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A critical evaluation of Edward Said's literary critical concept in culture and imperialism

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Abstract

This study aims to assess the validity of Said's humanistic critique in establishing a comprehensive critical theory that integrates both theoretical and practical aspects. Thus, it clarifies the cognitive frameworks of Edward Said's concept of criticism through an analysis of his interpretation of culture. It clarifies how Said successfully applied the theoretical tenets of humanistic criticism by providing a comprehensive analysis of culture. Said's humanistic criticism transcends merely exposing the deficiencies of contemporary American critical theory, as demonstrated by its arcane professionalization. It aims to deconstruct professionalization, replacing it with critical values that associate critical theory with its context, allowing the intellectual to elucidate the disparities within the interrelated historical experiences. Transforming the frameworks of traditional criticism is both theoretical and practical. The theoretical aspects of Said's concept of criticism emphasize the literary tenets promoted by both classical and contemporary American criticism. Nevertheless, the practical aspects of Said's humanistic critique relate to the intellectual's capacity to transform Saidian theoretical concepts of humanistic criticism from theoretical boundaries to practical application. In other words, how Said could express cognitive frameworks that alter the established intellectual perspectives of his background and society into a more humane perspective, allowing him to reassess modern critical theory.

Keywords: american critical theory, culture, historical experience, humanistic criticism, american critical theory, professionalism.



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Introduction

This present study seeks to evaluate the extent to which Said's humanistic criticism is valid in forming a cohesive critical theory that encompasses both theoretical and practical dimensions. Consequently, it elucidates the cognitive frameworks of Edward Said's notion of humanistic criticism by examining his interpretation of culture. In other words, it elucidates how Said was able to implement the theoretical principles of humanistic criticism by offering a holistic interpretation of culture. Said's humanistic criticism does not limit itself to highlighting the shortcomings of modern American critical theory, exemplified by its esoteric professionalization. It seeks to dismantle professionalization, substituting it with critical humanistic ideals that link critical theory to its context, enabling the intellectual to illustrate the discrepancies within the connected historical experiences. Altering the paradigms of conventional criticism is both theoretical and pragmatic. The theoretical dimensions of Said's humanistic criticism highlight the inhumanistic principles advocated by classic and modern American criticism. Nonetheless, the pragmatic dimensions of Said's humanistic critique pertain to the ability of the intellectual to translate Saidian theoretical principles of humanistic criticism from the confines of theory to the expanse of practical application. In other words, how Said could articulate cognitive frameworks that transform the entrenched intellectual perceptions of his own heritage and culture into a more humanistic viewpoint, enabling him to reevaluate modern critical theory.

The Hybridity of World Cultures: Toward the First Step of Said's Critical Strategy.

Said's humanistic critique is interconnected with his personal notion of culture. Efforts to identify a universal set of humanistic ideals inherent in all cultures, aimed at fostering a deeper humanistic comprehension of culture. These humanistic ideals facilitate the resolution of the Saidian conflict regarding how the intellectual can objectively analyze his society from within, despite an inherent inability to disengage from it, whether consciously or unconsciously. Said's humanistic notion of culture in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) unequivocally rejects the association of culture with nation or state; it significantly reinforces artificial geographical boundaries and exacerbates xenophobia. Culture serves as a source of identity, often in a confrontational manner, as seen by the "returns" to culture and customs" (II). Commitment to such concepts may propagate ignorance and animosity instead of fostering understanding. Said (1993) wrote:

In our desire to be heard, we frequently overlook that the world is a congested environment; if everyone were to demand the absolute primacy of their own voice, we would be left with a dreadful cacophony of perpetual conflict and a chaotic political landscape. The genuine horror of this is becoming increasingly evident in the resurgence of racist politics in Europe and the tumult surrounding political correctness and identity politics in the United States. (p. XXI)

