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Abstract

According to the precepts of recent theory, history ought to be understood as a quantum series, a set of what Foucault in his middle writings calls discontinuities: random and self-reflexive events that defy structural, categorical or teleological definition. Yet as analysts of contemporary culture and contemporary social life - and this point Foucault himself ultimately concedes¹ - we are perhaps duty bound to unlock broader referential and heuristic patterns in order to account more fully for the multiple contingencies directing our personal and social destinies. To this extent, Australia's integration with the South East Asian region appears to have become an axiom in public discussion, though the specific nature and degree of this historical osmosis remains problematic. With specific reference to Bali, the most extant and commonly imagined constituency of the Far East-Near North constellation, this essay would hope to elucidate some of the cultural-discursive and socio-political dimensions of this integration process.

JEFF LEWIS

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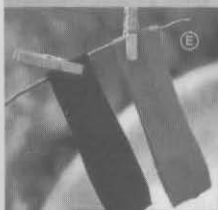
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Thus, just as our politicians, economists and business leaders exalt the virtues of an international capitalist consciousness, many of our most prominent cultural analysts and a number of fictionalists are producing studies and tales which seem to serve gladly the requirements of this new commercial regionalism. What is needed, we are told, is the complete surrender of those jingoistic, xenophobic and morally depraved cultural conceits which shackle Australia to a Eurocentric time-warp, and which, according to Alison Bronowski's *The Yellow Lady*, produce an intensified version of Western Orientalism:

The Anglo gripped, Euro-centric West-skewed view of the world, which even well-educated Australians inherited, locked many into thinking anachronistically of Australia as discovered not located, colonized not invaded, and of Asian countries...as the white man's burden, to be dominated, democratised, developed, defeated, or defended. Eurocentricism might produce mild intellectual anorexia in some Europeans; in Australia the condition could be life-threatening.²

A, B, C, D En jersey pur coton... en imprimé ans aux couleurs fraîches et éclatantes de l'été!

A Le combi4fort imprimé. Doux-ponçage devant. Taille élastique. Finition double piqûre. Poise de boutonnage.
Anis imprimé 337.6357
5 tailles en cm
90 98 F 126 130 F
102 110 F 138 140 F
114 120 F



B Le caraco imprimé. Four-couche. Boutonnage sur poitrine. Finition double piqûre.
Anis imprimé 337.6373
5 tailles en cm
88 90 F 126 70
102 80 F 130 75
114 85 F

C La jupe évasée imprimée. Elle a une large ceinture et en côtes extérieures additionnelles d'alésamine. Ourlet deux piqûres.
Anis imprimé 337.6363
5 tailles en cm
96 80 F 126 85
102 75 F 130 90
114 80 F

D La robe imprimée. Taille bébé. Jupon évasé. Boutonnage devant. Finition double piqûre.
Anis imprimé 337.6302
7 tailles en cm
88 86 F 126 115
94 102 98 F 130 125
108 114 105 F

Bronowski's fearful prognosis echoes Ross Garnaut's³ analysis of the north east Asian ascendancy which he contrasts with the crippling economic failures of Australia. In Garnaut's terms Australia needs to become more Asian oriented in its outlook and more diverse in its internal constitution. Like Stephen Castles et al⁴ and innumerable other enthusiasts for multiculturalism, Garnaut argues that the greater 'Asianification' of the Australian population and culture would produce an economic landbridge to Asia — and hence access to the region's economic magic pudding.

This Asianification would also bring joy to the hearts of those cultural theorists and social critics who are 're-writing the archive', as Simon During⁵ describes it, those postcolonialists in particular who have made it their duty to reconfigure the history of the world by reducing the European cultural inheritance to 'one heritage among many others'. Politically, this reduction demands the 'systematic rereading of the archive, and in particular a reinterpretation of canonical works'.⁶ This is precisely the critical and ideological project of Edward W. Said whose re-examination of the European scholarly and fictional canons leads him to conclude that the economic and military enslavement of the non-European world by the colonial superpowers was as much a function of culture and language as of 'profit and the hope of more profit':

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with such words and concepts as 'inferior' or 'subject races', 'subordinate peoples', 'dependency', 'expansion', and 'authority'.⁷

Indeed, while colonialism as an economic and political mechanism has passed away, imperialism, as Said defines it, 'lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural space, as well as in specific political, ideological, economic and social practices'.⁸ The task of the ideologically informed cultural critic, then, is to expose imperialism (or 'neo-colonialism' in other critics' terms) where it lingers — and for the Said of *Culture and Imperialism* the literary canon is the most insidious and therefore most powerful of these cultural spaces.

