1975.
[38] Brennan 1992, 2000, and 2001.
[39] Brennan 2006, p. 123.
[40] Williams, 1977; Lazarus 2011, pp. 192–3.
[41] Foucault 1975.

because 'it presumes that the whole Orient can be seen panoptically'.[42] For reasons of space and focus, I cannot develop this argument any further here. Suffice to say, however, that one should not obscure the explicitly Foucauldian underpinnings of *Orientalism.* Instead of stressing the primacy of one intertext over the other or trying to bring Said's analyses into line with either a Foucauldian or a Gramscian orthodoxy,[43] I propose a contrapuntal reading of *Orientalism* that places it in a complementary Foucauldian and Gramscian light that does not grant either of the two the upper hand. In order to do justice to Said's approach to secular criticism, one have to consider Orientalism as both a discourse *and* as the product of hegemony. Allow me to argue why.

… and as the product of hegemony

In an essay that came out of a recurring National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar at Columbia University that he taught from 1977 to 1979, Said balances Foucault's conceptualisation of the function of texts against Derrida's. In the essay, he explicitly favours the former's for its ability to not only show the internal workings of texts but also their worldly affiliations with 'institutions, offices, agencies, classes, academies, corporations,

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[42] Said 1978, p. 240.

[43] The phrase is Lazarus's. Although he is right to point out that this is precisely what *Orientalism*'s Foucauldian critics have done (Lazarus 2011, p. 189), its Gramscian critics have also tried to reconcile Said's "heterodox" criticism with a canonical version of Gramsci – whatever that may be, given the unsystematic nature of Gramsci's writings.

groups, guilds, ideologically defined parties and professions'.[44] Yet despite its worldliness, Said finds Foucault's theory ultimately inadequate as a means of dealing with historical change precisely because it does not pay attention to individual statements:

> Foucault's thesis is that individual statements, or the chances that individual authors *can* make individual statements, are not really likely. Over and above every opportunity for saying something, there stands a regularising collectivity that Foucault has called a discourse, itself governed by the archive. … Though obviously anxious to avoid vulgar determinism in explaining the workings of the social order, he pretty much ignores the whole category of *intention*.[45]

According to Said, Foucault conceptualises discourse as something that dominates and even overwhelms subjects.[46] As I have already discussed, Said believes that individuals *can* make personal statements and contribute to (and thus potentially oppose) a collective discursive formation such as Orientalism. Even though he is positive on the whole about Foucault's view of the function of texts,[47] Said finds it lacking in terms of context and ultimately, therefore,

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[44] Said 1983a, p. 212.
[45] Said 1983a, p. 186; emphasis added.
[46] See Foucault 1970, p. xiv.
[47] What Said admires in Foucault's theory of the function of texts is the idea that 'the text is part of a network of power whose textual form is a purposeful obscuring of power beneath textuality and knowledge' (Said 1983a, p. 184). It is the role of the critic to make visible once again this connection and to challenge 'the culture and its apparently sovereign powers of intellectual activity' (Said 1983a, pp. 184–5).

ahistorical. According to him, the study of the workings of texts can only achieve fullness in its historically contextual mode, which means broadening the historical context to include, amongst all other worldly affiliations, the human intentionality that produces these texts.[48]

By disregarding human intentionality, Foucault imagines power as too sterile and irresistible and, Said was to say in an interview in 1992, 'ultimately becomes the scribe of domination'.[49] In this sense, Said, who is politically committed,[50] feels uneasy about Foucault's rather disinterested stance from the operations of power, and criticises him for leaving out oppositional forces and thereby lapsing into political quietism –[51] a criticism that was also often voiced in France by Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and other critics of the left.[52] 'What one misses in Foucault', Said goes on to write,

> is something resembling Gramsci's analyses of hegemony, historical blocks, ensembles of relationship done from the perspective of an engaged political worker for whom the fascinated

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[48] Bhattacharya N., Kaul, Loomba and Said 2004; Brennan 2005; Christopher 2005, p. 118.

[49] Said 1992, p. 239.

[50] Said became politically active in 1967 in response to the Arab-Israeli conflict of June. He published his first political essay on the representation of Arabs in 1970 (Said 1970) and became an independent member of the Palestinian National Council in 1977.

