

6 'The Southern Question' and Said's Geographical Critical Consciousness

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Edward Said never ceased to battle with what is called Hegelian historicism, a temporal mode of understanding which invokes opposition only to be reconciled in the end. The Hegelian historicist perspectivism always seeks to secure a core identity underneath myriad divergent, contradictory literary, social, and historical phenomena, resorting to all kinds of temporalities to resolve threats to that core identity. According to Said, such 'temporal and redemptive optimism' is shared among most modern literary critics and theorists. Even critics like Lukacs, for all their penetrative insight into the permanent gap between life and representation, self and Other, and subject and object, whose reconciliation occurs to them only as provisional and aesthetic, are none the less possessed by a deep-seated desire for their unification in time. In Said's view, all types of discourse prioritizing identity over difference or universality over locality do or can be deployed to justify the ongoing power relations between East and West or South and North. The one exception that Said asserts in contrast to Hegelian historicism is Antonio Gramsci, whose geographical and spatial mode of thinking not only conceives of social life and history as discontinuously and unevenly shaped, but always undertakes to expose the world as a stage for struggle for rule or hegemony. Many critics have mentioned Said's indebtedness to Gramsci but the most illuminating account of Said's inheritance of the Gramscian critical consciousness is made by Said himself in his 1996 article 'History, Literature, and Geography', which was later included in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. In his estimate, the Gramscian way of seeing is 'geographical and spatial in its fundamental coordinates':¹ It considers the world to be made up of ruler and ruled or leaders and led; it is persistently opposed to the tendency to homogenize and equalize everything; it regards the history of the world as a history of different forces or social groups contending with one another for 'the control of essentially heterogeneous, discontinuous, non-identical, and *unequal* geographies of human habitation and effort'.² It is arguable that the Gramscian geographical critical consciousness as such underwrites all Said's writing, from *Orientalism* through *The World, the Text, and the Critic* to *Culture and Imperialism*. To speak of Said's indebtedness to Gramsci is to address

Gramsci's indebtedness to Said as well, for it is Said who insightfully appreciated and elaborated what he termed 'a new geographical consciousness of a decentered or multiply-centered world', impassionedly recommending it to late twentieth-century critics for 'deal[ing] with disjunctive formations and experiences such as women's history, popular culture, postcolonial and subaltern material' that refuse to be subjected to a repressive scheme of correspondences.³ This geographical mode of thinking, whose critical efficacy is established through Said's efforts, has become a major contribution to contemporary postcolonial studies.

Any discussion of the Gramscian critical consciousness as geographical in kind necessarily takes us back to Gramsci's famous piece 'The Southern Question'. As Timothy Brennan perceptively put, 'The Southern Question' should be recognized as already containing 'the entire intellectual map of the *Notebooks* in a condensed and suggestive form', for it introduces all the key subjects he took up in the *Notebooks* such as 'the problem of the South, the political function of the Intellectuals, the peculiarities of Italian history, and the influence of the idealist cultural historian and philosopher, Benedetto Croce'.⁴ Actually one can move beyond Brennan and argue that this monumental though unfinished essay of Gramsci's contains all the key issues taken up in contemporary postcolonial studies as well: one geopolitical space exploiting and oppressing another on which it depends for markets and resources; the underdeveloping of the South by the North; a discriminative ideology which folds distance into difference, connecting a certain population's psychological, emotional and cultural habits and qualities with its geographical location; an essentialist theory of identity; the urgent need for decolonizing the mind; a break in the tradition of thought; the role of the intellectuals who commit themselves to a certain social or political cause. Gramsci begins by quoting from *Ordine Nuovo*, a journal he cofounded, that 'The bourgeoisie of the North has subjected southern Italy and the islands and reduced them to the status of exploited colonies' and from there he calls attention to the alliance between the southern peasantry and the northern proletariat as a sure path to a rejuvenation of the whole nation, for the proletariat of the North's emancipation from 'capitalist enslavement' is continuous and interrelated with the emancipation of the peasantry of the North.⁵ After that, Gramsci proceeds to unmask what Said would call 'imaginative geographies' underpinning the bourgeois ideology propagated among the masses of the north, which looks on

the South [as] a lead weight which impedes a more rapid civil development of Italy; the southerners are biologically inferior beings, semi-barbarians or complete barbarians by natural destiny; if the South is backward, the fault is not to be found in the capitalist system or in any other historical cause, but is the fault of nature which has made the southerner lazy, incapable, criminal, barbarous.⁶

The arrogant structure of attitude and reference one detects from this passage informs the various descriptions of Orientalism or imperialism interrogated and critiqued in Said's *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*.

