

presented here also is the Accents of Life: a collection devoted to the people and areas ordinarily overlooked in modern American society. These various entities are not items located on the cultural periphery. On the contrary, the elements are part and parcel of the whole social experience, subtly adding and manipulating in a manner worth highlighting here as "accents" or "flourishes." Thus each piece included aims to explain, exemplify, call attention to, or even denounce a specific social accent. Notably, several works deal explicitly with accents that have developed as a direct result of the changes in American culture since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. However, the gloomy post-September 11 aura provides a backdrop without wholly dominating the discourse—a position as reflected in the varied attitudes of the articles herein. The main thrust remains an exposition of the cultural flourishes in American society.

First we address the role of the Intellectual in our society. Between the two articles, we arrive at the Intellectual as an identity and laden with responsibility. The current public Intellectual, a far cry from academic irrelevancy, can function as a justifier of the corrupt elite or the informer of the masses. The latter situates the Intellectual as a beneficial investigatory tool of society, whereas being a mouthpiece of the corrupt exploits the public's need to know. Thus how the individual Intellectual pursues his or her subjects inherently affects the society for better or worse, yielding the Intellectual a privileged position capable of widespread influence. The Intellectual role operates like a beacon of knowledge for the culture at large, a person expected to be exemplary and referential as a benchmark enabling changes for everyone else.

Apart from the role of a person, we move into the function of images. Pictures ordinarily passed over as incidental and average actually provide discursive power over the society utilizing them. We find repetition intentionally dulls sensation of the image enough to render any subjugating content appear natural. The true significance of this theme resides in the pervasiveness; these images highlight social tendencies and manipulate preferences while operating under the guise of mere commonplace pictorials.

Finally we delve into the realm of literature to examine language's power to corrupt and alter. In this manner a person by default of his or her social dialect may be altered for the worse into an ill-fitting and undesirable role. A socially-recognized identity is contingent on language to describe and define that role even when the inadequacy of naming comes into play. Thus the derogative influence of linguistic constructs provides a poignant view on the limited validity of so-called identity in our culture.

Christianne M. Cain

the space of the intellectual: displacement in edward said marc auge and jacques ranciere

cristos hadjiyiannis is currently in his second year of a ph.d in english at the school of literatures, languages and cultures at the university of edinburgh, uk. his doctoral project considers the poetic theory and practice of t.e. hulme, with particular reference to hulme's contribution to the development of modernist aesthetics as well as the relation between academic philosophy and modernist poetry in the early twentieth century and in the aesthetic theory of jacques ranciere.

in his 1993 lecture 'Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals,' Edward Said interrogates the role and purpose of the post-colonial intellectual in contemporary society by rethinking and reconceptualising the notion of exile. Said begins by challenging the negative connotations which 'exile' often carries, questioning what he sees as a popular-yet-mistaken idea: 'that being exiled is to be totally cut off, isolated, hopelessly separated from your place of origin' (RI 36). As well as the 'actual' condition of an individual 'wandering away' from 'familiar places,' exile, Said finds, taken in its metaphorical sense as the displacement from the familiar or the worldly, fits best the model of life of the 'nay-sayer' intellectual, Said's name for the individual who is consciously working at odds with her society, refusing to 'take up life' and choosing, instead, to dwell indefinitely in 'a state of inbetweenness' (RI 43, 45). In this 'exilic displacement', as he calls it, there lies the possibility for critical and, thus, constructive, thinking and action. It is this very idea of exile as the necessary 'place' of the intellectual that this paper seeks to explore. By examining Said's idea of 'exilic displacement' vis-à-vis Marc Augé's anthropology of non-places (non-lieux), and Jacques Rancière's politics of aesthetics, this article addresses a question which is central both in post-colonial studies more specifically, as well as in modern-day critical theory more widely; namely, what is the right place for the intellectual in contemporary society?

¹ The lecture was the third of a series of six Reith Lectures delivered for the BBC. It was published first in *The Independent* on July 8, 1993, p. 16, and reprinted in *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 36.