Commentators like Alison Bronowski have taken Said's critical and methodological paradigm, simplified it, and applied it to the Antipodean context. Bronowski makes much of the Orientalist stereotype that pervades colonial and recent Australian fictional and artistic texts. Everyone from Percy Granger to Norman Lindsay, Christopher Koch to John Duigan⁹ is judged guilty of jingoistic dabblings or the sorts of sexual stereotyping which Chilla Bulbeck sees as involving 'the construction of white masculinity as normative' and the native woman as 'licentious and

depraved and therefore...the property of the white men'.¹⁰ This view of course has become a commonplace for feminist studies of East West relations. The ABC's *Coming Out Show*, for example, dedicated an entire program to exposing the patriarchal and neo-imperialist depravities inherent in Dennis O' Rourke's *The Good Woman of Bangkok* (1992), a film which, according to its detractors, implicates its maker in the ideology of transnational sexual exploitation.

Peter Mares, producer of the ABC's *India-Pacific* program, sees this stereotyping as part of a more endemic deficiency in Australia's electronic media: 'Take for example the "Singapore girl" syndrome — airline promotions which emphasize the exotic and the erotic, implicitly confirming images of Asian women as submissive and available for the desires of Western men'.¹¹ Mares speaks of other generic types such as 'the clever little man' and the 'chop suey' syndromes, both of which demonstrate the shallowness of the Australian media in producing images of Asia. Like Richard Gehrman who claims simply that the Australian media 'distorts' Asia by genericizing it,¹² Mares argues that the stereotyping of individual Asian persons is symptomatic of the treatment and representation of Asia as a generalized geographic-cultural category:

So the terms 'Asia' and 'Asian' are dangerous ones: they suggest that Asia is in fact a place which can be defined, that is homogenised. This smacks of a colonial mentality, one which sees Asia as 'the Orient', a region of scenic rice-fields, mountain ranges and peasants, on the one hand; bustling, dirty, confusing, congested cities on the other... (Promoting this image of a mythical place called Asia was in my view the really serious sin of the well-intentioned ABC-TV series *Embassy*.)¹³

Mares' view of TV series like *Embassy* echoes other commentators' disapproval of the substitution of a genuine national locale in films such as *The Year of Living Dangerously* (The Philippines for Indonesia) and *Far East* (Macao for The Philippines).

Similarly, Sylvie Shaw, a consultant to the media liaison organization, Asialink, argues that the tendency of Australian films and mini-series to produce Orientalist stereotyping, especially of women, limits the Australian public's knowledge of the real conditions and people of Asia. Shaw acknowledges that the new interest in Asia, economically and culturally, may be producing negative as well as positive effects. Australia's desire for self-actualization subsumes any genuine exposition of culture and geography:

By raising the profile of Asians and Asian themes, there can be a tendency to overlook the 'cultural specificity' of the different Asian nations and ethnic groups within these countries... And while we continue to set films and mini-series like *Far East*, *Bangkok Hilton*, *Vietnam* and *Turtle Beach* in Asia, they tend to be more about our search for identity than they do about Asia.¹⁴

Shaw is quite specific in her criticisms, in fact, claiming that films like Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982), John Duigan's *Far East* (1982) and Phil Noyce's *Echoes of Paradise* (1986) merely employ the generic Asia as an aesthetic and commercial device: 'The mystery of Asia tugs at our primitive heart strings. Tropical beaches, magical cultures, exotic landscapes, sexual encounters — an escape from our everyday lives'.¹⁵ Thus the Australian visitor to Asia 'goes Troppo', as Frieda Frieberg puts it, taking the ill-informed and unsuspecting audience with him or her. Adventurers like Maria in *Echoes of Paradise*, 'unleash the repressed sexuality of the suburbs, and, after a whirlwind holiday romance, they return to their families and their mundane existence'.¹⁶

Central to both Shaw's and Mares' analyses is Annette Hamilton's combination and adaptation of Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined community' with a generalised borrowing from Freud-Lacanian psychoanalytical conceits. Hamilton also sees Phil Noyce's *Echoes of Paradise* as an Orientalist text; however as in d'Alpuget's novels, the imaginative expropriation of the East (Bali/Thailand) and its sexuality by the West (Australia) is carried out by a woman. Hamilton, in fact, attempts to provide some theoretical coherence to the opposing sensations of fear and sexual attraction which inform the Orientalist attitude. The imagination of nationhood which is so brilliantly described by Anderson is extended by Hamilton to include the 'neo-colonialist' absorption of non-sovereign territories; Australia's imagination of itself and its own community embraces the sexuality, territory and culture of the East:

This is not an appropriation of 'the real'; it is an appropriation of commodified images, which permits the Australian national imaginary to claim certain critical and valuable aspects of 'the Other' as essentially part of itself, and thereby claim both a mythological and spiritual continuity of identity which is otherwise lacking.¹⁷

Hamilton goes on to claim that this imaginative appropriation is tainted by the equally potent fear of contact, most particularly as it is 'linked to the profound, historically rooted Australian (British) racism, and is articulated in the danger of the ultimate merger between self and other'.¹⁸

Thus, like Humphrey McQueen who has described Australian nationalism as 'British imperialism intensified by its proximity to Asia',¹⁹ Hamilton links Australian identity and the Australian national imaginary to Eurocentric Orientalism. Siew Keng Chua and Suvendrini Perera²⁰ are also concerned with the relationship between the imaging of Asia and the constitution of the Australian identity which both believe to be Orientalist and, as Perera claims, discernibly 'anxious' in inclination and character. Perera, in fact, is deeply suspicious of those antipodean neophytes who do not share her own and Edward Said's post-colonised pedigree. Specifically, she has serious misgivings over the-

...recent recognition of - and celebratory exploration into - a newfound 'postcolonial' condition [which] often pass over the problems posed by an older self-image of Australia as regional heir to the coloniser's discarded nature. This history places Australia in an unequal and uneasy triangle with Europe (and especially Britain) at one end, and Asia on the other — a relationship perceived as a set of continuing hierarchical rearrangements based on current conditions of military, economic and cultural (which also at times includes racial) superiority.²¹

With minor variations, Perera's summary accords with the views also being espoused by other Australian followers of the Said paradigm. Orientalism (along with neo-Imperialism) becomes a consummate description of Australian culture. To this extent, these Australian cultural analysts would perhaps applaud Said's contention, most recently and expansively elaborated in *Culture and Imperialism*, that any imaginative articulation in Western texts of the previously colonized peoples and cultures of the world constitutes an act of appropriation. Thus, even those canonical texts of Austen, Conrad, Gide or Forster which might have seemed to challenge illiberal, undemocratic, repressive or colonialist practices — and which remain, according to poststructural precepts, trapped in their own historical-cultural contexts — are ultimately damnable. It is simply unacceptable, Said would insist, for the privileged imagination to produce its narrative out of the suffering, material privation and cultural disenfranchisement of so unequal a partner, the silenced other.

In effect, this approach to transnational communication — what might productively be called De-Orientalism, the deconstruction of Orientalist imagery — has become something of an orthodoxy,²² a favoured point of departure, for recent Australian cultural analysis. While it is not my intention here to examine the theoretical and historiographic implications of this approach,²³ it is necessary to point out that these analyses themselves constitute precisely that 're-writing' of the archive to which we have earlier referred. This new cultural description represents a new version of 'the East', one which is also and inevitably a new version of Australia and a new version of the context within which Australia and its regional neighbours communicate. While Sylvie Shaw seems to have missed this general point, Alison Bronowski — again following Said's observation in *Orientalism* — has been incisive enough to realise that any representation of 'the other' is inevitably a statement about 'the self': when Australians write about Asia they are writing about, indeed forming, their own imaginations and identities. Clearly, the emphasis of De-Orientalism — deriving from poststructuralist and psychoanalytic theories — is on the representation of things and the configuration of realities that may have no grounding in truth. Yet while Said is at least cognizant of the theoretical dangers of such an approach, many of the Australian cultural analysts proceed as if their own version or representation is itself the

correct, real and unassailable one. Their analyses are designed to demonstrate the deficiency of other versions, while their own version takes on the condition of what Lyotard calls self-legitimizing narrative.