The most remarkable feature of the Gramsci essay, from Said's point of view, is its insistence on examining all the problems in geographical terms, such as 'hegemony, social territory, civil and political society, emergent and traditional classes . . . regions, domains, historical blocks'.⁷ But the extraordinary importance of the piece to Said, it is arguable, consists not only in its spatial method of analysis, but the foregrounded centrality of the Southern Question itself. It gives its readers a sense that the Southern Question is the problem of problems confronting the whole nation of Italy and its future. Without changing the attitudes of and toward the southern peasantry, without integrating agrarian southern Italy with industrialized northern Italy, without exorcising the prejudices looming between South and North, there would be no emancipation for the northern proletariat, no socioeconomic development for the nation, and no regeneration of the people. There is a significant coincidence between Gramsci's Italy and Said's world, for in both there is an urgent Southern Question except that in the latter it is also named the question of the East or the Orient. Indeed, Said's reading of Gramsci sees two Southern Questions, one is historical and the other contemporary, since the concept of 'the Southern Question' as encountered in Gramsci's essay can be allegorically interpreted and appropriated for different situations of domination or colonization. Said's admiring encounter with Gramsci's 'The Southern Question' is no doubt informed by his own political anxieties and critical agendas embedded in a world under the pressures of its own Southern Question. The Southern Question to Said and his contemporaries including ourselves is the question of how an imperial West with its technological superiority and military prowess is continuing to dominate, exploit, and misrepresent the non-West and how urgently necessary it is to form a new historic bloc of resistance against imperialism reincarnated as capitalist globalisation. Just as Gramsci's articulation of the Southern Question opens up a space for examining the unequal relations between southern and northern Italy as well as their interdependence, so Said's raising of the contemporary Southern Question offers him a perspective for investigating the West's reinvented strategies for dominating, underdeveloping and containing the Rest. What is especially worth celebrating in Gramsci in Said's view, is that he rewrote the Hegelian master-slave dialectic in light of the colonial situation or in terms of colonizer and colonized or South and North and that over two decades before Fanon did, except that what Gramsci tackled was internal colonialism within the bounds of the nation-state.

Said's most explicit application of the Gramscian geographical mode of critical thinking implied in his "The Southern Question" is found in *Culture and Imperialism*. In the section titled 'Connecting Empire to Secular Interpretation', he enthusiastically recommends the Southern Question for

providing '[a]n explicitly geographical model' of analysis for investigating the collusion between the idealist historicism and the imperial map of the world as well as the 'various sovereign dispositions' and methodology shared among Eurocentric anthropologists, historians and philologists.⁸ The brilliant analysis Gramsci makes in the piece signals a prelude to *The Prison Notebooks* which highlights a 'paramount focus to the territorial, spatial, geographical foundations of social life'.⁹ What Said found most inspiring and enlightening is the way Gramsci connected the poor, inferiorized, and vulnerable South to 'a north that is dependent on it'.¹⁰ Gramsci's geographical analysis of the South-North relationship heralds Said's exploration of the ways Western imperial powers subjugated and depended on colonial peripheries for the maintenance of a privileged life in the metropolitan centre.¹¹ His contestatory investigation of the subjugation of the South to the rule of the North, his call for an alliance between the proletariat and the peasants necessary to the overthrow of the capitalist system and his dialectical analysis of social events, classes and individuals, which unfailingly situates them in concrete sociohistorical circumstances, all these display an antitotalistic mode of thinking and a geographical attention to the issues of class, nation, intellectuals and culture—identities, values and experiences are all defined by heterogeneity, incongruity and discontinuity due to their particular geographical situations. Gramsci never allows temporality domination over spatiality and his geographical reflections on history and culture refuse to collapse them into identity.