[51] Said was later to clash with Foucault on precisely this matter, arguing that Foucault never thinks about power from the perspective of opposition, rather from its actualisation: 'Foucault's imagination of power is largely *with* rather than *against* it … [H]is interest in domination was critical but not finally as contestatory or as oppositional as on the surface it seems to be. This translates into the paradox that Foucault's imagination of power was by his analysis of power to reveal its injustice and cruelty, but by his theorization to let it go on more or less unchecked' (Said 2000, p. 242).

[52] See Eribon 2011, pp. 276–80. In an interview, Sartre polemically called Foucault's air of neutrality and his precedence of structures the final bulwark of the bourgeoisie against Marxism (Sartre 1966). Although distinctly less sympathetic to Marxism, Said shares many criticisms of Foucault with Sartre – perhaps a residue of his Sartre-inspired existential-phenomenological work on Joseph Conrad (Said 1966). These analogies fall outside the scope of this chapter.

description of exercised power is never substitute from trying to change power relationships within society.[53]

To supplement Foucault's conceptualisation of the workings of texts and in lieu of what he considers to be flawed ideas on power and agency – both with regards to authors and the critic – Said favours Gramsci's ideas on hegemony as a means of conceptualising culture, agency, and power relations, both in the essay and in *Orientalism*:

> ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied. To believe that the Orient was created – or, as I call it, "Orientalized" – and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination, is to be disingenuous. The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex *hegemony*.[54]

Apart from restating that Orientalist discourse is driven by an intention – both on the level of the collective and the individual –[55] Said argues that the relationship of power that informs Orientalism and that is perpetuated by Orientalist discourse should be seen as a form of cultural leadership, or what Gramsci has identified as *hegemony*. 'Culture, of course', Said goes on to specify,

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[53] Said 1983a, pp. 221–2.
[54] Said 1978, p. 5; emphasis added.
[55] Hussein 2002, p. 240.

is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but by what Gramsci calls consent. … It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and strength I have been speaking about so far.[56]

To be clear from the outset, in my discussion of the Gramscian notion of *hegemony* I am aligning myself with Peter Thomas's understanding of it. Contrary to Perry Anderson's widespread antinomian view in which hegemony (consent) and domination (coercion) are seen as qualitatively distinct and oppositional forms of power,[57] Thomas argues that one should see them

as strategically differentiated forms of a unitary political power: hegemony is the form of political power exercised over those classes in close proximity to the leading group, while domination is exerted over those opposing it.[58]

The unfolding of power, Thomas argues, happens through the winning of consent of included classes and coercion against excluded others.[59] In a dialectical integrated process, hegemony both prepares for a future domination and secures that achieved dominance: consent always appears in tandem with a

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[56] Said 1978, p. 7.
[57] Anderson 1979, pp. 20–5.
[58] Thomas 2009, p. 163.
[59] Thomas 2009, pp. 162–3.

certain degree of coercion.[60] Not only is Thomas's understanding, to my mind, closer to Gramsci's conceptualisation of power relations as the dual nature of Machiavelli's Centaur 'half-animal and half-human … levels of force and consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation',[61] it also closely fits Said's description of how Orientalism helped first to unfold and later maintain European-Atlantic dominance over the Orient. Historically speaking, Said finds it remarkable that in the Orient 'very little consent is to be found'.[62] Orientalism's relationship of power is unitary in that non-Orientals hold onto power and speak for Orientals, who are excluded from the right of self-representation and held in check through a series of colonial institutions (military, legislative, judiciary, administrative, educational, religious, academic, imaginative). The relative strength between the Occident and the Orient allowed the former to dominate the latter and enabled the formation of Orientalism as a Western discourse to support that dominance in the culture at home and prepare for colonial interference abroad;[63] subsequently, from Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 to the present, one is able to see the manufacturing of consent of the Oriental population by both Western and Eastern intellectuals alike.[64] Orientalism, to put it in Gramsci's words, can thus

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[60] Thomas 2009, pp. 163–4.
[61] Gramsci 1971, p. 170.
[62] Said 1978, p. 6.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Said 1978, pp. 81–4, 322–4.

be seen as a power relation of 'hegemony protected by the armour of coercion'.[65]

The conceptualisation of Orientalism as a discourse *and* as the product of hegemony at the same time is crucial in two ways.[66] First, Gramsci's term *hegemony* allows Said to think not only of culture in terms of determining yet productive constraints – an idea one also finds in Foucault's cultural analyses – [67] but allows him to do so without dismissing the individual agency of subjects and blurring the individuality of authors.[68] After all, Gramsci argues that although there are forces of dominance and subordination at work in history that are independent of human will – the refractory social forces such as a city's

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[65] Gramsci 1971, p. 263.

