antithesis, as a 'surrogate and even underground self'.[11] Without the Orient and without Orientalism, it would seem, Europe would not be what it is. Neither would musicology be what it is without its antithesis, its surrogate and underground self. To be sure, what that antithesis is exactly is open for discussion. But I would suggest that, in the case of turn-of-the-century France, at least, one candidate is the musical practices of foreign places and peoples.

The much broader lesson, therefore, is that Orientalism may be at the very heart of how our discipline operated in its earliest stages, during the foundation of a musical academy and the codification of its basic tenets, whether those of a François-Joseph Fétis or a Guido Adler. Moreover, despite attention to historiography, methodology and expanding subject areas, the way we operate is not so different from a century ago: we still periodize historically, categorize geographically and read musical texts. Is it possible that there are traces of Orientalism, however latent, left in our work today? And if so, how might we confront this aspect of the history and present of musicology?

Edward Said and Ethnomusicology

MARTIN STOKES

Edward Said's influence on ethnomusicology has never been particularly marked. This statement needs immediate qualification, of course. Postcolonial thinking did have an impact on ethnomusicology from the outset, and a deeper and more transformative one than is sometimes allowed. And Said's work has certainly been a point of reference and citation, under the broad category of 'Orientalism'. But there has been no sustained engagement with the broader trajectory of his work, and little of which I am aware in the way of symposia, reviews or obituaries specifically devoted to his impact on ethnomusicology. Henry Stobart's *The New (Ethno)musicologies* contained two references to Said's work, and Gregory Barz and Timothy Cooley's *Shadows in the Field* only one.[12] So he would seem, on the surface, to have been somewhat irrelevant to the major disciplinary transformations of the 1990s, which both of these volumes reflect.

On the face of it, this is surprising. Said's work, as it is commonly understood across the humanities, has asked questions that an ethnomusicologist cannot avoid. There are a number of possible explanations. One is that ethnomusicology has always been too deeply lost in its own romance with the exotic to be able to handle the Saidian critique. This might be the conclusion a non-ethnomusicologist would draw from reading, say, Kofi Agawu's *Representing African Music*.[13] But this would be to fail to acknowledge the long-standing, if often localized and uneven, engagement of ethnomusicologists with postcolonial theory,

[11] Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

[12] *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, ed. Henry Stobart (Lanham, ND, 2008); *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, ed. Gregory Barz and Timothy Cooley (Oxford, 2008).

[13] Kofi Agawu, *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* (New York, 2003).

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admirably described in Thomas Solomon's recent review of the subject.[14] Another explanation might be that Said's affection for, and well-known defences of, the Western art-music canon left many ethnomusicologists wondering. Why, for example, should he have so disdainfully and systematically ignored traditional Arab or Palestinian sound-worlds? And why would he have excused the Western musical canon from his broader critique of Western culture – always, for Said, complicit with state power and colonial domination? But this would be to assume an overly partisan reading of Said's musical writings. For all of his Western reflexes, he talked about performers, performances and performativity, rather than Music with an upper-case 'M', in ways that continue to touch familiar and sympathetic ethnographic nerves. And this would be to ignore the more meditative and knowledgeable tone on Arab music culture in Said's later, and particularly his autobiographical, writing.[15]