The innovative deployment of the terms *geographical* and *geography* enables Said to name a useful Marxism against the Marxist orthodoxy—it takes up all Marxist issues such as class, class struggle, proletariat, hegemony or leadership in geographical or spatial terms. In other words, it offers all the insights of Marxist analyses unburdened by Hegelian historicism. What Said finds especially useful of the Gramscian critical consciousness is that, while underscoring the relationality of values and meaning and the interconnectedness of the world, it insists on the geographical embeddedness of texts, thoughts and practices. Said's valorisation of 'geography' and 'geographical' certainly speaks of his own historical and discursive situatedness, that is, his participation in the counterhegemonic intellectual movement, which gathers all the ammunitions the postmodern spatial mode of thinking offers for attacking the strongholds of colonial modernity. Geography means difference, for what a geographical mapping reveals are different landscapes, ethnoscapas, ideoscapas and socioscapas as well as dissimilar features of the surface of the earth inhabited by different peoples and divergent systems of life and growth in different parts of the globe. Geography as such is a discontinuous, unidentitarian concept pointing to irresolvable difference. The geography asserted by Said in opposition to temporality is the geography accentuating simultaneity and spatial coexistence. Where temporality emphasizes evolutionary time, linearity, causality, identity, primacy, origin and singularity, geography speaks of boundary,

simultaneity, co-existence, plurality, overdetermination and equality. As geography insists on recalcitrant difference, the geographical critical consciousness sees human history as a rich documentation of social contests for territory, overseas territorial expansions, imaginative geographies and domination and resistance.

Said's geographical understanding of modern history performs a double task. On the one hand, it exposes and critiques what he calls imaginative Western imperialist geographies which divide the world in terms of self and other, good and evil, barbarian and civilized, justifying colonialism's territorial expansions and economic exploitations overseas. On the other hand, it gives rise to a geographical imagination which is always at pains to uncover the world as unevenly developed and resistant to imperial domination. Said elaborates his concept of 'imaginative geographies' via discussing the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard's 'poetics of space', which distinguishes between objective space and poetically or imaginatively endowed space. The latter in Bachelard's poetics of space designates a space emotionally, psychologically or ideologically charged or invested. It is the objective space that has undergone imaginative transformation or transfiguration. The poetically endowed space recalls what David Harvey terms the relational space in his recent book *Spaces of Global Capitalism*, which along with the absolute space and relative space he formulates through creatively appropriating Leibniz's, Cassirer's and Lefebvre's respective discourses on space. The absolute space is fixed, tangible, concrete and locatable. The relative space is a space of relativity. The relational space is a space whose value derives from relationality, a space whose use, function or content is determined by social relations, ideological positions or existential attitudes. It is itself a relation or relationship.¹² Harvey's relational space is synonymous with and explanatory of Bachelard's imaginative space, and as such both help to grasp Said's 'imaginative geographies'. Both relational space and imaginative geography derive their meanings and values from relationality or positionality and both tend to romanticize, alter or falsify an objective entity.

Imaginative geographies as a hallmark of Orientalism always commit a double violence: it at once cancels genuine difference and fabricates difference where it does not exist. Geographical imagination, on the contrary, performs a double task of questioning false difference to show the representational violence of the West during its encounter with its geographical and racial Others. What is at stake here is the use of difference on both sides. The concept of difference can be taken as a Bakhtinian space for social contest, in which different social groups or forces fiercely engage with one another for hegemony. The postcolonial relaunching of difference is to assert the equality of being on behalf of the previous and present colonized and protest the violent effacement of their culture and history by colonialism. For the subaltern people to assert their equality of being is to challenge and question the West's colonization of the non-West. The

