

***The Global Public Intellectual, Academic Professions
and the Intellectual Hero:
Reflections on Edward Said***

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The death of Edward Said at the age of 67 on 25 September 2003 represents a defining “moment” in history that allows us to think analytically and politically about the emergence of global public intellectuals. The outpouring of emotion, intellectual reflection, critical commentary, and controversy at Said’s death was enormous and global in its reach. Said was primarily a member of the American intellectual and scholarly elite, so it makes sense that obituaries appeared in the major North American newspapers, journals of opinion, and in leading academic journals. These various tributes, however, provoked enormous controversy in the midst of the mourning for those who knew Said (Associated Press 2003; Bernstein 2003; Siddiqui 2000; 2003). The error-ridden *New York Times* obituary, in particular created a minor storm of debate related to the objectivity of America’s paper of record and the contested legacy of Said’s intellectual and political work (Bernstein 2003).¹ Even a tribute to Said in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* met with a response of published letters raising questions about Said’s character, scholarship, politics, and questions of the political use of obituaries (Chapin 2003; Fein 2003; Isaac 2003; Rockland 2003; Rosenberg 2003).

The politicized response to the death of Said, however, was not simply an intramural squabble among the American intellectual elite but instead was a global event. Tributes appeared in newspapers, opinion, and academic journals throughout the world, underlining Said’s truly global influence. Said was an academic intellectual whose influence ranged far beyond mainstream media and scholarly journals. There were hundreds of tributes to Said on websites globally as well as score of panels, conferences, and seminars throughout the world devoted to his legacy. Even the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, said that while he did not share all of Said’s opinions, he “always enjoyed his company, savoured his wit and admired the passion with which he pursued his vision of peace” (United Nations News Service 2003). Reaction to the death of a scholar is rarely a truly global event that provides such a rich window into so many political, scholarly, and intellectual issues.

Said was not only a major literary scholar whose work transformed his field. He was also an internationally known social, cultural, and political critic. Said’s hugely influential and controversial classic book *Orientalism* (1978 [1994]), in particular, brought the issue of the cultural and political autonomy of colonized people into the very centre of Western academic debate and contributed to the founding of the field of post-colonial studies (Clifford 1988; Dirlik 1996; Turner 1994). In a widely discussed book on the public intellectual, the American judge Richard Posner (2001) assembled a list of the most influential public intellectuals from data on scholarly citations from the period 1995-2000. Said

1. *The New York Times* obituary misstated the city of Said’s childhood home (Cairo not Jerusalem, although he was born in Jerusalem), the date of partition of Jerusalem (1949 not 1947) and misidentified the last book he published while living (*Freud and the Non-Europeans* (2003) not *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994)). For discussion of *The New York Times* obituary see (Bennis 2003; Giroux 2004).

was number twenty-two on a list topped by Foucault, Bourdieu, Habermas, Derrida, and Chomsky; a list that also includes scholars like Max Weber, Erik Erikson, and William James in the top twenty (Posner 2001). Said is among a handful of individuals who most prominently represent the emergence of the “global public intellectual.”

Few intellectuals exemplify more than Said the ideal of the autonomous social critic, free from the constraint of national state interest, political orthodoxy, purely academic professional discourse, and the fashions of the day. The controversies that emerged in the wake of Said’s death, over and above the specifics of his life and political views on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, were precisely about the proper role of the intellectual in relation to the state, political movements, and the professions in a newly global world polity.

Said’s professional career was spent as a professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. One of the least compelling critiques of Said in the wake of his death, is the argument that his work on Orientalism is simply a “whine” or that he could be placed in the “hey, hey! ho, ho! Western Culture has got to go!” camp of left-wing political correctness. As Said himself once quipped, “how can anyone accuse me of denouncing ‘dead white males’? Everyone knows I love Conrad” (Ali 2003, 3).¹ Said stood out from his fellow professional literary critics, however, because of the global scope of his scholarship; the range and diversity of his intellectual, cultural and political pursuits; and the strength of his convictions.

