

rów i laureatów w konkursach organizowanych przez ugrupowania itd. itd.

Układ haseł - co może w pierwszej chwili deprymować - jest chronologiczny, a nie alfabetyczny, czyli wie-dzie od grup powstałych najwcześniej (Inaczej z 1945 r.) do tych z ostatniego okresu (Dziewin-Młodzi z 1980 r.). Jednak dzięki rozbudowanym indeksom ("alfabetyczny wykaz członków grup", "zestawienie grup według miejscowości" oraz "alfabetyczny spis grup") nie jest trudno trafić do poszczególnych omówień.

Jednym zdaniem, książka Ewy Głę-bickiej to nie tylko "leksykon grup", napisany z obiektywnym dystansem, ale także fascynująca rekonstrukcja bogatego życia literackiego w Polsce, fascynująca i zdumiewająca: chyba nikt z czytelników nie zdawał sobie sprawy, że aż tylu poetów, prozaików i krytyków (ok. 2 tys.) było zaangażowanych w działalność tylu grup (ponad 200)! To chyba rekordowe liczby w skali światowej (słownik Virmaux, który nota bene nie informuje o żadnej polskiej grupie powojennej, podaje zaledwie kilkadziesiąt podobnych faktów we Francji; tylko kilkanaście mogłoby się równać z naszymi pod względem ilości członków, zakresu inicjatyw kulturalnych i dorobku). Leksykon ten z całą pewnością stanie się ważnym i inspiracyjnym punktem wyjścia dla różnorodnych badań przede wszystkim historycznych, ale także z zakresu teorii procesu literackiego, socjologii grup, poetyk zbiorowych itp. Myślę, że niektórzy autorzy haseł w *Słowniku literatury polskiej XX wieku* (pod red. A. Brodzkiej i innych; Wrocław 1992) dziś, po lekturze Głę-bickiej, inaczej sformułowałyby swoje teksty (np. autorka hasła Nowa Fala).

Z założeń warsztatowych leksykonu wynika, że czytelnik nie znajduje w nim omówień i interpretacji twórczości literackiej poszczególnych grup, bo autorka skupiła się na problemach "dziejów i programów", nie wkraczając na teren (już nie tak stabilny) poetyki imma-

nentnej. Pewnie, że byłoby to kapitalne uzupełnienie tego ze wszech miar cen-nego leksykonu. Bo w ostatecznym ra-chunku przecież nie są ważne fakty i daty określające istnienie grup, ich spotkania i dyskusje oraz nawet naj-mądrzejsze i najbardziej konsekwentne programy. Liczy się literatura.

Zatem gdyby np. Alain i Odette Virmaux chcieli naprawdę rzeczowo i odpowiedzialnie przyjrzeć się zjawiskom polskiej literatury po 1945 r. i zrekapitulować - na tle europejskim - nasze grupy - w takim swoim potencjalnym słowniku znalazłoby miejsce tylko dla kilku - spośród kilkuset, o których napisała w swoim dziele Ewa Głę-bicka.

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Edward W. Said  
CULTURE AND IMPERIALISM  
New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 1993,  
pp. 380

Edward W. Said's *Culture and Imperialism* may well be regarded as one of the most important books published in 1993. It is no less than an attempt to map out new directions for cultural criticism in the 1990's, to bring about an "adjustment in perspective and understanding" of the Western cultural archive (243) and, ultimately, to propose "the alternative norms for intellectual work" (42). The measure of respect Said's scholarship commands among his academie peers is best evidenced by the fact that at the annual MLA convention, held in Toronto in December 1993, a separate panel was devoted to the assessment of *Culture and Imperialism* and its possible impact on the study of the humanities.

It is not for the first time in Said's career that his contribution has provoked the academe to shift its interpretative paradigms, challenging it to become engaged in what he would probably call the process of decolonizing know-



ledge. His landmark work *Orientalism* (1978) has changed forever the way the West views itself vis-à-vis the Orient which it has always constructed as its inferior cultural Other. Said is also internationally renowned for his critical readings of modernist writers, especially in such books as *Beginnings* (1975) and *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983). His criticism is not easy to classify; he has drawn from such disparate sources as traditional humanism, poststructuralism, especially in its Foucauldian version, and Marxism. However, what cannot be disputed is that he has become a major voice within postcolonial theory and criticism, which have recently moved from the margins to the centre of academic discourse.

Apart from Said, postcolonial theory has found its classic and contemporary practitioners in such thinkers as Leopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Aimé Césaire, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Wilson Harris, Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Mohanty, Sara Suleri, or Stewart Hall. They explore issues such as the hierarchical relationship between the West and non-West; colonization and anticolonial resistance; postcolonial culture and identity; the construction of Western subjectivity and knowledge; nationalism and national cultures; hybridity, etc. (One of the best introductions to postcolonial theory has been given by B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, and H. Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*, published in 1989 by Routledge). Indeed, what those critics have made us aware of is that "postcoloniality" is a condition that affects not only so-called Third-World countries, but rather is inscribed in and inseparable from the entire enterprise of Western European and American culture. The emergent Indian, African, Caribbean, as well as British, American, Canadian, and Australian literary theories are increa-

singly becoming part of this postcolonial project of reclaiming from Europe the territories (also intellectual) that have been appropriated by the empire.