Nonetheless, Westerners fail to recognize that historical experiences are interconnected and interwoven. "Far from being unitary or monolithic or autonomous entities, cultures actually incorporate more foreign elements, alterities, and differences than they consciously exclude" (Said, 1993, p. 15). Said (1993) further argues that "who in India or Algeria today can distinctly delineate the British or French elements of history from contemporary realities, and who in Britain or France can accurately circumscribe British London or French Paris while excluding the influence of India and Algeria on those two imperial metropolises? (p. 15) In addressing this issue, Said seeks to elucidate the perspective presented in Martin Bernal's book, *Black Athena* (1987), whereby Bernal attacks the restrictive form of self-representation advocated by Western society. Western culture asserts its purity by omitting the interconnected and shared aspects with other global cultures. "The significant and inherent differences in race profoundly influence the distinct genius of Indo-European peoples compared to that of Semitic groups" (Arnold, 1903, p. 141). Although Greek civilization is the foundation of current Western societies, it incorporates features from Egyptian, Semitic, and several other Southern and Eastern

cultures. The Greek authors themselves recognize the hybridity of their historical civilization. Nevertheless, Western intellectuals intentionally overlook the writings related to the hybridity of their historical cultures. In his book *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Cultural Race* (1995), Robert Young contends that pure culture does not exist. The advancement of humanity results from cultural hybridity and mutual communication (p.29). Said's conviction in the hybridity of global cultures is the foremost practical humanistic virtue.

Assuming that all global cultures are hybrid may provide the critic with a suitable context for delivering relatively objective criticism, as their biased affiliations to their nation and culture diminish, redirecting their sense of belonging to a more universal perspective. It enables him to readily comprehend that his culture is the product of an interminable series of interactions among diverse global cultures. It reaffirms his affiliation with the distinctive realm of Saidian worldliness. Consequently, when the critic evaluates, analyzes, and interprets any artwork in relation to others, he must prioritize his humanistic perspective over preconceived notions; he will regard others as integral to his own culture and contributors to its formation, rather than as alien elements or adversaries that pose a constant threat. He will strive to illustrate the historical experiences of others from their beginnings, rather than through the preconceived frameworks established by his own culture.

The Discrepancy of the Historical Experience:

Said regards both culture and tradition primarily as historical experiences. In essence, it is a human experience that has been converted into a historical experience, with its cultural configuration articulated through discourse or documented history. No experience that is analyzed or reflected upon can be deemed immediate, as no critic or interpretation can be fully trusted if they assert to possess a perspective that is unaffected by history or social context. (Said, 1993, p.15). That is to say, the historical experience constitutes the implicit framework recognized as culture and tradition. All events in the world contribute to the formation of history. Consequently, historical experience serves as the tradition and cultural repository that produces global political and artistic features, among others. Said (1993) articulates it as follows:

Eliot asserts that the poet is distinctly an original talent, yet operates within a tradition that cannot be simply inherited but must be acquired through considerable effort. Eliot asserts that tradition encompasses a historical consciousness, which entails an awareness of both the past's temporal distance and its ongoing relevance. This historical consciousness necessitates that a writer engages not only with the essence of their own generation but also with the collective literature of their nation, which exists concurrently and forms a cohesive order. (1993. P.1)

Said posits that Western intellectuals perceive historical experience as homogeneous and unitary. This cohesive perspective of historical experience establishes a static paradigm of culture and tradition that refreshes its manifestation while retaining its meaning. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (2012) assert that the development of European images was predominantly traditional, achieved through the "manufacture of rituals, ceremonies, and tradition," which shaped the European representations of power. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (2012) elucidate that Western society maintains its historical experience in a static and uniform manner amid the continuous endeavor of fabricating its past traditions. They wrote:

Invented tradition' refers to a collection of rituals, typically regulated by explicitly or implicitly accepted standards and characterized by ritualistic or symbolic elements, aimed at instilling specific values and behavioral norms through repetition, so suggesting a connection to historical continuity. They typically strive to create continuity with an appropriate historical context whenever feasible. (p.1)

The invention of tradition is characterized as a method of illuminating the past in the present while preserving its relevance. It restricts the intellectual engagement with his tradition and culture by facilitating their transmission to the present without critical analysis. Consequently, the formation of tradition constrains historical experience. It detaches Western culture from its historical context, political conditions, and social circumstances. Consequently, it aids in illustrating history in a circular fashion. Consequently, it neither grants Western culture the authority to scrutinize its historical interactions with other global cultures nor allows it to embrace and integrate them. Furthermore, it fails to provide Western society the opportunity to reevaluate its principles or engage in critical self-reflection. The invention of tradition is simply a method to maintain Western tradition and culture unchanged.