His life was linked to politics and ideas. Said grew up in Cairo as an Episcopalian member of the Arab elite and was thus a product of the British colonial educational system. Said emigrated to the United States in 1951, the son of a wealthy Palestinian who himself had come to the United States in 1911 to avoid being drafted by the Ottomans (Said 1999). Said’s father earned American citizenship by fighting in the first World War, and made his fortune in the stationery business, paving the way for young Edward to attend an elite American boarding school, followed by professional training at Princeton and Harvard. Said established a successful academic career with his two very scholarly first books, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* (1966) and *Beginnings* (1975 [1985]). Said was well positioned to emerge as one of the great literary critics of the 20th century alongside Columbia’s Lionel Trilling and Canada’s Northrop Frye. Said was politicized by the 1967 war, however, and by the time *Orientalism* was published in 1978 his work dealt centrally—and sometimes now polemically—with questions of power, knowledge, and the “other.” Said helped establish the emerging field of “post-colonial studies” in universities throughout the world (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1995).

Said, however, did far more than create a new disciplinary or post-disciplinary tradition, and establish his reputation as a scholar of literature. Said’s status as a major public intellectual flows from his work undertaken outside his role as a professional academic. Said was an accomplished classical musician and cultural critic who had written regularly about music and opera for *The Nation*, among other outlets. A proponent of what he famously called “worldly” criticism (Said 1983), Said was also an internationally engaged political activist and, for a time, was a member of the Palestinian National Council. Probably the most visible and articulate proponent of the Palestinian cause, he wrote numerous books on the Middle East, and at the end of his life he was a harsh critic of both the Oslo accords and Arafat’s political leadership (Associated Press 2003; Said 1992; 1995a; 1995b; 1997; 2000; 2003). A major focus of the last decade of Said’s life, furthermore, was the political commentaries he wrote in Arabic for the Cairo paper *Al-Ahram*, essays translated into English in the collection *From Oslo to Iraq and the Roadmap* (Said 2004). Said’s many writings on the role of the intellectual and his scores of interventions in book reviews, essays and lectures have given rise to enormous debate, inspiration, and controversy in the United States and throughout the world (Said 2000). If one believes that there is something called the “public intellectual” in a global context, Said’s example looms large.

Since the publication of Russell Jacoby’s book *The Last Intellectuals* (1987) the term “public intellectual” has been widely debated among academics, journalists and intellectuals in the United States and increasingly throughout the world (Posner 2001; Townsley 2004). A public intellectual can be defined as an academic scholar, independent intellectual, journalist, or other media professional who writes or speaks clearly on issues of culture, politics, morality, or economics to a broad public outside narrow professional academic or policy circles in a capacity that goes beyond their professional and occupational roles (Cosser 1965; Kadushin 1974). For Jacoby (1987), this type of public intellectual is an endangered species, as academic professionalism, corporate and government sponsored think tanks, and

1. In terms of style and attitude towards Western literature, Said had far more in common with the traditionalist literary criticism of the well known New York intellectuals Lionel Trilling and Irving Howe than he did with some of the more fashionable theoretically and politically driven scholarship we see in many literary departments today. Despite Said’s account of his life that stressed his subjective feelings of always being “out of place,” his long-term commitment to teaching the “greats” of Western literature through close textual readings meant that he fit very squarely within the Columbia tradition of liberal arts education exemplified by Trilling himself (Said 1999).

a mass media saturated culture make the independent social critic a thing of the past. Jacoby has been widely criticized for underestimating the importance of race and gender in the dynamics of public intellectuals, for viewing only “famous” intellectuals as being public, for being excessively critical of academic scholars, and for exaggerating the alleged “death” of the public intellectual (Brint 1994; Royce 1996; Said 1994). Contrary to Jacoby’s pessimism, however, we may be seeing the creation of new types of “global public intellectuals,” as the digital revolution and emergence of global social movements and political institutions challenge traditional notions of what an intellectual is and how political publics are constituted (Baud and Rutten 2004; Castells 2000, 2001).