These, of course, are the well documented perils of deconstruction.²⁴ What needs to be acknowledged, nevertheless, is that De-Orientalism produces particular kinds of critical and ideological effects, and that it too is part of an historical and cultural project which produces rather than describes history, the real and the true. Specifically, the De-Orientalists' celebration of 'difference' or 'otherness' reverses the dialectic, producing a simplified historical cartography of goodies (victims) and baddies (perpetrators). While of course there are a number of very sophisticated adaptations of the Derridean and Lacanian paradigms,²⁵ the Australian orthodoxy tends to have simplified concepts of self and other in order to establish a coherent ideological position for the advancement of the multicultural or pluralist doctrine. Perhaps to redress the infamies of White Australia, security paranoia, regional neglect and the attempted genocide of its indigenous people, these commentaries have denounced pejorative versions of difference and replaced them with a more celebratory version. Thus, in re-examining the Australian canonical texts and re-writing the archive, the Australian De-Orientalists have condemned false difference, measuring it against a 'difference' which is genuine and valuable: Bronowski applauds the multi-lingual, multicultural, transnational writer; Sylvie Shaw congratulates mini-series like *Aya*, a transnational production with 'real' Chinese protagonists; and Simon During, Sneja Gunew and Chilla Bulbeck celebrate the ethnic specificity of liberationist texts written by the world's *genuinely* marginalized and diasporic peoples.

If ever this new version of history is recognised as a configuration rather than a truth (During, Said and Stuart Hall occasionally concede as much), it is nevertheless justified as morally and politically superior to the older canon which remains implicated in Imperialism and Orientalism, and which fails to deliver the 'universal' emancipations promised by democratic liberalism. Clearly, and as we noted in the introduction to this discussion, this re-writing (and re-validating) of history has its own roots in broader cultural and politico-social processes. Thus, while a concept like multiculturalism has never achieved anything like uniform or universal popularity in the broader Australian community,²⁶ it has, as sociologist Katharine Betts outlines, become a powerful and governing ethos in national cultural policy.²⁷ While Betts' analysis is directed specifically toward the immigration policy and its relationship to multiculturalism, her elucidation of the new social class of altruistic cosmopolitans provides useful insights for our more general understanding of re-writing of Australia's cultural communion with Asia. Betts writes of the new class's hostility toward any who question the 'unassailable' economic or cultural

virtues of multiculturalism. These altruistic cosmopolitans, Betts tells us, preclude discussion on the issue of cultural pluralism or immigration generally by branding any equivocators as damnable racists:

The explanation for the intelligentsia's attitude to immigration does not lie with any sophisticated cost-benefit analysis... The perspective offered by altruists and cosmopolitans, with its themes of internationalism, cosmopolitanism, exotic foods and customs, and its imagery based on compassion for the world's poor, is more attractive [than perspectives based on economic or ecological data], providing an intriguing blend of urbane sophistication and low-cost benevolence. The development of this way of looking at immigration has coincided with rapid growth in the numbers of new-class professionals... They have used it [the ideology of cosmopolitanism and altruism] to shape an identity based on a clear distinction between people of insight, discernment and cosmopolitan understanding, and the narrow parochialism of their parents' generation.²⁸

Betts' conception of altruistic cosmopolitanism also echoes Stuart Hall's notion of the global postmodern, the cultural conduit of international capitalism 'which works in and through specificity'.²⁹ That is, Hall tells us, as well as its propensity to absorb all things, all cultures and all people into its relentless commodifying embrace, the international flow of capital also functions to enhance and utilize difference to its own ends. Thus, the new pluralism celebrated by and configured in postmodernism becomes the 'international cuisine' of the cosmopolitan First World city dweller — though not a cuisine being enjoyed by the indigent of Calcutta.³⁰

While Betts and Hall have quite distinct ideological and heuristic purposes, their work alerts us to those broader social and cultural fields in which the re-writing of Australia's national and regional identity is taking place. In particular we are alerted to the central contradiction which the altruistic cosmopolitan and De-Orientalist perspective continually confronts but never satisfactorily reconciles: that is, the pursuit of a supposedly irreducible ethnic or national specificity must accommodate those broader spheres of reference to which we earlier referred. Most notably, the enthusiasts of specificity have had considerable trouble accounting for and incorporating the processes of globalism and global integration into their own theoretical, aesthetic or ideological program. There are certainly a number of theorists, most particularly those influenced by Marxist and neo-Marxist thinking, who argue that these integrative processes are part of the broader all-commodifying impulse of capital. Commentators like Lipietz, Wallerstein and Harvey³¹ would suggest that this all-commodifying tendency ultimately dilutes and reduces the differences between individuals, peoples and their cultures. Claiming a similarly oppositional position, a number of Australian De-Orientalists³² demand the emancipation of the individual or ethnic minority against the greater power of Eurocentric or imperialist monophonia which is complicit with global capitalism. None of these writers nor their theoretical foundations, however, seems able to account

adequately for the contradictions implicit in the new and shifting formations of international capitalism: on the one hand the skewed ethnic and national formations which once divided the modern world are being dissolved by this erratic and restless flow of capital, absorbing formerly colonised peoples into its utilitarian and pleasure playing web; and on the other hand new and old political and economic megopolies continue to deny the aspirations, pleasures and freedoms of other individuals and groups. The ethnic essentialism of these De-Orientalists — and here I would include Said himself — fails to acknowledge its own inclination toward an orthodoxy that cannot deal with multiple and precarious power interactions, complexity and contradiction. Rather, power is seen as fixed in immobile super-structures, themselves supported by historical rhizomes that continue to determine, as they underlie, the patterns of the contemporary globe, its culture and political economy.