Said perceives the historical experience as a dual-faceted concept, burdened with two intrinsic meanings; the first pertains to the optimal representation of the historical experience by the critic or intellectual, while the second relates to the inherent essence of the historical experience itself, or its universality. Said articulates his perspective on historical experience in the following lines:

My interpretative political objective is to juxtapose experiences, allowing them to interact, in order to align concurrently those ideologically and culturally isolated perspectives that seek to distance or suppress alternative views and experiences. The revelation and dramatization of ideological discrepancies underscore their cultural significance, allowing us to recognize their potency and comprehend their enduring influence. (p. 32)

The historical experience, in its most expansive definition, is characterized by discrepancies involving two or more opposing parties. For instance, colonialism is recognized as a historical experience, occurring at a specific time and contributing to the global archive of recorded history. Although primarily executed by the colonizer, the involvement of the colonized cannot be eradicated or obscured. Consequently, the historical experience is communal, interwoven, and interconnected. We must collaboratively analyze and interpret disparate experiences, each characterized by its unique agenda, developmental pace, internal structures, coherence, and external relationships, all coexisting and interacting with one another. Moreover, the universality or humanistic essence of historical experience suggests that it is contrary to human nature to restrict one's emotions to only those experiences already encountered or confronted. This historical experience might be perceived by those who observed, witnessed, and read about it. Said (1993) articulates it succinctly in the subsequent lines:

If one subscribes to Gramsci's notion that the intellectual vocation is both socially feasible and desirable, it becomes an untenable contradiction to construct analyses of historical experiences based on exclusions, which assert that only women can comprehend feminine experience, only Jews can grasp the Jewish experience, and only those with formal colonial experiences can understand the colonial experience. The challenge with theories of essentialism and exclusivity, as well as with walls and divisions, is that they foster polarization, which tends to absolve ignorance and demagoguery rather than facilitate understanding. (p.30)

The historical experience is fundamentally interconnected and interwoven. If we restrict our thoughts and emotions to our personal experiences and conflicts, we will become indifferent to the anguish, suffering, and hardships of others, rendering humanity like to machines. If we perceive historical experience as excluding, it compels us to adopt a self-defensive stance. It compels us subconsciously to defend our experiences, regardless of their fairness or oppression. We initiate our harsh criticism of others without attempting to cultivate any form of objective understanding. "Consequently, you will subordinate the diverse experiences of others to an inferior status" (p. 30). Said elucidates that a critic's recognition of the variance in historical experiences, while preserving their uniqueness, prevents the elevation of their own experience to a more distinguished and superior status. While historical experience is inherently subjective, it transcends national boundaries, artificial geographical divisions among various nations and cultures, and the presumed frameworks of racial ideology. It is fundamentally humanistic. This enables the critic to offer more impartial evaluations. In the "Symposium on Edward Said's Culture and Imperialism," Robbins, Bruce, et al contend that Said's divergence in historical experience significantly influences his critical theory, as he strives to reinstate "the historical processes that texts have excluded" (3). However, Said's concept of historical discrepancy undermines his humanistic objectives by solidifying the separation between the Self and the Other. The reference point in this quotation remains the metropolis—the traditional Others continue to be perceived as Others" (3).

In his essay, 'Hope and Reconciliation: a Review of Edward Said W.', Paul A. Bove elucidates that Said's notion of culture derives its validity from perceiving the human experience predominantly as a historical phenomenon. He put it in the following:

He has attained expertise in the historical study of imperialism, national liberation movements, and contemporary endeavors to connect the First and Third Worlds following the conclusion of the Cold War. Second, the book is historical and as the very basis of history: it depends

upon and reinvents the critical and creative possibilities of literary history ; it offers itself as a historical document , not merely as record ,as it were , of a moment , but as an agency in the reorganization of cross –cultural relations in the current world... .Fourth, this book uniquely merges the consequences of theory with the critical discourses of decolonization , that is ,of such important figures as Fanon, Ceasaire ,and Ngugi , to produce not a theory ,but an understanding of the history and present of its topics –an understanding that does not ,as it were , follow the theory but rather takes that itself as but part of a careful reflection upon he experience of both colonization and resistance...This book is an effort at reconciliation between historical combatants who now must see their shared experience, their common histories, who, must, indeed, write and produce the stories of what they have shared and certain (267).