Not everyone, however, believes that the revitalization of the public intellectual tradition would be a good thing. Richard Posner’s *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline* (2001), for example, took the debate about the term and the role of the public intellectual to a new level of media attention although his largely critical view of the public intellectual was often misread by commentators (Townesley 2004). An American judge, a prominent intellectual himself, and ideologically a free-market conservative, Posner argues that the public intellectual is not a model from the past to be romanticized or emulated, but instead is an example of market failure. Academics, Posner points out, get hired, paid and tenured for writing peer reviewed scholarly work that is tightly controlled by professional norms, and checks and balances. Academics, furthermore, suffer serious reputational costs for weak scholarship (Whitely 1984, 19). All this, for someone with Posner’s “free market” oriented theoretical commitments, ensures that scholarly work in universities produces a product that is valuable for the society as a whole. On the other hand, there are no effective market mechanisms operating in the production and consumption of public intellectual work.

Posner suggests that when academics enter discussions of issues outside their narrow expertise and attempt to comment on larger political and public debates, they are notoriously inaccurate. Yet he makes the case that none of this matters in the market for public intellectuals since people read their work for entertainment and to feel connected to certain political views (what economists would call a “solidarity good”), not for accurate predictions, information, or real insights. Since public intellectual work is what economists call a “credence” good whose quality cannot be tested directly by the consumer, public intellectuals face no market discipline for the inaccuracies in their work. Since even low quality intellectual work can sometimes bring fame and extra money for a talented few, the market for public intellectual work draws some academics away from the serious scholarly work that could actually do the society some good (Posner 2001).

For Posner, Said is a major example of the problem. The psychological reasons for Said’s critique of the tameness and conformity of the specialized literary scholar is, for Posner, unconvincing (Posner 2001, 4). Posner suggests that Said’s politics were “far to the left” and led him to think that only opposition to corporations and governments is worth encouraging. Posner, in contrast, argues that academic dogma and political conformity to totalitarian movements like communism provide equal dangers to the autonomy of the public intellectual (ibid, 30-31). Posner claims that Said’s “claim of outsider status on the basis of his Palestinian origins” is a “pose of marginality” (ibid, 32) since he was a tenured professor at Columbia, does not have the “speech or physical appearance” that would mark him as “foreign” and Americans, in any case, “do not treat their foreign citizens as outsiders” as the example of Henry Kissinger suggests (ibid, 32). Said, Posner polemically argues, was not taking any risks during the infamous incident where he threw a stone toward Israel from the Lebanese border, since “the Israelis weren’t shooting back” (ibid, 58). One need not find Posner’s critique of Said compelling, nor find the comparison of Kissinger and Said illuminating, to agree that more conceptual work is necessary. We cannot simply take the rhetorical claims of public intellectuals themselves at face value (Pels 2000; Townesley 2004).

A sociological analysis of the concept of the “public intellectual” is required. The public intellectual is not an *occupation*, since intellectuals who perform this function can be employed as professors, journalists, think-tank scholars, electronic media professionals, freelance independent writers, and professionals employed by government and industry. The public intellectual is not a profession since they are not subject to a licensing procedure, educated by formal credentials or represented by a professional association. The role of the public intellectual, furthermore, is created and sustained within diverse types of formal organizations, such as research universities, teaching universities, book publishing houses, think-tanks and newspapers. In a certain sense, public intellectual activity is a sideline for some intellectuals outside their day jobs (Posner 2001). Despite Posner’s critique, Said’s life and career illustrates just how an autonomous intellectual can resist professional and left-wing orthodoxies, as well as the temptations of power. All this gets more complicated under globalization.