West regards the different rest as inferior, backward and uncivilized, for its social organization, cultural life and aesthetic production does not conform or measure up to modern Western norms. The West's advanced science and technology and military might has established the hegemony of its civilization, which perceives other civilizations as uncivilized and which achieved control over nations differently developed in science and technology. Western civilization or modernity proclaims and propagates itself as universal, although its alleged universality ultimately betrays a masquerading particularity. History has repeatedly witnessed victor or colonizer imposing as universal culture-specific institutions, standards and modes of production and representation on the defeated or colonized, subsuming and homogenizing differential cultures and values into a singular orbit of normality. This is the way imperialist hegemony asserts particularity in the name of universality. In investigating and interrogating colonialism and imperialism, one has to and does, along with critics like Said, celebrate ethnic and cultural difference, deconstructing ideologies of universalism. For only by legitimating and celebrating ethnic and racial difference can the dominated and marginalized peoples achieve recognition as equal and justify their equality of being despite their insufficient technological and infrastructural modernization, and only by launching difference as culturally, socially and geographically embedded can the violated differences prove their identifications by the imperial West or North to be false and forced representations.

Imperialist imaginative geographies first of all divide the world into 'us' and 'them', designating the familiar space as ours and the unfamiliar spaces as theirs and making artificial geographical distinctions. Once those distinctions were established, all 'the latent and unchanging characteristics of the Orient or the indigenous were made to stand upon or "rooted in [their] geography"'.¹³ Imaginative geography transforms times and spaces other or alien to the metropolitan self into hierarchically placed values and meanings, cancelling 'the discrete entities held in by borders and frontiers' both literally and figuratively.¹⁴ Arabs, for instance, are conceived of as 'camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers'; East Asians are believed to be 'yellow', 'melancholy', 'rigid', and 'perfidious', 'savages' and 'monsters'; Africans are portrayed as 'black', 'phlegmatic' and 'lax', 'savages', all of them 'an affront to real civilization'.¹⁵ They are either degenerate or 'have no direction, no driving power', and 'the sum of their efforts is futile'. They are to be owned, guided, controlled, defined by the West, all because they are 'not quite as human as "we" are'. Imaginative geographies of the West serve the purpose of translating 'the appetite for more geographical space into a theory about the special relationship between geography on the one hand and civilized or uncivilized peoples on the other'.¹⁶ Setting up a manifestly, absolutely different world to be controlled, manipulated, and incorporated, the West regards the nonwestern people as corrupt, degenerate, irredeemable and inferior, their nations having 'no life, history, or culture

to speak of, no independence or integrity worth representing without the West'.¹⁷ No one has interrogated and deconstructed Western imperialism with its imaginative geographies as rigorously and programmatically as Said did. As David Harvey admiringly acknowledges in a different context, it is Said who 'so brilliantly demonstrates in his study of *Orientalism*, the identity of variegated peoples can be collapsed, shaped, and manipulated through the connotations and associations imposed as outsiders name places and peoples'; it is he who draws 'attention to the power of naming as a power over others as well as over things'.¹⁸ Here, 'naming' does exactly the same job as 'imaginative geographies' in that they both force identities onto people spatially and culturally distant from the colonialist namer or geographer. Indeed, what underwrites the acts of naming or imaginative geography is the guiding principle of propinquity: what is geographically and culturally propinquitous to the imperial eye is associated with reason, virtue, intellect and civilization whereas the areas or cultures in the remote peripheries are named or imagined to be barbaric, primitive, inferior, uncivilized and degenerate.

Said taught us over and over again that geography is a fundamental and enabling part of Western colonialism and its territorial expansion. This is something even colonialists themselves never bothered to hide. According to British imperialists, Geography is 'an essential part of knowledge in general' and, as 'a sister science to economics and politics', geography has to be recognized as the 'handmaid of history' or 'part of the equipment that is necessary for a proper conception of citizenship' and "an indispensable adjunct to the production of a public man".¹⁹ Those well versed in English literature will probably make a ready connection between the expansionist insistence on the value of geography and the episodes involving maps in British novels, particularly young Marlow's passion for reading maps in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Fanny's embarrassment and sense of shame when ridiculed by her cousins for not being able to read a map in Austen's *Mansfield Park*. If geographical knowledge is necessary for a 'proper conception of citizenship' or 'public man' in imperial Britain, it certainly explains well a young British citizen's passion for map or reading or his/her embarrassment for lack of geographical knowledge. Geography and cartography are certainly part of modern science, and their absence in nonwestern countries in the nineteenth century were certainly nothing to feel proud of, but it is undeniable that geography and cartography from their very beginning in Europe have served the interests of systematic territorial expansion and political domination overseas. English literature is full of allusions to the facts of empire and many novelistic protagonists have connections with the British Empire. The empire as a reference and 'an easily assumed place of travel, wealth, and service', notes Said in *Culture and Imperialism*, 'functions for much of the European nineteenth century as a codified, if only marginally visible, presence in fiction, very much like the servants in grand households and in novels, whose work is taken for