Bove contends that Said’s characterization of the human experience as a multifaceted historical phenomenon, involving multiple parties, enables his critics to elucidate the more obscure aspects of his critical thought; specifically, how to liberate the theoretical principles of Said’s critique from the constraints of their theoretical framework that hinder their capacity to propose alternatives to conventional and pragmatic forms of criticism. In essence, this addresses the contradiction between Said’s predominantly humanistic critical perspective and his attempts at critical engagement with the world. Said’s comprehension of human experience as historical operationalizes his critical concept, contextualizes its text within the world, and clarifies the intricate and interrelated nature of his various critical values. Furthermore, it allows him to ascertain that the narratives of 19th-century English novels represent solely the historical experiences of the dominant group, while simultaneously marginalizing the historical experiences of others. Consequently, Said’s critical analysis strives to unveil the obscured historical experiences depicted in 19th-century Western novels concerning colonial colonies. In his article “Representing Empire: Class, Culture and the Popular Theatre in the Nineteenth Century,” Michael Hays contends that Said’s concept of the historical experience as discrepant enables a reinterpretation of the narrative forms produced in the nineteenth century, revealing that the ostensibly autonomous works of art reference empire. (p.65)

Nevertheless, reinstating the obscured historical context inside the literary work is insufficient for interpreting and critiquing the confusing and veiled elements represented in the text. This reading is an abstract procedure designed to emphasize specific historical facts related to the interpreted work. Nonetheless, literary criticism involves human engagement, wherein the critic’s emotional connection to the text is a crucial component for delivering a coherent interpretation. The literary criticism is predominantly humanistic; the critic’s emotional engagement should penetrate the text to illuminate uncertain and unclear aspects that traditional literary criticism’s mental and abstract processes cannot access. Raymond Williams’s concept of structure of feeling. In Raymond Williams (2015) contends that through historical analysis, we may rebuild material conditions, social structures, and, to a large extent, ideologies. A major institution like drama will undoubtedly be influenced by all of these factors to varying degrees, therefore it is useless to discuss which is more important. Connecting a work of art to any aspect of the perceived totality might be advantageous to various degrees, but analysis often reveals an elusive element that lacks an external counterpart. I believe this element is the structure of feeling of an age, which can only be understood through the artwork’s holistic experience.

Raymond Williams asserts that extrinsic factors, including material existence, social structures, prevailing ideologies, and historical and social contexts, are insufficient for a comprehensive and objective analysis of literary works. Williams observes that while these components facilitate the interpretation of the available text, there remains an aspect that is unexamined or still ambiguous. Moreover, such ambiguous significance cannot be grasped concerning objective things; rather, it requires human emotion. In other words, such language is crafted by humans. The human spirit and emotions are intricately embedded inside the text., the critic must perceive the text in its whole; he should utilize his emotional sensibility to comprehend what is challenging to grasp through materialistic components. This idea encapsulates the true essence of Williams’ concept of the ‘structure of feeling’. As a humanistic critic, Said was able to interpret the fundamental significance of Williams’ notion of structure of emotion, reformulate its intellectual trajectory, and designate it as the ‘structure of reference and attitude’. Said posits that the structure of reference denotes the cultural allusions to the realities of empire derived from the nineteenth-century British literature. “Taken together these allusions constitute what I have called a structure reference”.(p. 62) Thus, “the structure of reference and attitude can be defined as the cultural attitude of the British intellectual toward others

,manifested by the diverse references to empire in the narrative forms. Subsequently, the Western novel participates in advancing the perceptions and attitudes of the Western intellectual about England and periphery. For instance, the novel refers to the others as subjects, subordinates and backwarded and to the British intervention in peripheries as a civilizing mission. Said's invention of structure of reference and attitude allows him to demonstrate both the Westerners' feeling of others and their perception of peripheries through fixing, analyzing and critiquing such references. Said's 'structure of reference and attitude' exerts a major role in building up his Said's humanistic criticism as it helps him , in addition to other humanistic values to put Said's theoretical values of the humanistic criticism into practice.