Randall Collins’ pioneering work *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (1998) has offered a profound challenge to the way we think about intellectuals, raising the question of globalization in sharp terms. A brilliant and ambitious attempt to sociologically theorize the rise and development of philosophy in Ancient

Greece, China, India, Japan and Medieval and modern Europe, Collins makes the case that “the twentieth century is the first in which comprehending world history has become possible” (Collins 1998, xvii). Collins argues that the “life of the mind” is presently undergoing a fundamental challenge, as new information technologies, the globalization of the research university, economic linkages and intermigration “produce a common world culture” (Collins 1998, xviii). For Collins, intellectual parochialism is a serious problem today, and by the end of the twenty-first century, “educated people will likely be embarrassed to know so little about the intellectual history of other parts of the world than their own” (Collins 1998, xviii). How might we envision a truly global intellectual world?

Globalization theorist Jan Aart Scholte argues that social science has been excessively wedded to what he calls “methodological territorialism,” something that one can see in the literature on intellectuals where we study “the American intellectual elite” (Kadushin 1974), the “French intellectual nobility” (Kauppi 1996), or the “Russian intelligentsia” (Brym 1988; Coser 1965) from within a framework of nation-based intellectual communities. The flows of intellectual émigrés and “travelling theory” have always been central to the sociological analysis of intellectuals (Coser 1984; Said 1983). Perhaps the notion of the global public intellectual, however, can help us think about a community of writers and scholars that is globally connected, and involved in debates/dialogues with publics that are not constituted exclusively around national territorial boundaries.

This involves new conceptual work, since the most influential theoretical perspectives on intellectuals and creativity are grounded in a spatial argument that Scholte’s theory challenges (Collins 1998; Farrell 2001). Jacoby (1987), in particular, stressed the importance of the city as a concrete place where intellectuals emerge and are sustained. Public intellectuals, we have come to believe, tend to emerge and/or sustain themselves in the social circles of small journals or intellectual meetings places that are often located in the “magnet places” of major cities in particular nations. The New York intellectuals, the Parisian intellectual elite, early Marxist intellectual in London, or exiled Latin American radicals in Mexico City represent key examples of centres of public intellectual life in the past (Collins 1998; Coser 1965; Farrell 2001; Kadushin 1974; Kauppi 1996). While Said was clearly an intellectual with a global reach, his roots as a New York intellectual are unquestionable even if he was “out of place” there, as elsewhere (Said 1999). Must a global public intellectual be marginal and out of place, or does rooted and connected social criticism lead to more responsible politics (Pels 1999; 2000; Said 1999; Walzer 1988)? And how might globalization be re-shaping the very terrains on which we address this question?

The notion of the global public intellectual can be conceptualized in two distinct ways. A global public intellectual, by one definition, is an individual who writes social criticism for an audience outside the boundaries of academic professions and university discourse and whose ideas and “name recognition” have a global reach. The contemporary examples of Noam Chomsky (Barsky 1997), Naomi Klein (Klein 2000), Salman Rushdie (Brennan 1989), Amartya Kumar Sen (Sen 1970), and Arundhati Roy (Roy 1997; 2001) suggest ways in which academics, journalists, activists, and novelists contribute to public debate on important issues of the day with a “global reach” outside the boundaries of both narrow professional discourse and the traditional nation state. These famous intellectuals write works that reach a global—not simply a national—audience and are increasingly addressing issues in global ways.¹ There is a history to this type of intellectual. The examples of Bertrand Russell (Monk 1996; 2000), Leon Trotsky (Aronson 2005), Erich Fromm (McLaughlin 1998), Frantz Fanon (Macey 2001), Jean-Paul Sartre (Aronson 2004), Albert Camus (Aronson 2004), Paulo Freire (Gadotti 1994), Hannah Arendt (May 1986) and George Orwell (Rodden 1989) suggest that global public intellectuals are not new phenomena.