granted but scarcely ever more than named'.²⁰ In the British novels such as *Dombey and Son*, *The Great Expectations* and *Mansfield Park*, Said notes, 'the domestic order was tied to, located in, even illuminated by a specifically English order abroad'.²¹ In *Dombey and Son* we see that 'the universe, and the whole of time' is for the British businessmen 'to trade in', and that they are provided with 'unlimited opportunities for commercial advancement abroad'.²² *The Great Expectations* can be taken as embodying the great idea behind the otherwise ugly projects of imperialism to which Europeans like Marlow would bow to pay their tribute: establishing a settler colony overseas for dumping the undesired population and for expropriating resources needed in the metropolitan centre.

In his geographical or contrapuntal reading of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Said succinctly maps out the power relations between the metropolitan Mansfield Park and Antigua whose presence is shadowy but meaningful. The relationship he sees between them is similar to that Gramsci sees between southern Italy and northern Italy: a metropolitan centre depends on a despised, exploited, inferiorized periphery for material and economic sustenance. In *Mansfield Park*, the counterpoint Said discerns or determines is space or spatial relations, or geography, location or relocation. The spatial counterpoint concerns two movements, the movement from Mansfield Park to Antigua and the movement from Portsmouth to Mansfield Park. One can say that Mansfield Park is flanked by the two geographical spaces, relying on them for its continued peace, elegance, propriety and prosperity. From Portsmouth, it gets a spiritual mistress and from Antigua its wealth. Said's reading focuses more on the spatial relationship between Mansfield Park and Antigua. The presence of Antigua is shadowy, and its mention sounds casual, but as a geographical point of reference it is constantly mentioned and significant. Sir Thomas keeps travelling between Mansfield Park and Antigua for he has plantations there. The spatial relationship between Mansfield Park and Antigua resembles that of country and town, metropolis and colony, centre and periphery. The good life in one space, Mansfield Park, is sustained by the other, Antigua. So it is actually a relationship of subjugation and exploitation. All imperial and colonial enterprises aimed at territorial expansion involve a metropolis transforming an outlying territory into a colony, a tributary, an agricultural or manufacturing base, a supplier of resources, no longer seen as an independent country with intellectual, cultural and moral integrity. The fact that Antigua or West Indies assumes only a shadowy, secondary presence in the novel parallels that fact that colonies are never recognized as places of life, meaning and importance to metropolitan populations. Reading along with Said, one sees a parallel between Fanny's entitlement to her status as the mistress of Mansfield Park and Sir Thomas's right to own plantations overseas. As suggested by Austen, it is their virtues and abilities which legitimate their rule over their respective territories. In critiquing Western colonialism, Richard Waswo sarcastically points out, 'civilization comes from elsewhere . . . it

consists in dominating the land, planting fields and skyscrapers upon it, and extracting profit from it . . . any nondominating human identification with uncultivated land is ipso facto primitive and savage . . . therefore, the displacement and/or destruction of such savages in the name of all the foregoing, which is progress, is morally justified'.²³ This is the logic of social Darwinism—the fittest survives. This accounts for all imperial expansions and manoeuvres. So what legitimizes Sir Thomas' appropriation of land in Antigua are his ideas, virtues and abilities that are wanting in the natives, just as Fanny proves to be the right person for heirship to Sir Thomas's patriarchal authority in Mansfield park by qualities and virtues lacking in his own children. The correspondence between Fanny's spatial movement and Sir Thomas's geographical movement as discussed above is nothing explicitly given in Austen's novel, but what Said's Gramscian critical consciousness and his contrapuntal reading derived therefrom always alert us to be aware of.