Contrapuntal Reading

Said conceptualizes the contrapuntal technique as an interpretative literary methodology capable of revealing concealed historical experiences. This literary approach liberates the Saidain theoretical values of humanistic criticism from their static theoretical framework, facilitating practical applications of theory. Drawing inspiration from music, Said notes, "In the counterpoint of Western classical music, various themes play off one another" (Culture and Imperialism 51). He introduces the contrapuntal reading of literary texts, which involves examining multiple parallel historical documents related to the literary work in question; each document possesses a direct connection to the interpreted text. Said articulates this clearly in the following lines: We commence reading it not univocally but contrapuntally, maintaining a concurrent awareness of both the metropolitan history being recounted and the alternative histories that oppose the prevailing discourse. (p. 51) This contrapuntal analysis of conflicting historical contexts reveals the obscured truth, the distorted knowledge, and the prejudiced ideological framework, as it equally represents the divergent perspectives of both the Self and the Other. Said employs the concept of new historicism to facilitate his contrapuntal interpretation. In *An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (1995), Peter Barry defines new historicism as follows:

The method involves the simultaneous examination of literary and non-literary texts, typically from the same historical epoch. In this context, new historicism ostensibly rejects the prioritization of literary texts; rather than distinguishing between a literary 'foreground' and a historical 'background,' it advocates for a scholarly approach where literary and non-literary texts are afforded equal significance and continuously engage with one another. This notion of 'equal weighting' is encapsulated in the definition of new historicism provided by American critic Louis Montors, who characterizes it as a dual focus on 'the textuality of history and the historicity of texts.' ... A new historical essay situates the literary text within the framework of a non-literary text (p. 173).

Said's contrapuntal reading appears significantly influenced by new historicism, emphasizing historical experience as a crucial component in literary interpretation; however, new historicism possesses numerous shortcomings that may hinder its ability to provide a robust and relatively objective analysis. The new historicism confines its study and critique of the text to the corresponding historical record. Furthermore, its historical documentation is monolithic, which disregards or minimizes the variance in historical experiences. The new historicism does not concern itself with the significance of the author's autobiography; it solely examines the historical context of the text, so further widening the gap between the author and the text. Moreover, it fails to embody the selfless humanistic qualities that render the intellectual unbiased in its portrayal of historical experiences. New historicism lacks precise theoretical frameworks for the objective interpretation of canonical texts; it only emphasizes the significance of historical experience in textual analysis.

Said's contrapuntal reading of literature is informed by both theoretical and practical aspects of humanistic critique, including the hybridity of global cultures, the variance of historical experiences, the concept of worldliness, and a just critical consciousness, among others. Therefore, when the intellectual employs a contrapuntal reading of literature to analyze a specific text, he must be cognizant of the following considerations: he must recognize that all cultures are hybrid, which precludes him from privileging one culture over another or adhering to a particular mode of thought that critiques other cultures, as this diminishes his strong and uncritical attachments to his own culture, thereby obstructing his ability to perceive other world cultures objectively. Secondly, it requires a comprehensive understanding of the discrepancies, overlaps, and hybridity of historical experiences. This knowledge compels the intellectual to

diligently recover the obscured historical experience and to actualize it from its source, rather than from his cultural repository.

Thus, the Saidian theoretical concepts, including worldliness and equitable criticism, will be contextualized within their practical framework. Said's humanistic critique enables him to recognize the role of culture in the imperialist process and the biased representation of historical experiences presented in such books, which marginalizes the historical experiences of peripheral regions. Moreover, it emphasizes that literary works cannot be divorced from the contextual reality and the political dynamics of their society. However, addressing the historical difference needs consideration of other significant variables for interpreting his text. First and foremost, it is essential to emphasize the social, political, and cultural contexts prevalent at the time of the literary work's development. The critic is compelled to assess the degree to which the author was influenced by the prevailing ideology of his society, necessitating an examination of the social and historical conditions of the time, which requires a study of the author's autobiography. It is essential to emphasize others' reactions to historical experiences, highlighting their perspectives. For Said, integrating the disparate experiences illuminates the common and interconnected aspects.

In summary, Said's contrapuntal analysis is distinctly articulated in the subsequent phrases: In practical terms, "contrapuntal reading," as I have termed it, refers to the interpretation of a text with an awareness of the implications when an author illustrates, for example, that a colonial sugar plantation is deemed essential to sustaining a specific lifestyle in England. Furthermore, akin to all literary works, these are not confined by their formal historical beginnings and conclusions. References to Australia in *David Copperfield* and India in *Jane Eyre* arise not merely from the authors' imagination, but because British imperial power facilitated these significant appropriations. Furthermore, it is equally true that these colonies were eventually emancipated from both direct and indirect rule, a process that commenced and progressed while the British, along with the French, Portuguese, Germans, and others, remained present, albeit with only sporadic acknowledgment of this development as part of their efforts to suppress indigenous nationalism. Contrapuntal reading must consider both imperialism and its resistance, necessitating an expanded analysis of texts to incorporate previously excluded elements. For instance, in *L'Estanger*, this includes the entirety of France's colonial history and its dismantling of the Algerian state, as well as the subsequent rise of an independent Algeria, which Camus opposed (Said, 1993, 66-67).