Globalization, however, has created more post-territorial space where ideas can be discussed, debated and engaged with, outside of national political cultures and publics (Scholte 2000). The political perspectives promoted by contemporary global public intellectuals increasingly make the case, moreover, for politics, policy and movements that assume a world conceptualized as one place. Global public intellectuals, from Russell to Said, are not simply arguing for policies within the framework of the national political interests of the states and societies in which they hold citizenship rights. Global public intellectuals address universal concerns for a world polity and intellectual debate, even if they speak from a certain perspective and before the structures of global civil society have been fully put into place.

It would be a mistake, however, to restrict the notion of the global public intellectual to famous intellectuals (Baud and Rutten 2004; Royce 1996). Under globalization, there now exist many thousand intellectuals who discuss politics, culture and economics with mass publics outside professional discourse in the non-territorial political space of the in-

1. The issue of whether global public intellectuals are cosmopolitans, or whether this very notion is politically and theoretically problematic is a discussion for another time (See Brennan 1997). My view is that the sociological concept of the global public intellectual must be defined in ways that are neutral to this kind of ideological debate.

ternet, at the World Social Forum meetings, in and around newly emerging global institutions such as NGOs and international financial organizations as well as in the context of global social movements (O'Brien, Goetz, Scholte & Williams 2000). Global public intellectuals are debating new ways of envisioning politics in a world with more porous borders, quicker travel and instant communication (Castells 2001; O'Brien et al. 2000).

Some of these globally oriented public intellectuals will be known throughout the world in the networks of activists and mobilized publics, but will have little visibility within the status hierarchy of the academic world and mainstream media in their own nation state. Walden Bello and Susan George are examples.¹ Some locally based intellectuals, however, organize, speak, and write globally through the internet or approach politics with a global vision while remaining unknown outside their local community. By this broader definition which rejects fame as a criteria for being a public intellectual, these locally based global public intellectuals contribute to emerging debate about the world as one place in ways that help us imagine a new world beyond the present (Royce 1996).²

Public intellectuals are those who engage in a debate about culture, politics, and morality as part of an autonomous intellectual debate not controlled by states, religion, political movements, and professional academic discourse. How do the processes of globalization transform who the "public" is, the constitution of the intellectual community that engages in discussion, and the nature of the issues to be discussed? That is to say, if debates cross the boundaries of geographic territories, and can no longer be captured by the metaphor of the "New York intellectual," how can we think about the possibility of a global public intellectual? The movements as well as political sources of authority that often created, sustained and sometimes threatened the autonomy of public intellectuals in the past are now globally—not nationally—based. If intellectual communities are constituted in non-territorial ways as Scholte suggests, what are the implications for the creation of a global civil society (Castells 2000; Coleman and Wayland 2005)?

From my perspective, the key difference in the world of intellectuals today relative to the past is not what Scholte calls the rise of "globality" but instead is the emergence of the research university as an institutional innovation created in Germany in the nineteenth century and fully institutionalized and consolidated in the twentieth century in the United States (Abbott 2002; Brint 1994; Collins 1998; Scholte 2000). Before the rise of the modern research university, intellectuals had little autonomy from the control of religious institutions, the state, political parties and movements, elite patronage, or the insecurity of trying to make a living based on a "market" for ideas, culture or art (Collins 1998). This German inspired and American institutionalised "academic revolution" created an institutional environment that provided resources, institutional grounding, and the historically unprecedented autonomy created by tenure. The public intellectual debate is largely about the intellectual consequences of this institutional transformation (Townsend 2004).

Jacoby (1987), however, did not ask some of the sociological questions that would help illuminate these dynamics. For Jacoby (1987), it is a terrible thing that the modern research university has killed off the generalist non-specialist intellectual, while from Posner's (2001) perspective we need to finish off the job. Should academic intellectual production be as autonomous as possible from state, business, or community interests; or should academics be organically linked to the states, civil society and economic forces that provides the resources for the university itself? And what would this all look like, in the context of Scholte's notion of "globality" where we think about the world as one place relatively de-linked from territory? Face-to-face interaction and spatial concentration is central to many of the most influential theories of the development of intellectuals and their networks (Collins 1998; Coser 1965; Kadushin 1974). What do new communication technologies, the intensification of global networking, the vastly increased speed of travel, and the introduction of digital technology do to the sociological dynamics of intellectual production; "how theories travel;" and the consolidation of intellectual networks, mentoring processes central to the development of public intellectuals and the institutionalization of intellectual communities?