Other De-Orientalists, while parading an equally uncritical brand of ethnic essentialism,³³ seem to take a more liberal utilitarian view, tacitly accepting, if not approving of, the integrative processes of global capitalism. These writers confront the issue of Australia's economic decline, and argue that national economic advantage would be best served through ethnic realignment and reconstitution. These writings elide theoretical difficulty altogether, seeing no contradiction between integrative and separative processes: difference, deployed in the international capitalist program, becomes essentialized as the cure for Australia's economic (and social-cultural) ills. Australia's own status as a minor or marginalised international player might somehow be redeemed through a genuine restitution of the liberal Enlightenment ideals of tolerance, individualism and utility. In their celebrations of ethnic pluralism and correlative denunciation of older versions of Australian Euro-inclined identity and affiliation, these De-Orientalists seem satisfied with the official government position and the new pleadings of Australian business. These De-Orientalists deflect the concerns of Hall, Harvey or Lipietz about the diminution or loss of 'difference' through capitalist integration, envisaging a celebration that would facilitate the harmonious passage of Australia into its region — all the world's a food hall.

These two versions of De-Orientalism are united in their ethnic celebrationism, their limited capacity for dealing with flux and change, and their tendency to veer away both from their own precarious theoretical foundations and the often contradictory specificities of transcultural and transnational interaction. Nevertheless, De-Orientalism, particularly Said's sophisticated adaptation of poststructuralism, has proved extremely useful in alerting us to the ideological and heuristic deficiencies of Imperialist thinking. However, in assuming the status of a new orthodoxy, most particularly as it sheds the complexity of the poststructuralist theoretic, the 'idea' of Orientalism has itself become essentialized, even ossified, as it has become institutionalised in critical

investigation. This type of 'deconstruction',³⁴ specifically in relation to Australian representation of itself and South East Asia, must necessarily rarefy and reduce texts according to specific analytical and ideological strictures. Poststructuralism itself has highlighted the problems associated with this hermeneutic process — the reconstitution of a secondary text as interpretation.³⁵ Nevertheless, the crude application of the De-Orientalist critical-ideological perspective reduces texts to a monochromatic interpretation. Complexity and contradiction are rarefied, if not banished altogether, and the works under study remain as skeletal and pilloried examples of racism, jingoism and xenophobia; the protagonists of Koch, d'Alpuget, Drewe, Weir, Duigan and Noyce maraud about the South East Asian countryside, exploiting its citizens and re-instituting White European cultural, racial, sexual and economic supremacy. Thus the re-writing of the archive often proves little more than a 're-torturing' of the language and imagery of contemporary texts in order to make them conform to the De-Orientalist project, a history of goodies and baddies.

Given Said's disavowal of the European voice and its capacity to represent legitimately the non-European and non-metropolitan experience in any circumstance, it is not surprising that those De-Orientalists who so breathlessly attend their mentor's proclamations should so enthusiastically condemn Australian narrativizations of South East Asia. However, this reading of Australian subjectivities and culture fails once again to comprehend adequately those countervailing and often competing perspectives which give the text its internal and formal complexity. Little attention, for example, is paid to the anti-imperialist perspectives which inform and confound many of the Australian characters who live, work, love and often 'subvert' in South East Asia. The De-Orientalists tend to retreat from the precariousness of power, identity and culture as it is represented in a range of recent transcultural Australian texts, preferring to view these instabilities as further manifestations of what Suvendrini Perera calls 'Orientalist anxieties' — as though anxiety were the epitome of political and moral infamy. Like Said, Perera and other De-Orientalists would condemn the Anglo-Australian to silence; the voice of the postcolonised peoples of the world, whatever the alterations to the global cartography, is now an exclusion zone. Only the ethnically privileged are able to speak with genuine insight and political legitimacy of the transcultural condition.