For Said, 'exile' describes 'the state of never being fully adjusted, always feeling outside the chatty, familiar world inhabited by natives...tending to avoid and even dislike the trappings of accommodation and national well-being.' Said continues:

Exile for the intellectual in this metaphysical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others. You cannot go back to some earlier and perhaps more stable condition of being at home; and, alas, you can never fully arrive, be at one with your new home or situation (RI 38).

Ultimately, this 'dislocation' becomes for the intellectual 'not only a style of thought but also a new, if temporary, habitation' (RI 39). Said's definition of 'exile' serves to distinguish between the uncritical 'intellectual' who is 'beset and overwhelmed by the rewards of accommodation, yea-saying, settling in', and the 'detached' intellectual who, by choosing to exist in some state of 'exilic displacement,' is able to maintain the crucial critical awareness that sets her apart from the common consensus (RI 46). This second kind of intellectual has a marginal existence; displaced and dislocated, she is never fixed to one point of reference or one particular place. As Said puts it, the 'exiled' intellectual is never living 'on land' (RI 44), the negation of the proposition emphasising further the 'unsettledness' which is the intellectual's defining characteristic. This claim, however, should not be taken as suggesting that the intellectual exists like a 'free-floating' entity in some exquisite, ideal, realm. On the contrary, as Said stresses, 'no one is free of attachments and sentiments' (RI 47). Indeed, existing outside the 'chatty' world is as much insufficient for critical intellectual activity as is wholly embracing the 'familiar' world. What is crucial, rather, is that the intellectual 'sits' in the chiasmus between the known and the unknown, the familiar and the estranged. Only in this way will the intellectual be able to enjoy unconstrained and multi-angular perspective and the ability to see with the eyes of both the insider and the outsider, thus becoming freed 'from having always to proceed with caution, anxious about upsetting fellow members of the same corporation' (RI 47).

In as much as Said disallows the possibility that the intellectual may ever exist in some fixed or stable position, it is right to think of the intellectual's position among the rest of the members of society as a non-place, to borrow Marc Augé's crucial anthropological term, or a 'space', the latter which carries a sense of neutrality in contradistinction to the determinacy which 'place' implies. It is interesting that recent post-colonial theory, as well as political theory more generally, is characterised by an insistence on spatial terms such as 'space', 'location', 'margin', 'positionality', 'displacement' and so on. For example, post-colonial theorists such as Grossberg and Bhabha have introduced the notions of 'space of culture' and 'third space' respectively to stress the fluidity and uncertainty of ideas of culture and identity. In political theory, 'spaces of democracy', 'spaces of resistance' and 'spaces of politics' have gained way over more traditional structures of analysing relations of power and representations.¹ Understanding the position of the intellectual on the model of space, I'd like to suggest, helps us capture and emphasize the detachedness which Said casts as the most crucial cases of in-

1. Grossberg, 'The Space of Culture, The Power of Space', *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (London: Routledge, 1996); H.K. Bhabha, 'Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences', *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 208-10

tellectual activity. This detachedness is what allows the unaffiliated intellectual to be always critical of the society she is a member of. Yet, as I will argue, it is also what prohibits the intellectual from having any direct or active participation in the political sphere. In *Non-Places*, Augé asserts that any 'space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place.' Like Said's 'exile', Augé's notion carries both an 'actual' and a 'metaphorical' meaning. On the one hand, 'non-places' refer to real places that exist, such as motorways (when viewed from inside car interiors) or passenger transit lounges of airports. On the other hand, though, much more than concrete representations of post-modern excesses of space and time, 'non-places' designates 'areas' with no sense of identity (national, social, or political), and, therefore, with no ties of cultural belongingness or national affiliation.² The 'archetype of non-place,' Augé tells us, is traveller's space, that is, '[s]pace, as frequentation of places rather than a place.' This creation of space, stems in effect from a double movement: the traveller's movement...but also a parallel movement of the landscapes which he catches only in partial glimpses, a series of 'snapshots' piled hurriedly into his memory and, literally, recomposed in the account he gives of them (NP 85-6).³