There are numerous sociological obstacles to the emergence of truly global intellectual debate not dominated by powerful institutional forces. Some global public intellectuals like Russell, Chomsky, Sen, and Said emerge only after years of establishing their academic reputations in such fields as analytic philosophy, linguistics, economics, and literary criticism respectively. This underlines the enormous professional pressures that limit the participation of professors in public debate (Said 1994). Aware, of course, of this sociological dynamic, Said argued for the centrality of an "amateur" social criticism that rejects the logic of professionalism, career building, and primary institutional loyalties

1. Bello teaches sociology and public administration at the University of the Philippines, and is the Director of "Focus on the Global South" and has been a major force in the World Social Forum. George is a Fellow of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam, and her writings have had a major influence on global oriented activists for many years. There are many other examples. For a discussion of why public intellectuals should not just be "famous" intellectuals see Royce 1996.

2. It might be useful to refer to these type of activists as "popular intellectuals," although we leave these definitional matters for another discussion (Baud and Rutten 2004; Rutten and Baud 2004).

to universities, disciplines, or schools of thought. For Said, a successful professional career can contribute to knowledge production, if approached with integrity, but it can also provide the platform for the core activity of the intellectual—the requirement of speaking truth to power in ways that are autonomous from academic professionalism, political power, and even the social movements of the oppressed. The scores of obituaries written on Said after his death provide ample evidence of his autonomous global public intellectual activity, as one can see from the controversy his writings created. He is such an important example of a global public intellectual because, contrary to Posner's (2001) critique, Said's life and career exhibited an unusual level of autonomy from professional scholarly pressures, the political orthodoxies of both the powerful and the powerless, and the intellectual fashions of the day.

SAID'S COURAGE: BEYOND THE AMATEUR INTELLECTUAL

Said's courage and particular perspective on the public intellectual is brought into focus even more clearly when one compares him to the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Young humanities and social science scholars as well as activists in contemporary anti-corporate movements will often identify Bourdieu as a prominent "public intellectual" opponent of neo-liberalism and even an "ideal type" example of a "global public intellectual" (Swartz 2003). Bourdieu's theoretical approach, however, actually represents a more complicated position on these questions since he was a vocal critic of the perspective on the public intellectual represented by Russell Jacoby. Bourdieu was contemptuous of what he saw as intellectual journalism of many of the public intellectual valorized by Jacoby (1987) and represented in the French case by Jean-Paul Sartre and Raymond Aron. Bourdieu argued against the notion that intellectuals should write for and to the general public, seeing this as a career strategy of intellectuals with low levels of cultural capital within the academic "field." To Bourdieu, intellectual debate should be undertaken according to an autonomous logic created by academics and intellectuals themselves and not on behalf of movements, states or an amorphous public (Bourdieu 1975; 1989a; 1989b; Pels 1995). For the early Bourdieu, the modern university has created an institutional structure that helps sustain autonomous academic debate and dialogue, a logic that must be defended against the dynamics set in motion by markets, states or movements.

It is true that in the last decade of his life, Bourdieu "went public" with speeches and writing attacking American led cultural, political, military and economic globalization as well as gender and class inequality (Swartz 2003). Whether this was a principled and courageous stand in defence of the oppressed or simply the playing out of the last stage of the career logic of the elite French academic field is a question worth further examination (Kauppi 1996). Bourdieu's position on the autonomy of the intellectual and university, however, is quite clear, and very distinct from both the Gramscian radical position as well as the contemporary perspectives that view intellectuals as specialized experts beholden to states and stock-holders in the economy and community (Brym 1980; Karabel 1976).