While always at pains to unmask the representational violence of the imperialist imaginative geographies, Said never fails to point out counterpoints of resistance to imperial power. His geographical imagination in this sense stands diametrically opposed to the imperialist imaginative geographies. It rigorously reiterates that no system of power can exercise total domination over the world's discontinuous geographies of habitation and effort and that there are always emergent or alternative solidarities of consciousness, judgment and taste beyond control and always spaces of resistance and hope. For no matter how dominant any social system may be, Said quotes Raymond Williams saying, 'it cannot exhaust all social experience, which therefore always potentially contains space for alternative acts and alternative intentions which are not yet articulated as a social institution or even project'.²⁴ Indeed, Williams unfailingly appealed to Said, despite his regrettable shortcomings, majorly for his spatial mode of analysis and his theory of emergent social forces, but the latter's admiration for the former only points to a shared indebtedness to the Gramscian critical legacy. For, as Timothy Brennan reminds us, Williams's 'cultural materialism' has its theoretical beginnings in Gramsci's emphasis on the writer's situation in a matrix of social and cultural productions, though he, unlike his social British contemporaries such as Perry Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm, did not sufficiently acknowledge his indebtedness to Gramsci.²⁵ 'What we need over and above theory, however', Said wrote in analyzing travelling theory, 'is the critical recognition that there is no theory capable of covering, closing off, predicting all the situations in which it might be useful. This is another way of saying . . . that no social or intellectual system can be so dominant as to be unlimited in its strength'.²⁶ While acknowledging the brilliance of Lukacs's account of reification and the necessity of upholding a critical consciousness beyond the reach of reification, Said takes him to task for his inability to see that no dominant social system is totally dominant as to be unlimited in its reach, for 'if reification is totally dominant, how then can

Lukacs explain his own work as an alternative form of thought under the sway of reification?'.²⁷ What Said throughout his critical career indefatigably fought against was totalizing systems of thought or power, and that is why he could never bring himself to tolerate Hegelian historicism, whose corrective or contrast he found in the Gramscian geographical mode of thinking. Indeed, power and resistance to power, one can argue, was all Said wrote about.

According to Said's contrapuntal global analysis, there are always 'two sides, two nations, in combat, not merely the voice of the white master'.²⁸ As Benita Parry perspicaciously points out, in naming a culture of resistance, Said not only rediscovered and recovered the subaltern histories and experiences suppressed by the processes of imperialism, but asserted as counterpoints to empire 'uprisings, strikes, protests, demonstrations, campaigns, civilian militancy and armed struggles'.²⁹ In Said's view, a complex and uneven geography of global power relations 'take[s] into account all sorts of spatial or geographical and rhetorical practices',³⁰ including the third world's antinomian nationalism.³¹ He celebrates the third world beginnings in Du Bois, Aimé Césaire, Franz Fanon and George Lamming, acclaiming the voyage-in made by writers like Retamar and Rushdie. Contesting 'conceptions of history that stress linear development or Hegelian transcendence', Said argues that 'decolonization is a very complex battle over the course of different political destinies, different histories and geographies, and it is replete with works of imagination, scholarship, and counter-scholarship'.³² His geographical critical consciousness never hesitates to salvage or develop potential resistance or an emergent social praxis. That is why in discussing the paradox of the imperialist impulse intertwined with anti-imperialist vision implied in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, he gives plenty of space to elaborating the implications of limits of empire and alternative reality derived from its narrative forms. As the novel by direct description or implication speaks of the contingency of imperialism as well as its illusions and violence, it 'permits [its] later readers to imagine something other than an Africa carved up into dozens of European colonies'.³³ Said reveals himself to be at his best as a literary critic and Gramscian thinker when he writes, 'Conrad's self-consciously circular narrative forms draw attention to themselves as artificial constructions, encouraging us to sense the potential of a reality that seemed inaccessible to imperialism, just beyond its control, and that only well after Conrad's death in 1924 acquired a substantial presence'.³⁴ In a sense, one can say that Said's whole critical career is a ceaseless contrapuntal narrative of repressive power and resistance to it. That is why he finds Foucault's work eventually short of what it initially promises: although his analysis of power reveals 'its injustice and cruelty', his theorization of it tends to 'let it go on more or less unchecked'.³⁵ It is in this sense that Said contends that 'Foucault's imagination of power is largely *with* rather than *against* it', and that it is not as 'contestatory or oppositional as on the surface it seems to be'.³⁶ He launches Gramsci's as well as Williams's conceptions of 'emergent and alternative subaltern groups