[66] There are very few studies that consider Foucault's and Gramsci's understanding of power together. Though some critics forcefully reject the possibility of combining the work of the two thinkers, I am on firm ground with the few critics who suggest that the two oeuvres should be considered complementary and that the selective combination of their insights supplements the inevitable flaws or theoretical blind spots in either theory (Cocks 1989, p. 26; Ekers and Loftus 2008; Hardt and Negri 2000; Kreps 2015; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Radhakrishnan 1990; Torfing 1999). Chantal Mouffe was one of the first to argue that Gramsci and Foucault approach many of the same theoretical concerns and that the former's understanding of hegemony can be reconciled with the latter's notion of discourse (Mouffe 1979). Mouffe draws upon Gramsci's insights that the struggle for hegemony happens in civil society during a war of position (see Gramsci 2007, p. 267) to reconceptualise hegemony as a discursive phenomenon (Torfing 1999, p. 14). According to her, social conflict is a struggle over meaning that is being fought at the ideological level by intellectuals of opposing blocs through the constant disarticulation and rearticulation of discourses (Mouffe 1979, pp. 185–7). The struggle ends when one bloc has successfully disarticulated the opposing bloc's discourse and has rearticulated certain key discursive elements in ideological terms of its own (Mouffe 1979, p. 198; see also Laclau and Mouffe 1985).
  Moreover, I find myself strengthened in combining the ideas of Gramsci and Foucault by the work of Michael Ekers and Alex Loftus on the political ecology of water. They too combine both writers' ideas and stress that Foucault's understanding of power has antecedents in Gramsci's work on hegemony and the integral state (Ekers and Loftus 2008, pp. 702–8). In their view, Foucault's micropolitical theory of power follows up on Gramsci's insights on hegemony and the consolidation of power from the public sphere of the state right down to the intimacies of everyday life, such as privative initiatives, the thought of intellectuals and the modern home (Gramsci 1971, pp. 5–23, 55ff, n. 5, 258). While Foucault did not deny the existence of the state in the Gramscian sense and even explicitly acknowledged that relations of power and the regimes of truth operate within broader, macropolitical forms of hegemony (Foucault 2000, p. 133), he thought it necessary to decentre power and take as a starting point the intricate, dispersed micropractices of modern power that were hitherto being obscured in analyses that focused too much on the apparently sovereign power of the state and its apparatus (Foucault 1976, pp. 116–18).

[67] See Foucault 1976, pp. 123-4.

[68] Said 1978, p. 9.

population or the number of firms, for instance –, these forces serve as the conditions on which a society can transform and certainly do not rule out human intention or overwhelm willed human work.[69] *Hegemony* is a sensitive analytical term that takes into account the constraints affecting subjects while simultaneously acknowledging the active role these subordinate subjects play in the operations of power.[70] The dominant class, Gramsci writes, does not merely coerce its power upon subaltern classes, 'but manages to win the active consent over those over whom it rules'.[71] An analysis of power relations must therefore study both the historical conditions in which men live and that shape their subjectivity *and* study the will and initiative of these men in reaction to these conditions.[72] It is clear from Gramsci's writings that conscious and willful actions of men are, after all, the prime motors of history.[73] Gramsci's theory of hegemony enables Said to pay attention to personal statements in addition to discursive statements, and to conceptualise Orientalism

> as a dynamic exchange between individual authors and the large political concerns shaped by the three great empires – British, French, American – in whose intellectual and imaginative territory the writing was produced.[74]

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[69] Gramsci 1971, pp. 180–5; Williams 1977, p. 108.
[70] Gramsci 1971, pp. 265–6; Jones 2006, p. 41.
[71] Gramsci 1971, p. 244.
[72] Gramsci 1971, pp. 125–33, 244.
[73] Gramsci 1971, p. 130; Daldal 2014, p. 151; Thomas 2009, p. 156.
[74] Said 1978, pp. 14–15.