Said's perspective on the need for the amateur intellectual is quite different from Bourdieu's position (Said 1994).¹ Said showed a willingness to take political and personal risks as part of his role as an intellectual, going far beyond the role of the academic in ways Bourdieu did not pursue (Abbott 2004).² Said argued the case for the Palestinians for decades, at the risk of his life in face of death threats, arson in his office, and unrelenting attempts to discredit him by unearthing minor inconsistencies in his biographical account of his life (Judt 2004; Weiner 1999). Said was called a "professor of terror" and there were calls to have him fired from his position at Columbia University in the aftermath of an incident where he had symbolically thrown a stone (a pebble according to some, a rock according to others) towards Israel from Southern Lebanon (Alexander 1989; Judt 2004). Contrary to those that claim Said was critical only towards the United States and Israel, the last decade of his political life was spent opposing the Oslo accords and the leadership of Arafat, as well as courageously writing critiques of Arab intellectuals and leaders in Arabic in a widely read Egyptian paper (Said 2004). Contrary to Said's own call for the "amateur" intellectual, it was his very professional status as a world famous tenured academic literary scholar at Columbia University that made possible this intellectual autonomy from orthodoxies of all kind. The difficulties intellectuals with less stature face articulating political critiques of the status quo are illustrated by the political problems faced by younger radical scholars at Columbia after

1. The tension between these two intellectuals is worth exploring; even if Said's argument is not always internally consistent, does not really fit with the history of his own career, and does not allow one to deal fully with some of the serious contradictions among Said's "amateur" intellectuals. It is important not to exaggerate the differences between Said and Bourdieu on this issue, for Said's respect for the French sociologist was clear (Akram 2003).

2. Bourdieu, to be fair, took stands in opposition to poverty, social exclusion, American led globalization, and American culture; and in support of gender equality (Swartz 2003). Nonetheless, these were hardly highly controversial positions in late twentieth century France.

Said's death in the wake of campaigns against academic freedom organized by right wing organizations like Campus Watch (Finn 2005).

Tenured professional academics, it is clear, have far more intellectual autonomy than most other professions especially when compared to intellectuals working in the media and cultural workers.¹ Paradoxically, it is often the success of best selling novels or works of non-fiction that create the intellectual freedom that writers like Klein, Rushdie and Roy, for example, have used with such energy as global public intellectuals (Bose 2004; Brennan 1989; Klein 2000; Roy 1997). The pressures of professionalism, the need to make a living, and the continuing power of nationalist rhetoric and the nation state means, however, that all but the most courageous of intellectuals will refrain from speaking up on controversial political issues outside of the assumptions of national political discourse and the constraints of mainstream institutions.

The dynamics of amateurism and professionalism, however, are complex, and can play out in different ways. Said himself understood that a lack of professional accomplishment can lead to reactionary politics just as easily as professionalism can result in the co-option of intellectuals by power and narrow scholarship can lead to political irrelevance. For example, Said's critique of the Iraqi intellectual Samir Al-Khalil's *Republic of Fear: The Inside Story* (1991) emphasized what he saw as the political opportunism common among intellectuals without, from Said's perspective, an autonomous base rooted in serious intellectual accomplishment. In our present "social constructionist" intellectual culture where making distinctions between "serious" and "first-rate" intellectuals is frowned upon, Said's willingness to assert both his political and intellectual judgements is refreshing if not uncontroversial.

Another example of the problem with amateur intellectuals can be seen with Bayard Rustin, a well known activist described as an "itinerant intellectual" in a essay that describes his important role in the global diffusion of the non-violent civil disobedience strategy from Gandhi's India to the American civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr. in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Chabot 2004). Rustin, an African-American activist in the American Socialist Party and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) for decades, was a key figure in the global diffusion of a strategy borrowed from the global south and applied in the American south. Rustin was not a professional academic or journalist, but was an activist intellectual who was marginalized in America society because of his radical politics as well as his race and homosexuality. Despite his marginalization, Rustin nonetheless entered history as the major organizer of the 1963 "I Have a Dream" March on Washington and as a pivotal figure in ending legal segregation in the United States.