within the dominant discursive society' in contradistinction with Foucault's 'unmodulated minimization of resistance'.³⁷ For Said as well as for Gramsci and Williams, whatever is humanly constructed has to be recognized as contingent, vulnerable and not impervious to dismantling and interrogation, whereas Foucault fails to note that any dominant culture involves a 'guaranteed insufficiency . . . against which it is possible to mount an attack'.³⁸

Said as well as Gramsci has left us but the world we live in remains caught up in the Southern Question. The South or the non-West continues to be dominated, exploited and underdeveloped by the North or the West; the ancient contest for hegemony or rule over territories goes on globally at different levels of social life; imperialism rerun via the processes of globalization devised and centred in the North or West is re-invading into the erstwhile colonies or semicolonies; imaginative geographies are at work behind all types of nationalism and xenophobia and various versions of war against terror, particularly in the recent Iraq war.³⁹ Although technological revolution, transnational corporations and the global restructuring of capitalism have made the world increasingly interdependent and interconnected, radically altering our concepts of time, space, politics and relations, this has in no way changed the fundamental fact that the North or West still poses or imposes itself as the centre of the world.⁴⁰ The global power relations between the developed West and the underdeveloped rest acutely remind us of the Southern Question today. On the one hand, multinational capital with its hegemonic ideology and technology is globally spreading and celebrating Americanism in economics, political institutions and cultural productions, reinforcing the five-hundred-year-old colonial capitalism which established the West as the world's geopolitical, economic, cultural and intellectual centre. On the other hand, the dispossessed subaltern of the earth, having hardly broken with old Eurocentrism, are all of a sudden hijacked into the processes of capitalist globalization, becoming neocolonized culturally, economically and intellectually. While capital and goods globally flow across national boundaries, they nonetheless remain centred in the northern or Western hemisphere. Global capitalism has transformed whole areas in Asia, Africa and Latin America into labour-intensive manufacturing bases controlled by the imperial centres. The world does not seem to have changed much in that it is still torn apart by wars for power or resources and is still manipulated by imaginative geographies, whose genealogy 'starts with Napoleon, continues with the rise of Oriental studies and the takeover of North Africa, and goes on in similar undertakings in Vietnam, in Egypt, in Palestine and, during the entire twentieth century in the struggle over oil and strategic control in the Gulf, in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Afghanistan'.⁴¹

This is the world with an urgent, unresolved Southern Question, a world calling for the Gramscian or Saidian critical consciousness and geographical imagination, which, motivated by humanist yearnings for universal equality, solidarity and love, never loses sight of the domination and exploitation

of the peripheries and resistance to it. Indeed, the critical project championed by Said as well as Gramsci not only sees a world ravaged by hatred, dominance, violence, power and exploitation whose exercise is in many cases initiated and justified by imaginative geographies, but a world that is constructed by human beings and hence stands open to change for the better. One chief reason and strategy for changing the world to rid it of wars and imaginative ideologies is, one can argue, the ideal of one-worldism. Throughout Said's critical career, he never ceased to emphasize the interdependence and interrelatedness among cultures, nations and ethnic communities. According to him, 'Critical thought does not submit to commands to join in the ranks marching against one or another approved enemy. Rather than the manufactured clash of civilizations, we need to concentrate on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other, and live together in far more interesting ways than any abridged or inauthentic mode of understanding can allow'.⁴² That is why he acclaimed the constructively reinvented notion of 'one world' proposed in the 2002 United Nations World Summit in Johannesburg. In this regard Said as a public intellectual intransigently pursuing justice and peace and championing the one-world humanism recalls what Alain Badiou recently wrote about 'performative unity' and the courage to fight. We must imagine towards 'the existence of the single world right from the start, as axiom and principle', Badiou remarks. 'The simple phrase, "there is only one world", is not an objective conclusion. It is performative: we are deciding that this is how it is for us'.⁴³ In the same context he proceeds to define and recommend what he calls 'courage' as 'the principal virtue in face of the disorientation of our own times'. In Badiou's vocabulary, what takes courage is to write, think or act in 'different *durée*' to that imposed by the hegemonic law of the world.⁴⁴ By deploying a performative one-worldism, Said perseveringly fought against various forms of imperialism with their imaginative geographies, and to those familiar with his intellectual sovereignty and dauntlessness, he definitely stands out as a man of courage who could never be bent to power and domination. Having inherited Gramsci's geographical critical consciousness via Said and a world in many ways no better than it was when Said and Gramsci were fighting for the cause of freedom and equality, it is now our turn to take the Saidian courage to fight any form of imperialism through a performative one-worldism.