Of course, in Augé this space is understood rather negatively, in terms of the alienation imposed by post-modernity on the modern individual. Nevertheless, Augé's traveller shares something intrinsic in common with the self-seeking intellectual who Said likens to a 'traveller, a provisional guest' moving 'beyond the conventional and the comfortable' (RI 44, 46). The difference is that Said sees traveller's space positively, as hiding the possibility for creative thinking. Indeed this space becomes, for Said, the ideal 'habitus' of the universal intellectual who, by choosing to remain outside the 'familiar' world, aims to represent her native people. In 'Holding Nations and Traditions at Bay,' delivered as part of the same series of Reith lectures, Said discusses the idea in Benda's *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, that, as he says, 'intellectuals exist in a sort of universal space, bound neither by national boundaries nor by ethnic identity.' Although Said is keen to show that things have changed a great deal since the late 1920s, the time when Benda was writing – the dismantling of the great colonial empires, the advent of the Cold War and the emergence of the Third World, the dramatic changes in travel and communication technology, and the proliferation of specialised studies, Said argues, have demanded a reconceptualisation of the idea of the 'universal intellectual' – he, nevertheless, accepts that a universal space from within the intellectual speaks exists. As he admits, 'despite the inevitable erosion of the universal concept of what it means to be an intellectual, some general notions about the individual intellectual do seem to have

1. Augé, Marc. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London: Verso, 1995., pp. 77-8. Hereafter abbreviated in text as NP.

2. Augé holds that a place is an 'invention discovered by those who claim it as their own' (NP 43). Elsewhere he says that it is a symbolic space 'which serves as a reference for all those it assigns to a position' (NP 53). In 'Secular Criticism', Said cites Auerbach to support the view that 'our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation.' See *The Edward Said Reader*, ed. by M. Bayoumi and A. Rubin (London: Granta, 2001), p. 225.

3. Interestingly, a similar metaphor to the one which Augé employs appears in Ghosh, who conceptualizes what he calls 'the greatest sorrow' in terms of the feeling of those 'writers who look back, in the wake of that loss [of maps], [and who] can only build shrines to the past.' 'The Greatest Sorrow', *The Imam and the Indian* (Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2002), p. 319.

more than strictly local application' (NP 26-7).

As we will see, Rancière likewise distinguishes between the two spatial terms 'place' and 'space', in his own attempt to separate politics from what he thinks is its contrary: the police order. Thus, when he is writing about police, Rancière uses 'place' to emphasise the logic of the proper, while when he is writing about politics he uses either 'lieu' or 'espace'.¹ Whereas 'place' very state of which seems to be for Rancière the condition for politics. As he put it in a recent interview, politics 'has no "proper" place.'² This is an idea which, as we have seen, appears in Said, too, who concludes his lecture on 'Intellectual Exile' with the affirmation that the intellectual has always to move away from the centralizing authorities towards the margins' (RI 47). The idea, in both Rancière and Said, is that politics happens only when the subject refuses to be included in the whole. Just like Said's intellectual must refuse to 'settle' in the political, Rancière acknowledges that 'politics generally occurs "out of place", in a place which was not supposed to be political'.³ The idea of the intellectual speaking or writing from within a 'non-place' or a 'space', however, hides an obvious contradiction. The task of the post-colonial intellectual, Said tells us in *Holding Nations and Traditions at Bay*, is to represent "the collective suffering of your own people...to give greater human scope to what a particular race or nation suffered, to associate that experience with the sufferings of others" (RI 44). In other words, the task of the intellectual is to speak for those who remain unrepresented in, to use Spivak's term, the 'subaltern space.' As Said proposes, '[f]or the intellectual the task is explicitly to universalise the crisis' of her people (RI 44). Put otherwise, Said's 'universal intellectual' has to provide the 'space' from which the voice of the unrepresented be heard. The problem is that the task that Said assigns his intellectual appears to be undermined by the very fact that, first, as a marginal figure, the intellectual can occupy no firm ground upon which to represent anyone; and, second, as an equal member of the very society she vows to speak for, the intellectual is bound to always remain unrepresented herself. The question is: How can the unrepresented represent the unrepresented? Put differently, how can the intellectual's 'displacement' be used to political effect? Turning to the political theory of Jacques Rancière is one way of addressing this issue, for, as I would like to suggest, Rancière's spatial politics captures what is most essential in Said's definition of the role of the intellectual, namely the imperative for perpetual exclusion from any readily received order of things and opinions.