Another possibility is that ethnomusicologists have found the Foucauldian circuitry of *Orientalism* unsympathetic, at odds with prevailing theorizations of history, structure and agency. This would chime with broader and more enduring critiques of postcolonialism as a whole, with its (perceived) stylistic obscurity, the reliance on first-world theory, the lofty attitude towards local culture, the privileging of 'reading' over doing and organizing, the failure to consider the situatedness of the critic himself/herself, and so forth. This is more plausible, but would imply a broader rejection of or indifference to postcolonial theory, which I do not by any means believe exists. It would also be to assume something problematically uniform about the way in which postcolonial theory was read by ethnomusicologists in the 1980s and 1990s. Remember that postcolonial theory was itself a response to and a development of earlier lines of enquiry into the colonial production of knowledge, among which we might include Commonwealth literature studies, world systems analysis and Wallersteinian globalization theory, the historical and reflexive turn in cultural anthropology, subaltern studies in South Asia, and other traditions of activism/criticism in decolonization struggles in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America (associated with the names of C. L. R. James, Ngugiwa Thiong'o, Franz Fanon, Aimé Césaire and Chinua Achebe, among others) and in the civil-rights struggle in the USA (associated with W. E. B. Du Bois, among others). Middle East studies came to this particular critical juncture late in the day, it might be noted; certainly in comparison with, say, Latin American or South Asian studies. What I came to understand about 'Orientalism' in the 1980s was the consequence of more or less simultaneous encounters with the writing of Talal Asad, Michael Gilsenan, Aziz al-Azmeh and others, alongside that of Said.[16] The bibliographies of ethnomusicological colleagues considering similar kinds of questions in Latin America, Africa and South Asia at the same time were quite different, the questions more or less explicit, the polemics more or less accentuated. So ethnomusicologists came to postcolonial critique through anthropological

[14] Thomas Solomon, 'Where is the Postcolonial in Ethnomusicology?', *Ethnomusicology in East Africa: Perspectives from Uganda and Beyond*, ed. Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza and Thomas Solomon (Kampala, 2012), 216–51.

[15] Edward W. Said, 'Homage to a Belly-Dancer', *London Review of Books*, 12 (1990), 6–7.

[16] *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, ed. Talal Asad (London, 1973); Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam* (London, 1983). Slightly later, but formative in my own first efforts to think through postcolonialism in Middle East music studies, was Aziz al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London, 1993).

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and area-studies fields that had absorbed and translated these different lines of enquiry in their own particular ways and in their own time.

If Said has not provoked passionate debate, or inaugurated a subdisciplinary moment in ethnomusicology, there are, then, reasons. But his work – and particularly his later work – undoubtedly merits more systematic and engaged discussion. This is not to imply that we should return to the *Orientalism* polemics of the 1980s. But it is to suggest that at a juncture characterized by catastrophically misinformed public debate in the West on almost any Middle Eastern cultural or political issue, on the 'migration crisis' and on the ongoing disasters in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, we would all do well to remind ourselves of Said's broader diagnosis of West–Islam relations. It is to suggest that musicologists of the Western tradition would benefit from conversation with ethnomusicologists, particularly those from and who work on the Middle East, about 'their' Said. And it is to suggest that conversation within ethnomusicology about some important and perennial issues – humanism and activism, for instance – might benefit from discussion of Said's post-*Orientalism* writing.

Ethnomusicology clings to a foundational humanism, once neatly expressed by John Blacking's slogan 'soundly organized humanity, humanly organized sound'.[17] This humanism seems to have survived intact (that is, to have remained largely unexamined) in the wake of various waves of antihumanism/posthumanism in recent decades. Saidian critique suggests an alternative – one, indeed, that might bring a sense of direction in our current discussions about activism and social justice. But this would require a rather more nuanced environment of discussion about Said than is currently in play, limited as it is to (hesitant) reflections on *Orientalism*. His avowed humanism, his frequently voiced admiration of the 'complexity' of the Western tradition, is often understood, after all, to be contradictory. But Patrick Deer, Gyan Prakash and Ella Shohat suggest that this is not necessarily a contradiction at all.[18] His late writing may, indeed, have unwaveringly affirmed the value of the Western humanist tradition. But, they argue, 'It was an engaged, politicized humanism that insisted on its worldly ties […] [a humanism that] allowed him to critique the narrowness and aestheticizing tendencies of a liberal or conservative culturalism all too easily compatible with an era of neo-imperialism and permanent war.'[19] 'Insisting on its worldly ties' refers to a critical practice capable of acknowledging its dependence on historical, material and political circumstances. A critical practice, in other words, that could never float free, and that would thus always be in conflict with the narrow formalism of heavily institutionalized interpretative or analytical methods, and with the narrow and ongoing instrumentalization of culture in the context of neoliberal governmentality. There is a romanticism at play here, certainly, but a romanticism that has insisted on grounding itself in the here and now, that has striven for effective diagnoses of injustice, and that has nurtured organizable and realizable goals.