The second important consequence of Said's use of the term hegemony is that it tackles the criticism of allowing no alternative to Orientalism. Even though Said avows that he has paid insufficient attention to developing such an alternative,[75] change is always possible in a hegemonic analysis simply because a hegemonic social form can never exhaust all human behaviour, energy, or intention.[76] There are always significant forms of human practice that happen against or outside the dominating hegemonic social order and, Said was to write later in a way that balanced Gramsci's insights with Foucault's, 'this is obviously what makes change possible, limits power in Foucault's sense, and hobbles the theory of that power'.[77] Every social form has the possibility further to develop into a new or alternate form, however marginal that development may be.[78] In effect, a social form can only ever be partially and temporarily fixed, never fully. For if such absolute fixity would exist in the social world, there would be nothing to hegemonise and it would simply be considered domination.[79] This insight guarantees the possible emergence of new forces which can then, in turn, become hegemonic and forms the basis for Raymond Williams's elaboration of historical change in terms of dynamic interrelations between residual, dominant, and emergent forces. In this theory, these emergent forces are representative to areas of human behaviour which are neglected, repressed, or even unrecognised by the dominant hegemonic

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[75] Said 1978, p. 325.
[76] Williams 1977, p. 125.
[77] Said 1983c, p. 247.
[78] Gramsci 1971, p. 222.
[79] Laclau and Mouffe 1985, p. 134.

order.[80] These new forces can become dominant and topple the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism, for instance, through meaningful and willed human action, led by intellectuals.

Gramsci attributes an important role to intellectuals in the dissemination of hegemony and the manufacturing of consent, as well as in the production of a counter-hegemony.[81] They are responsible for the elaboration of ideology through culture and are ultimately capable of realising moral and intellectual reform at the level of civil society.[82] Said stresses the importance of intellectuals as agents in the practice of Orientalism too, albeit in a negative way. He describes Orientalism as a form of '*intellectual authority* over the Orient within Western culture'[83] in which he distinguishes both 'the historical authority' – Orientalism as a discursive formation – and 'the personal authorities' –[84] the personal statements of Orientalist scholars. Intellectuals are in no way free-floating individuals and must be considered in relation to the precise historical structures in which they function as intellectuals.[85] But even within these structures, they are still producers of objects, ideas, texts and, particularly in the case of Orientalism, representations posing as "truth".[86] This raises some critical questions:

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[80] Williams 1977, pp. 122–3.
[81] Gramsci 1971, pp. 9–14; Mouffe 1979, p. 187; Holub 1992, p. 6.
[82] Gramsci 1971, pp. 12, 60–1.
[83] Said 1978, p. 19.; emphasis added.
[84] Said 1978, p. 20.
[85] Gramsci 1971, p. 9; Jones 2006, p. 82.
[86] See Said 1978, p. 21.

> How do ideas acquire authority, "normality," and even the status of "natural" truth? What is the role of the intellectual? Is he there to validate the culture and state of which he is a part? What importance must he give to an independent critical consciousness, an *oppositional* critical consciousness?[87]

Despite Orientalism's functioning as a discourse, Said's term *strategic location*, as I have already indicated, implies that individuals must position themselves in relation to the existing discourse of Orientalism. However, because they ultimately hold on to authority, they can therefore be held accountable for their statements and actions when they contribute to the Orientalist discourse, solidify its insights, and perpetuate its structures.[88] In that respect, Said indicts scholars like William Jones or Bernard Lewis for upholding a textual attitude[89] towards the Oriental material they describe as a means of subduing the infinite variety of the Middle-East to an essentialised representation, which then serves as a validation for the imperial subordination of its peoples.[90] Even though they would consider their scholarly work to be impartial and detached from the political concerns of their time, it is actually saturated, Said believes, by political significance and ultimately validates the operations of imperial

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[87] Said 1978, pp. 325–6.