According to Rancière, 'the principal function of politics is the configuration of its proper space.' Unlike Laclau who believes that '[p]olitics only exist insofar as the spatial eludes us' and that, therefore, space and politics 'are antinomic terms', Rancière suggests that 'spatialisation' is the very condition for politics. To understand Rancière's idea that politics is interrelated to space, it is necessary that we distinguish, first, as he himself prompts us to do, between politics (deriving from the Greek polis) and police. Police, Rancière tells us in *Displacement*, is:

1 In the original French, we have three different words, espace, lieu and place. In translation, though, we only get 'space' for 'espace' and 'place' for both 'lieu' and 'place'.

2 'Ten theses on politics', *Theory & Event* 5:3 (2001), p. 25.

3 'The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics'. *Fidelity to the Disagreement: Jacques Rancière and the Political*. London: Goldsmiths College, 16-17 September, 2003

an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise (D 20).

Politics, on the other hand, is 'a series of actions that reconfigure the space where parties, parts, or lack of any parts have been defined.' Rancière continues:

political activity is whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place's destination. It makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise; it makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise (D 30).

Rancière's separation of politics from police gives us a way of understanding how the marginal intellectual, in choosing to remain outside the police order, finds in that very exclusion the opportunity to 'participate' in the political decision-making. Rancière, the intellectual would not be excluded from politics proper, but merely from the police-order, i.e. from 'all the activities which create order by distributing places, names, functions.' The task of the intellectual, it follows, would not be to strive for inclusion in an all-inclusive police-order, but, on the contrary, to remain excluded – as Said demands, never to follow 'a prescribed path.' As Mustafa Dikeç has pointed out, the theme for Rancièran democracy is that the police order remains not all-inclusive. '[T]he only place one finds the unaccounted for,' Dikeç asserts, 'is in the emergence of a political articulation, at a particular time and space, an emergence that becomes the claim of the unaccounted for to redefine the whole and to speak for this whole, which both is and is not yet.' The point here is that the intellectual must not be 'institutionalised' in politics, for such an 'inclusion' would disallow the possibility for politics proper, because the police-order is always the opposite of politics. This is also Said's point: maintaining a distance from the 'familiar' or 'chatty' world is a condition necessary for critical intellectual activity. The critical intellectual, therefore, cannot afford to accommodate herself in one fixed point; rather, she has to be always 'moving on, not standing still.' As Said has learned from Fanon and Césaire, both of who he cites in approval, inclusion of the 'unrepresented' in the 'represented' will inevitably lead to the re-constitution of another order. In Fanon's words, which Said borrows, '[t]he goal of the native intellectual cannot be to replace a white policeman' (RI 41, 32).

Rancière's separation of politics and police is based, in turn, on a grander hypothesis which underlies the entirety of his political theory: that politics can be examined from the perspective of 'the distribution of the sensible.' This 'distribution is defined by Rancière as 'the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it.' 'A distribution of the sensible,' Rancière tells us, establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts. This apportionment of parts and positions is based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determine the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and

in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution.