Said's humanism has something in common with what Deer, Prakash and Shohat describe as Stuart Hall's and Raymond Williams's 'self-contradictory genealogy of culture' – which is to say an idea of culture as where and how we imagine everyday meaning-making and

[17] John Blacking, *How Musical Is Man?* (Seattle, 1974).

[18] Patrick Deer, Gyan Prakash and Ella Shohat, 'Introduction: Edward Said: A Memorial Issue', *Social Text*, 24 (2006), 1–9.

[19] *Ibid.*, 4.

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struggle, but culture also as where and how we imagine reaching beyond.[20] To put it another way, culture as both the made and the making. 'Self-contradictory' seems right, with the dialectical implications of a constant and productive disjuncture between what we are made of and what we might make of ourselves. This is certainly rather different from Blacking's humanism, complex proposition though that was in its own way, too. For Blacking, the organic unity of the 'soundly organized humanity' and 'humanly organized sound' of the Venda was something that came with their culture, even if it was, in practice, to be taken away from them by apartheid and recouped only on special occasions, such as in the *tschikona*.[21] We have something to gain, as ethnomusicologists, from revisiting the idea of the 'musical human being'. On the one hand, we need to question the extent to which the idea of the human frame as the measure of all things continues to be normative in our area of the field, obscuring much that is important in our (sonic) relationship with environments, shaped as they are by non-human actors and technologies. On the other hand, we need to be alive to the ways in which it might inspire new lines of interpretation, critique and activism. The dialectical implications of Said's 'engaged, politicized humanism' would seem to keep both in play, without forcing one or other of these propositions off the table.

The term 'activism', as used by many today, often seems to imply an opposition between 'business-as-normal' teaching and writing, on the one hand, and, on the other, speaking up for and organizing on behalf of others who might benefit from our help. Said's conception of humanism should, surely, trouble this rather cosy opposition. Activism, and particularly musical activism, underpinned by all kinds of humanist rhetoric, can be troublingly blind to its colonial and missionary genealogies, a point made tellingly in Rachel Beckles Willson's recent study of music-related non-governmental organizations in Israel and the occupied West Bank.[22] By contrast, undemonstrative work on complex areas of human experience, involving the slow build-up of knowledge over time, might, in the teeth of relentless managerial demands for relevance and 'impact', shape the intellectual tools and imaginative horizons with and within which a subsequent generation might succeed in changing the world. This, too, is surely 'activism', quiet and institutionally invisible though it might be. The problems involved in the humanist rhetoric of 'cultural' NGOs have often been noted.[23] But we do not yet, arguably, have a sense of the possibilities, the more everyday ways in which the human dimension, 'the musical human being' as it were, continues to be evoked to make things feel, for so many people, both possible and hopeful; to provide grounds for acting in and on the world, if not participating in 'activism', in other words. Does Said show the way? His humanism could hardly be called programmatic, and the tensions within it remain unresolved. But it does suggest a more integrated conception of critique and activism, which ethnomusicologists could usefully consider. It also suggests an (at first sight unlikely) bridge between popular and academic worlds, and between Western and non-Western worlds. Academic musicology, still a thoroughly divided intellectual space despite the lip service, would benefit.

[20] Deer, Prakash and Shohat, 'Introduction', 4.
[21] Blacking, *How Musical Is Man?*
[22] Rachel Beckles Willson, *Orientalism and Musical Mission: Palestine and the West* (Cambridge, 2013).
[23] Geoff Baker, *El Sistema: Orchestrating Venezuela's Youth* (Oxford, 2014).

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