[88] Said 1978, p. 130. Brennan has recently argued that Said's use of discourse differs from Foucault's in that the former's 'does not preclude the idea of guilty agents of power, people with agendas and privileged interests, constituencies of active belief and policy, or the basic *injustice* of the operation that we should oppose on the grounds of human dignity' (Brennan 2013, pp. 18–19).

[89] A textbook example of such an attitude is the view that is ridiculed by Voltaire in *Candide* or by Cervantes in *Don Quixote*. This view, according to Said, is a common human failure of preferring 'the schematic authority of a text to the disorientations of direct encounters with the human' (Said 1978, p. 93).

[90] Said 1978, pp. 77–9, 315–21.

power.[91] As a result, Orientalists like Jones and Lewis cease to function as critical intellectuals and instead become 'experts of legitimation'[92] of the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism. In order to remain critical, intellectuals need to be aware of their worldly circumstances and their political function in civil society and remain oppositional to the workings of power in political society.[93]

Said's indictment of Orientalists is inspired by Gramsci's division of the intelligentsia into traditional and organic intellectuals. Whereas an organic intellectual is connected to an emergent social group and is aware of his or her everyday function in the economic, social and political fields,[94] a traditional intellectual misrecognises him- or herself as being severed from the social group of which he or she is a part and does not consider his or her workings to be of everyday political relevance.[95] These latter intellectuals 'represent an historical continuity uninterrupted even by the most complicated and radical changes in political and social forms'[96] and mistakenly consider themselves as '"independent", autonomous, endowed with a character of their own'.[97] Said's critical intellectual is an organic intellectual who pays careful attention to his or her own worldliness as well as the worldliness of his or her study object. He or she is actively involved in society and constantly struggles to change

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[91] Said 1978, pp. 9–11.
[92] Said 1983b, p. 172.
[93] Ashcroft and Said 2004, p. 100.
[94] Gramsci 1971, p. 5.
[95] Jones, 2006, pp. 87–8.
[96] Gramsci 1971, p. 7.
[97] Gramsci 1971, p. 8.

minds.[98] Such an intellectual is needed in service of proper humanistic scholarship and emancipatory democracy in order to combat the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism that is perpetuated by traditional intellectuals such as Jones and Lewis, who rely so much on *idées reçues* that they become blind to the differentialities of the Middle-East and its peoples.[99]

Orientalism, on the other hand, does not perpetuate the hegemonic framework it analyses, but actively tries to combat that hegemonic discourse by critically analysing it in the past and present in order to undermine its overwhelmingly powerful consent.[100] In the introduction to *Orientalism*, Said invokes Gramsci's idea of self-consciousness as the starting point for every critical analysis:

> The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. … [T]herefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.[101]

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[98] Said 1994, p. 4.

[99] See Said 1978, p. 94, and 1994, p. 89.

[100] The loss of active consent causes, what Gramsci calls, a crisis of authority in which the dominant class has lost its cultural leadership and exercises coercive force alone. This means that the subaltern classes 'have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously' (Gramsci 1971, p. 276). Coercion alone, without the accompanying consent, cannot ultimately prevent emergent ideologies from rising up, mobilising people, and eventually becoming dominant (Gramsci 1971, pp. 275–6).

[101] Gramsci quoted in Said 1978, p. 25.

Because every human subject is the product of an ensemble of relations,[102] the critic has to ascertain what these relations are and compile an inventory of them before her or she can change them for the better. Only when the material conditions are recognised, inventoried, and analysed is the active subject able to transform reality through willed and meaningful counter-hegemonic action.[103] *Orientalism* is Said's conscious attempt at compiling such an inventory of himself as an "Oriental" in order to challenge the hegemony of Orientalism and, to use Raymond Williams's words in *Culture and Society*,[104] contribute to 'unlearning … the inherent dominative mode'.[105] After all, acquiring consciousness of the complex relations of which a subject is the hub already modifies these relations. 'In this sense', Gramsci continues, 'knowledge is power'.[106] That powerful agency stems from Said's analysis of Orientalism as a discourse, his subsequent rejection of humanism-as-history by exposing the excrescences of humanism, and the insight that the production of knowledge

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[102] Gramsci 1971, pp. 352–5.