Said's contrapuntal approach seeks to dissect the intellect and identify the nature of the thoughts it produces. It directs its critic to understand the author's attitude toward the material by establishing a framework of references, which serves as an undeniable reflection of his sentiments. Said's analysis of *Mansfield Park* delineates the historical context of the novel's composition. The characterization of historical experience can more fully reflect the social and political realities of that era. Consequently, the critic or thinker encounters, whether consciously or unconsciously, the prevailing social, cultural, and political conditions of the era. Examining the external factors that significantly impact the book's development encourages the critic to analyze the author's autobiography, their life perspectives, and the motivations for composing the work. The critic correlates specific elements of the novel's storyline to these conditions. *Mansfield Park*'s allusion to the Caribbean colonies, specifically Antigua—utilized as a sugar plantation—explicitly illustrates the British culture's engagement in the imperialist endeavor. Moreover, when examining the historical discrepancies, we ascertain that sugar plantations were a fundamental necessity for British civilization throughout that period. *Mansfield Park* elucidates the perspectives of British imperial authority about their colonies. Said articulates this relationship more eloquently in the following terms:

My argument is that through the juxtaposition of casualness and stress, Austen demonstrates her assumption of the significance of an empire to domestic circumstances, akin to Fanny's dual assumption of this importance. Furthermore, Austen's references to Antigua in *Mansfield Park* necessitate a corresponding effort from readers to comprehend the historical implications of this reference. In other words, we must strive to grasp what she intended and the rationale behind the prominence she accorded it, as well as her choice, given that alternative methods could have been employed to depict Sir Thomas's wealth. Now, let us assess the symbolic significance of the Antigua reference in *Mansfield Park*: what role does it play, and what function does it serve? (Said, 1993, p. 89)

Said's contrapuntal interpretation enables him to concentrate on the marginalized aspects of the historical narrative in *Mansfield Park*: Western intellectuals overlook Austen's intentional mention of Antigua as one of Britain's overseas colonies. In his essay, "The Ethics of *Mansfield Park*: Macintyre, Said and the Social Context," Allen Dun contends that Said's contrapuntal analysis does not yield an objective interpretation of *Mansfield Park*.

Both Macintyre and Said adopt stances that impose unwarranted limitations on our comprehension of morality in Austen and, more broadly, on the range of moral exemplars. In their divergent interpretations of *Mansfield Park*, Macintyre and Said impose too rigorous criteria for anyone interested in the novel as a matter of moral contemplation. Fanny's ethical commitment, like to that of most contemporary humans, is significantly more intricate than the accounts provided by Macintyre or Said permit in the novel. (4)

Dun asserts that Said's contrapuntal interpretation of *Mansfield Park* as an imperialist instrument is both ineffective and spurious, as it confines the formulation of individuals' ethical beliefs to their engagement with the world. Nonetheless, contemporary individuals possess values that are complex and diverse. Consequently, the formation of their values cannot be attributed to a singular factor, namely, the politics of culture. Furthermore, the author rejects Said's assertion that the 19th-century English novel reflects the culture and philosophy of its society. Said erroneously asserts that the ethical frameworks of both Austen's land and Fanny are influenced by the same fundamental cognitive structure; they are inextricable. Austen's diverse ethical commitments cannot be comprehended as an extension of a singular cognitive framework. Austen lacks a cohesive ethical framework. Consequently, it is difficult to acknowledge that her ethics and politics reflect the same underlying pattern of thought.