*Culture and Imperialism* situates itself precisely in this context of revisionary writing. It calls for a new way of reading world literature by giving more scrutiny to the imperialist underpinnings of Western history, politics, and culture. Said believes that exploring the dynamic and complex relationship between culture and imperialism would allow the reader "to interpret canonical nineteenth- and twentieth-century works with a newly engaged interest" (68). He focuses on the three major metropolitan cultures - England's, France's, and the United States' - as they represent best the modern Western variety of domination, and shows how their cultural identity is bound up with the reality of power. Even though the age of empire is over, its memory, ideology, practices, and attitudes still persist. According to Said, forging the theoretical link between culture and empire may offer an important "point of entry into studying the formation and meaning of Western cultural practices themselves" (191).

Each of the four chapters of *Culture and Imperialism* has a slightly different thrust. Chapter One lays out the foundations of Said's argument. Here he puts forward his main philosophical and methodological premise that while "cultural forms are hybrid, mixed, impure" (14), the site of constant borrowing back and forth and crossing over, the West has always maintained a sense of cultural exclusivity and has treated "the whole of world history as viewable by a kind of Western super-subject" (35). He opposes "the rhetorical separation of cultures" as a basis for the relationship between the metropolitan centre and its peripheries, and calls for "affirming the interdependence of various histories on one another, and the necessary interaction of



contemporary societies with one another" (38). As the title of this chapter tells us, we inhabit the world of overlapping territories and intertwined histories.

In order to counter the effects of the universalizing discourses of the West, Said introduces what he calls the contrapuntal method of analysis, "in which texts and worldly institutions are seen working together, in which Dickens and Thackeray as London authors are read also as writers whose historical experience is informed by the colonial enterprises in India and Australia of which they were so aware, and in which the literature of one commonwealth is involved in the literatures of others" (318). Thus reading in "counterpoint" would let us bring together discrepant experiences that may have been geographically, temporally, ideologically, or culturally closed to each other, perhaps even suppressive of each other. Making such connections across time and space would give us a new globalized but not total vision of human history reconceived in terms of resistance and response to empire. Said makes it clear how his contrapuntal analysis, despite its affinity with the aim and methods of comparative literature, differs from this traditional discipline whose origins are closely linked to European imperialism. As a modern counterpart to comparative literature, contrapuntal reading challenges its alleged objectivity and detachment, its hierarchical values and universalizing tendencies, which have served to master, control, or exclude the Other in the name of Western superiority.

Chapter Two offers a series of exemplary close readings of Western texts, including Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Kipling's *Kim*, Camus's *The Stranger*, as well as Verdi's opera *Aida*. In his contrapuntal rereadings, Said on the one hand analyzes "structures of attitude and reference" (52) that reveal the patterns

of domination already present in such pre-imperial writers like Austen, while on the other hand he emphasizes the elements that have been silenced out or marginalized in such works. What Said's analysis amounts to is giving attention not only to what went into the text but also to what was excluded. He is deeply troubled by the coexistence of liberal humanist values and complicity with empire in the authors he refers to. It is at this point that some readers may demand a corrective to Said's emotionally charged attitude to the word "imperialism", which makes him retrospectively project charges of imperialist sentiments throughout the Western canon. Can we really blame Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, or Joseph Conrad for not doing anything to stand in the way of imperialism, just as Said blames the women's and the workingclass movement for being less sensitive to the colonial plight than to the plight of their own constituencies?

Leaving aside his ironic indictment of the Western conscience, Said nevertheless distances himself from what he calls "the rhetoric of blame", which in the voices of subaltern or minority critics nowadays often accuses Western writers for being white, privileged, and complicit. Far from jettisoning their work, it is important that we learn to reread them for both their aesthetic and ideological intrusions. On the other hand, Said also stresses the enabling function of empire for the emergence of narrative fiction, ethnographie and historical discourse, opera, and other disciplines, all of which have formal characteristics predicated on the presence of a strong ordering authority. As Said says, "without empire ... there is no European novel as we know it" (69).

Chapter Three counterpoints Chapter Two in shifting the perspective from the imperial eye to decolonization, focussing on native movements of resistance and opposition to empire in



literature and theory. Using his contrapuntal approach, Said couples a non-Western work with the canon. Thus Ngugi's *The River Between* and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* are juxtaposed with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* whereas Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* reinscribes the figure of caliban. But Said also shows that coupling together two writers belonging to totally different worlds does not necessarily mean recording two oppositional experiences; it provides links between the two worlds and illuminates our commonalities. In this part he reviews the themes of resistance culture, and in the critical tour de force interprets Yeats as a poet of decolonization. Said also discusses the work of intellectuals from the colonial or peripheral regions, such as C. L. R. James, George Antonius, Ranajit Guha, or S. H. Alatas, "who wrote in an \*imperial+ language, land who set themselves the revisionist, critical task of dealing frontally with the metropolitan culture, using the techniques, discourses, and weapons of scholarship and criticism once reserved exclusively for the European" (243).