In this way, Rancière is able to maintain that 'there is an aesthetics at the core of politics', and, further, claim that art, in some restrictive ways, 'creates' politics. First, Rancière asks us to understand this aesthetics in a 'Kantian sense', 'as the system of a priori forms determining what presents itself to sense experience' (PA 13). Understood in this way, politics is what 'revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time' (PA 13). According to Rancière's definition, politics amounts to the interruption or re-configuration of 'the common sensorium'. It is in this very interruption, that there lies for Rancière the possibility for art that interrupts the sensible – that which is seen or heard – and is, therefore, political. As he puts it in a recent essay, 'artistic practices take part in the partition of the perceptible insofar as they suspend the ordinary coordinates of sensory experience and reframe the network of relationships between spaces and times, subjects and objects, the common and the singular.' As Rancière states in *The Politics of Aesthetics*:

Art is political, inasmuch as its objects belong to a separate, autonomous, sphere. And it is political inasmuch as its objects have no specific difference with the objects of the other spheres. On the one hand, aesthetics meant the collapse of the system of constraints and hierarchies that constituted the representational regime of art. It meant the dismissal of the hierarchies of subject-matters, genres and forms of expression separating objects entering in the realm of art or separating high genres and low genres. It implied the infinite openness of the field of art, which ultimately meant the erasing of the frontier between art and non-art, between artistic creation and anonymous life. But on the other hand, aesthetics meant that the works of art were grasped as such in a specific sphere of experience where – in Kantian terms – they were free from the forms of sensory connection proper either to the objects of knowledge or to the objects of desire. They were merely 'free appearance' responding to a free-play, meaning a non-hierarchical relation between the intellectual and the sensory faculties.

Rancière's paradigm for this autonomous-yet-heteronomous status of art – art that is created in and for itself yet is received invariably by people who make it their own – is Schiller's discussion in *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* of the statue of the Greek goddess. For Schiller, Rancière thinks, this statue 'promises emancipation because of its very separateness and unavailability to our knowledge and desires.' Yet, he continues, 'at the same time, the statue promises emancipation because its "freedom" or "indifference" embodies the freedom of the Greek people that created it,' so that 'this freedom means the contrary of the first one':

[i]t is the freedom of a life that does not give itself to separate, differentiate forms of existence, the freedom of a people for which art is the same as religion, the same as politics, the same as ethics: a way of being together. As a consequence, the separateness of the artwork promises its contrary: a life which will not know art as a separate practice and field of experience.

Rancière is, therefore, forced to conclude that the 'politics of aesthetics' rests on a contradiction, namely, on the one hand, the independence of art and, on the other, the suppression of

its boundaries.

Of course, Rancière thinks that there is a kind of a 'third way' art, the art that neither aims at unifying aesthetics and politics, as was the German Romanticists' aim, nor intends to remain entirely functionless, as Adorno demanded. Against these two 'politics of art' Rancière juxtaposes Brecht's Arturo Ui, which he finds as paradigmatic of a 'third way' art, in that it 'consists in setting out the encounter and possibly the clash of heterogeneous elements.' Brecht, Rancière thinks, is successful in 'blending the scholastic forms of political teaching with the enjoyments of the musical or the cabaret, famously having allegories of Nazi power discuss in verse about matters of cauliflowers.' Yet, despite the success of Brechtian theatre in e-configuring the 'common sensorium', Rancière admits that '[t]here is no formula for an appropriate correlation' between aesthetics and politics, and that these must remain, inevitably, and sadly, disparate activities. As he says in an interview:

it is the state of politics that decides that Dix's paintings in the 1920s, 'populist' films by Renoir, Duvivier, or Carne in the 1930s, or films by Cimino or Scorsese in the 1980s appear to harbour a political critique or are suited to an apolitical outlook on the irreducible chaos of human affairs or the picturesque poetry of social differences (PA 62).

We are back at where we started from. Rancière's artist, just like Said's intellectual, finds herself in an impossible position: she had to remain entirely outside the political sphere (to ensure exclusion from the police order or the 'chatty', 'familiar' world), while also she wants to be active and critical, in the hope that she may effect or influence political decision-making. In this twin demand, I have argued, there is the unenviable task of the intellectual, writ small.

hr