What is not stressed in most accounts of this history, however, is that Rustin ended his life as a right-wing supporter of American imperial dominance of the world. It is impossible to get at Rustin's motives with any certainty; sociological speculation, however, might suggest that his marginal amateur status as an activist without a formal career contributed to his vulnerability to political co-option by powerful political forces. Professionalism as well as high-level intellectual accomplishments can both encourage public intellectual and popular intellectual engagement on the side of social movements as well as prevent these types of activities, something not fully theorized in Said's account of the intellectual (Said 1994).

Lest one think that academic professionalism is the cure for danger of opportunism among journalists or activists, Said's legacy reminds us of the importance of standing up against intellectual fashions and fads within the academy just as we defend the importance of academic autonomy against the intrusions of the market and the state. One of the most moving and illuminating account of Said's influence as a teacher appeared in one of the obituaries written by a former student:

(Said) was impatient with academic jargon and demanded that we discard it. One day, in our graduate seminar on intellectuals and power, a student said, 'Discourse.' Said exploded. Then the student nervously mumbled, 'Foucault.' 'That's right,' Said scoffed. 'That's Foucault's word. Where are yours?' (Bayoumi 2003).

Said, of course, was not unsympathetic to some of Foucault's ideas, having been responsible, to a very large extent, for popularising Foucauldian analysis of discourse and "knowledge-power" in the American academy with *Orientalism* (1978). Nonetheless, Said was impatient with how arcane jargon and the cult of personality can undermine the critical thinking as well as the political effectiveness of intellectuals who claim to be "critical theorists." The po-

1. Journalists, for example, work for either privately or state owned organizations and thus face institutional pressures to conform to the political and national orthodoxies of the time. Their political views and activities are further constrained by the norms of journalistic professionalism.

litical contradictions in Foucault's interventions into practical political activities, exemplified by the disaster of his writings on the Islamist wing of the Iranian revolution, are perhaps a topic for another time (Afary and Anderson 2005). These contradictions between "radical" theory and practical political intervention are worth considering, however, as we think about the larger issues of responsibility of the intellectual in a global world.

CONCLUSION

Said was a global public intellectual who resisted pure academic careerism and engaged with social movements, while never giving up his intellectual autonomy from political orthodoxy, intellectual fashion, and the temptations of power. There are legitimate issues to discuss regarding the problem of celebrity intellectuals and the cult of personality, for there is no question that Said's appeal was partly personal. Charisma and celebrity status has the potential to undermine as well as clear space for the voices of young critical intellectuals and movement activists fighting for autonomy under globalization as the case of Arundhati Roy's high profile involvement in the anti-dam movement in the Narmada Valley in India makes clear. The question of representation and "voice" with regards to high profile celebrity intellectuals and the movements they are linked to, furthermore, has become even more complicated in a world of the internet and the global information revolution (Bose 2004). The ultimate measure of a public intellectual, in my view, comes down to whether they open political and intellectual space for the movements and political intellectuals they are allied with, or crowd others out with their own careerism and fascination with celebrity status. Said passed this test with flying colours, for the obituaries written after his death make clear that he was an empowering intellectual hero to movement activists, academic professionals and young intellectuals throughout the world.

Serious discussion of the global public intellectual requires moving beyond the various myths and hyperbole that the public intellectual debate has generated (Watts 1994). Thinking analytically and politically about Edward Said's legacy means we must move beyond both the attacks and hero worship we see in the discussion of his life and work. Despite all the hype about the public intellectual, intellectuals similar to Said will play a modest but very real and important role in the creation of a democratic global public sphere in the future. Comprehending the world in a truly global way will require a space for autonomous intellectuals, creatively but conflictually situated in-between professions, movements, elite intellectual debate and political power in ways exemplified by Said's career and the life he lived.

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