The final chapter provides a sharp critique of American imperialist ascendancy which has been propelled by the belief that historically Europe and America have been uniquely positioned to rule the world. It is here that Said is mostly caught between "involvement and theory". However, working contrapuntally, he subsequently sketches a vision of liberation and identifies the potential sites of counterdiscourses animated by what he calls the exilic energies of our time. National boundaries, histories, and identities are no longer stable entities, and no one today is purely one thing. Thus, according to Said, our greatest intellectual and cultural challenge is to "match knowledge in the arts and sciences with these integrative realities" (331).

What Said seems to advocate is the

idea of cosmopolitan or "transnational" intellectuality, informed by antiessentialist, anti-systemic, and anti-representational attitudes. He rejects essentialism embodied in theories of race, modern state, or modern nationalism, as they "forgive ignorance and demagoguery more than they enable knowledge" (31). Eurocentrism, lying at the core of Western culture, "accumulated experiences, territories, peoples, histories; it studied them, it classified them, it verified them ... but above all, it subordinated them by banishing their identities, except as a lower order of being, from the culture and indeed the very idea of white Christian Europe" (222). In applying ideas of unchanging European and non-European essences to interpretation of cultures, we are losing sight of the interacting experience that links the West with non-West. Similarly, we forget that "essences" such as Germanness, Jewishness, or Irishness are already interpretations and historically created constructs. Said finds nationalism to be highly problematic and describes the advantages of moving beyond it as the possibility of discovering a new transnational identity that would be less constraining, less coercive than local identities. Thus the task of the cultural intellectual is "not to accept the politics of identity as given, but to show how all representations are constructed, for what purpose, by whom, and with what components" (314).

In fact, Said's anti-representational stance is not without its problems. It is just one of the numerous internal paradoxes pointed out by R. Radhakrishnan in his MLA review of *Culture and Imperialism* that Said's refusal to privilege one representation over another is hard to reconcile with his critique of the West's representations of its non-Western others. Said is suspicious of the power of narratives to give or withhold attention, and therefore he tries to give his book an anti-narrative



ve, that is, anti-linear, fragmentary, and displaced form, reminiscent of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, a hybrid work which he sees as his major influence. However, one can sense in Said's predilection for close reading - as well as in the underlying "temporal" structure of his elegant argument contained within the four chapters that seem to be symmetrically divided between the timeless, the past, the present, and the future - the universalist, or perhaps even modernist imagination at work. Significantly, the book is framed by the quotations from T. S. Eliot, urging us to use the present as a paradigm for the study of the past, and vice versa.

Given Said's persistent references to modernist discourse, it is tempting to view his brand of idealism as an extension of the modernist according to the privileged place to art and culture in our reality. One of the consequences of his project of "secular human history" would be to restore the responsibility of the artist or intellectual for the shape of the world. After all, Said sees liberation as an intellectual mission, and he offers scathing criticism of American academics for abandoning the issues of racism, poverty, ecology, disease, and other problems. All that despite the fact that he himself is speaking from a well entrenched position inside the academe.

The final question that may be asked of Said's book concerns the absence in his contrapuntal reading of a gendered perspective and its analysis. The majority of his primary and secondary sources are works by male writers; except for an occasional mention in passing, he never analyzes any feminist texts that belong to the tradition of postcolonial resistance writing. It is a pity because some of these texts might provide an interesting counterpoint to Said's celebration of nomadic mobility and migrant consciousness. Rather than challenging the system by

choosing to live like nomads or exiles, these feminists see the possibility of subverting the discourse of essentialism by realigning their loyalties and allegiances to small communities.

Still, in spite of all its internal contradictions and complexities, *Culture and imperialism* remains an essential book of political, cultural, and literary criticism that has been engaged in the process of decentering knowledge. It should be read by anyone interested in recent developments in cultural theory.

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Gérard Genette, *SEUILS*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1987, s. 392.

Jest rzeczą zrozumiałą, że w pojmowanym szeroko *universum* literatury na pierwszym planie znajdował się - tak czy inaczej rozumiany - tekst dzieła literackiego. Jego najbliższym "sasiadem", bo przecież nie "lokatorem", jest - od kiedy się pojawia - tytuł, a relacja, różnie się kształtująca, która zachodzi między tekstem właściwym a tytułem, wprowadza nas na obszar szerokiego "pogranicza" tekstu literackiego, które jest przedmiotem porządkującej refleksji Gerarda Genette. Podejmuje on próbę bliższego zbadania owego "pogranicza", lub - wskazując na jego elementy - "progów" dzieła literackiego, jak to sygnalizuje w tytule swojej książki. Upřednio Genette wyodrębnił pięć relacji transtekstualnych, które wypada przypomnieć<sup>1</sup>, aby lepiej

<sup>1</sup> Po szczegółowe analizy wypadnie sięgnąć do: Gérard Genette, *Introduction à l'architexte* (1979), *Palimpsests* (1982) i oczywiście *Seuils* (wszystkie wydane w Les Editions du Seuil, Paris). Zob. także: G.-D. Farcy, *Lexique de la critique*, 1991.