NOTES

1. Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 465.
2. *Ibid.*, 467.
3. *Ibid.*, 471, 458.
4. Timothy Brennan, "Literary Criticism and the Southern Question," *Cultural Critique*, 11 (1988-1989): 93.

5. Antonio Gramsci, "The Southern Question," in *The Modern Prince & Other Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1957), 28.
6. *Ibid.*, 31.
7. Said, *Reflections* (467).
8. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 48.
9. *Ibid.*, 49.
10. *Ibid.*
11. For this point, see Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (58–59, 96).
12. For more discussion on relational space, see David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (London: Verso, 2006), 119–48.
13. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 216.
14. *Ibid.*, 219.
15. *Ibid.*, 37, 108, 109, 117, 119, 251.
16. *Ibid.*, 108, 217, 251.
17. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (xix).
18. David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 265.
19. Said, *Orientalism* (215, 216).
20. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (63).
21. *Ibid.*, 76.
22. *Ibid.*, 13, 14.
23. Richard Waswo, "The History that Literature Makes," *New Literary History*, 19 (1988): 557.
24. Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (London: New Left Books, 1979), 252. See Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 240.
25. Timothy Brennan, "Literary Criticism and the Southern Question," *Cultural Critique*, 11 (1988–1989), 101.
26. Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (241).
27. *Ibid.*, 240.
28. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (207).
29. Benita Parry, *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique* (London: Routledge, 2004), 186.
30. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (318).
31. *Ibid.*, 109.
32. *Ibid.*, 317, 219.
33. *Ibid.*, 26.
34. *Ibid.*, 28–29.
35. Said, *Reflections* (242).
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, 244.
38. *Ibid.*, 245.
39. For this point, see Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 19–20. What Gregory writes concerning imaginative geographies is worth quoting at length: "America" and "Afghanistan," "Israel" and "Palestine," were jointly (not severally) produced through the performance of imaginative geographies in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington on September 11, 2001. . . . America took advantage of those same attacks and mobilized those same imaginative geographies (or variants of them) to wage another war on Iraq in the spring of 2003' (19). It is the same imaginative geographies that, according to Judith Butler, have caused the derealization or dehumanization of the 'Other', rejecting 'Arab peoples, predominantly practitioners of Islam, . . .

outside the "human" as it has been naturalized in its "Western" mold by the contemporary workings of humanism' (32, 33). For more discussion on this point, see Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2006), 19–49.

40. What James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer write in *Globalization Unmasked* is deeply relevant to the discussion here:

... the expansion of capital flows and commodity trade via unequal relations in the contemporary period is a continuation of the imperialist relations of the past. The subjects of globalization—the principal traders, investors and renters of services—have interests antagonistic to those of the objects of their policies—the workers, peasants, and national producers in the targeted countries ... the major economic units are owned and operated in large part by stockholders in the imperial countries; and profits, royalties, rents and interest payments flow upward and outward in an asymmetrical fashion ... the imperial countries wield disproportionate or decisive influence. ... Hence the concept of imperialism fits the realities much better than globalization. (29–30)

41. Said, "Orientalism 25 Years Later: Worldly Humanism v. the Empire-builders," *Counterpunch*, August 20, 2008, <http://www.counterpunch.org/said08052003.html>.

42. Ibid.

43. Alain Badiou, "The Communist Hypothesis," *New Left Review*, 29 (2008): 38.

44. Ibid., 41.