[103] Bobbio 1979, pp. 34–5. According to Said it is the function of the critical intellectual to invent a better and more just social and political order, not in the romantic sense in which something is created 'from scratch', but 'from the known historical and social facts' (Said 2004, p. 140) and then promoting it as a reality.

[104] Williams 1958.

[105] Williams quoted in Said 1978, p. 28.

[106] Gramsci 1971, p. 353. Gramsci uses this aphorism to argue that even the slightest knowledge of the ensemble of relations – both genetically in the movement of their formation and synchronically at a given period as a system – leads to a better understanding of one's own environment and subjectivity. This understanding is a source of agency for individuals because it is the basis for modifying this ensemble of relations and thus one's subjectivity. In this way, an individual is able to shape power (Gramsci 1971, pp. 352–3). While there is a great deal of resonance and continuity between Gramsci's and Foucault's understanding of power, one can discern a crucial difference at this point. Gramsci's notions of knowledge and power differ from Foucault's in that Gramsci believes man to be the *subject* of knowledge and thus an agent or locus of power (Gramsci 1971, pp. 351–7). Foucault, on the other hand, dispenses these ideas and considers man to be the *object* of knowledge that is produced by impersonal, diffuse, and abstract relations of power (Foucault 1975, p. 32). Being conscious of one's subjectivity and the relations of power that produce this subjectivity – insofar as this would even be possible according to Foucault – is never enough to change them and does not generate agency for individuals (see Daldal 2014, pp. 166–7).

and the operations of power can only be studied together in their full, imaginative, economic, social, and political context.[107]

But although Gramsci believes in the agency of individual intellectuals to change society, a lone intellectual is limited in his or her strength. A willful action only becomes meaningful when it is the organic will of a class or a group of people and, then, through strength in numbers, acquires the potential to be truly radical.[108] In order to successfully combat a hegemony it is vital to link one's own concerns to the politico-social concerns of others and to make clear that one's own sufferings and experiences are connected to those of many.[109] This is precisely what Said sees as his intellectual vocation:

> The intellectual's representations – what he or she represents and how those ideas are represented to an audience – are always tied to and ought to remain an organic part of an ongoing experience in society: of the poor, the disadvantaged, the voiceless, the unrepresented, the powerless.[110]

Recognition of human suffering is a crucial step, but insufficient in and of itself. Individual suffering must be universalised and linked to other peoples' sufferings.[111] As a result, Said goes to great pains to stress that Orientalism is not just an isolated academic problem but representative of a significant

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[107] Said 1978, p. 27.
[108] Gramsci 1971, p. 353.
[109] Gramsci 1971, p. 221.
[110] Said 1994, p. 84.
[111] Said 1994, p. 33.

problem in human experience, identity formation, and the representation of other cultures.[112] Orientalism's failure is an intellectual as much as a human one, because in its opposition to a world region that it considered irreconcilably alien, Orientalism dehumanised that region and its inhabitants and thereby, Said writes, 'failed to identify with human experience, failed also to see it as human experience'.[113] Intellectuals in the postcolonial world must learn from Orientalism's fatal mistakes and realise that though every experience is highly subjective, it is at the same time historical and secular and can thus be understood through proper historical and secular scholarship.[114] In the conclusion to *Orientalism*, Said links the challenge of his work to the various decolonisation movements worldwide, expressing their common goals:

> The worldwide hegemony of Orientalism and all it stands for can now be challenged, if we can benefit properly from the general twentieth-century rise to political and historical awareness of so many of the earth's peoples. If this book has any future use, it will be as a modest contribution to that challenge.[115]

Orientalism is organically tied to the struggle for the political, historical, and imaginative emancipation of (formerly) colonised peoples. As such, it is an act

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[112] Said 1978, pp. 325–6; see also Said 1979, and 1981.
[113] Said 1978, p. 328.
[114] Said 1986, pp. 55–6. Recently, Baidik Bhattacharya has pointed out the analogies between Said's secular criticism and Gramsci's secular humanism (Bhattacharya B. 2012, pp. 92–3). His argument is convincing but we should not forget the formative influence of the philology of Erich Auerbach and the thought of Giambattista Vico on Said's secular criticism.
[115] Said 1978, p. 328.

of resistance to the very framework it describes and contributes to the formation of a counter-hegemonic discourse.

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