In his essay 'Edward Said and the Historians,' Mackenzie contends that Said's contrapuntal interpretation is applicable solely to texts produced inside the imperialist Western framework or those that portray both the colonizer and the colonized (16). However, this research presents a divergent perspective from Mackenzie's. Said's conceptualization of contrapuntal reading theorizes and situates his critical concept inside a practical framework. It analyzes both canonical Western novels related to empire and other works unrelated to imperialism. The emphasis of this technique lies in its focus on the divergent historical experiences involving two or more opposing sides. Therefore, it is illogical to confine the resistance and disparity solely to the colonizer and the colonized. Nonetheless, difference is an essential principle of life; without it, existence cannot progress. In other words, the diversity and disparity of historical experiences constitute a value from which life derives its capacity for existence. Consequently, there exists discord and divergence among family members, villagers, citizens of the same nation, and constituents of a shared national culture. Thus, Said's contrapuntal analysis, along with his other humanistic principles, can offer a humanistic critical theory that interprets texts based on a defined set of theoretical frameworks.

In his book, *Absolutely Post Colonial* (2001), Peter Hallward elucidates that contrapuntal reading of literature serves as an effective approach for illustrating the historical experiences of others, while simultaneously aligning with the hybrid characteristics of contemporary cultures. Our most authentic reality is manifested in the manner we transition from one location to another. "We are migrants and hybrids" (58). In her essay "A Reading of Edward Said's Critical Concepts," Do'aa Imbabi elucidates that Said does not endeavor to provide a systematic and comprehensive account of the contrapuntal approach. Consequently, Said cannot demonstrate such a technique in clear and overt terms. Furthermore, Said does not specify the kind of texts that should be examined via the lens of contrapuntal reading in literature: Reading Said's writings reveals that he intentionally refrained from employing a theoretically comprehensive approach in his contrapuntal analysis. Said asserts that his conception of contrapuntality was inspired by the creation of an analytical form akin to art itself. The sense of ambiguity concerning the categorization of Said's work inside a specific critical theory may stem from his pressing need to identify as an academic who opposes hegemonic ideologies. Throughout his life, he was aware of the negative connotation associated with subordination. Consequently, he rejects the reliance on other intellectuals for his ideas. Experiencing subjective insights, even within the most systematic domains like literary criticism, appears to be the key to Said's uniqueness in the discipline.

Imbabi asserts that the primary reason for Said's failure to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework for the practice of reading is his subjective experiences. Imbabi refers to the influence of personal experience on Said's critical theory through subjective experiences. Said endures a protracted period of exile, which instills in his psyche a profound sense of non-belonging to any one physical entity. Consequently, Said rejects affiliation with any dominant culture and disavows association with any intellectual school. Consequently, he attributes his literary output

to his state of exile, dismissing the constraints of academic theory in favor of abstract affiliation. This research presents a contrasting perspective to that of Imababi. Said's contrapuntal reading cannot be separated from his other humanistic critical principles. These critical values maintain a consistent reciprocal relationship with Said's contrapuntal technique; in other words, Said's humanistic values stimulate the intellectual's mind with essential critical, humanistic, and cultural principles that enable the objective application of contrapuntal reading. Said's contrapuntal reading is not an archetype of his critical theory; rather, it is the culmination of his critical framework, which is informed by other significant critical values that collectively form a comprehensive theory. The ideals are elucidated in detail in both this study and the preceding one; the hybridity of global cultures, the hybridity of historical experiences, the realm of worldliness, the equitable critical consciousness, and the contrapuntal analysis of literature.

Conclusion

The Saidian critical theory is comprised on these essential humanistic values. Consequently, digesting, comprehending, and experiencing such values stimulate the intellectual's mind to establish coherent and systematic theoretical frameworks for contrapuntal analysis. Said successfully presents a comprehensive critical theory with distinct and defined critical parameters. Nevertheless, Said's assertion that he opposes all forms of specialization and professionalization does not imply that his critical thinking is anti-theoretical or that he rejects academic theory. However, Said does not dismiss professionalization and theory in their conventional sense; if that is the case, why does he engage with and critique critical theory and professionalization? What is his motivation for altering contemporary American thought and all established kinds of criticism? Said perceives the concepts of professionalization and specialization from a distinct vantage point compared to his detractors. Said challenges the dysfunctionality of specialization and professionalization, which imposes its culture and traditions on the intellectual, denying him the opportunity to reassess his own cultural beliefs. Simultaneously, it inhibits his ability to cultivate a fair and impartial comprehension of diverse cultures. Said possesses a distinct critical theory characterized by a collection of humanistic critical values. Comprehending these values enables the critic to evaluate any writing impartially.

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