While the work of Said and his followers has been important in adapting some of the poststructuralist tenets, most especially in exposing the ideological assumptions of historical discourses, it has tended paradoxically to reconstruct the sort of macro-teleology and essentialism that poststructuralism has generally tried to dismantle. Thus, 'Australia' is conceived in relation to the dialectics of Centres, Althusserian ideologies, imperialist domination, and neo-colonial materialist exploitation. A more productive approach would attempt to examine the

complexities, contradictions and instabilities of textual and discursive conceits — those elements of nation, culture and subjectivity which Foucault examines as the microphysics of power. Such an alternative examination of Australian transcultural communication would avoid monadic teleological and ideological contrivances, treating the precariousness of power and culture as inevitable and not necessarily damnable. Such an approach would render its own analysis and discursive production more sensitive to the interaction and multiple-flows of difference and similarity, specificity and collectivity, distance and propinquity. It would take seriously questions of ideology and inequity, preferring however to treat power in the Foucaultian sense of process and exchange, a matter of instability rather than structure and fixity. Such an approach would facilitate a more personal and personalized investigation without a retreat to idealizations and ideological formulae which tend to rarefy communication processes by shedding the intimacies of detail.

Tourism on the Indonesian island of Bali exemplifies how this alternative Australia Asia might be conceived and understood, most particularly as it relates to the context of the global postmodern and those transcultural communicative exchanges which demand shifts, realignments and readjustments in textual and interpersonal conceits. Bali, which is visited by over half a million international tourists each year — half of whom are Australian — has become a favoured site for direct and textual, extraterritorial experiences. Adrian Vickers defines these experiences in terms of what he calls 'the created paradise'; the discourse which articulates the actual space of Bali produces its symbols and meanings for holiday-makers, cultural adventurers and distant observers.³⁶ Texts as different as Phil Noyce's film *Echoes of Paradise*,³⁷ Gerard Lee's novel *Tropo Man*, Nigel and Caron Krauth's novel *Sin Can Can*, Inez Baranay's novel *The Edge of Bali* and Glenda Adams' story 'Letters from Jogja'³⁸ concern themselves with the impact of mass tourism and most particularly the cultural exchange processes which are bringing such significant changes to the island and the 'integrity' of its traditions. A conventional De-Orientalist approach might be concerned with the 'appropriation' of the traditional culture by the Australo-Western commercial and cultural hegemonies,³⁹ regarding the narratization of Bali as part of the continuing resonance of imperialism. Nevertheless, the fictional texts themselves raise the issue of neo-imperialism and the effects of mass tourism as they engage their characters in the ongoing dialogue about tourism, globalization and the impact of cultural interaction, change and hybridization. These issues are not easily resolved, and even in a novel like Inez Baranay's *The Edge of Bali*, which promotes a strident, even didactic, De-Orientalist sympathy, the complexity of the personal relationships between the characters tends to dismantle simple conclusions.

Thus, in the alternative analytical paradigm it is not simply a matter of the marauding Australian character imagining the Asian person, culture or context and expropriating whatever he or she wishes; rather, the Australian visitor interacts with his or her physical and cultural environment and is inevitably changed by that communion. The Australian protagonist is not a cultural marauder, as Annette Hamilton suggests of Noyce's Maria, but is confronted, challenged to the very centre of his or her cultural being, dislodged, affected, changed in some fundamental way even as she or he returns to the security and familiarity of the 'home' culture. In fact, the transcultural experience tends to dissolve the distance, absoluteness and separateness of those categories and oppositions which are so essential to De-Orientalist analysis: self-other, home-abroad, Australia-Indonesia, centre-margin, East-West, imagined-real, identity-difference. It is not that they vanish entirely, but rather that they are challenged from within and without by the new vocabulary of transcultural communication. Indeed, the Bali texts — including Noyce's film — incorporate a perspective which seriously challenges the primacy and stability of the home culture. If 'return' is inevitable, it is a return steeped in ambiguity and a recognition that the home culture (indeed all culture) is elusive and at least potentially reproachable.

Such questioning of the home culture is often expressed in these texts, for example, in the distinction drawn between ethical(travelling) and mass tourism. Thus, with the notable exception of Gerard Lee's *Troppo Man*,⁴⁰ all of these Bali texts tend to contrast a more spiritually, culturally and often sexually contiguous interaction against the superficialities of mass tourism which offends as it changes and which tends to be practised by the hordes. Certainly Hamilton and others might well regard such a distinction as merely disingenuous, yet a careful reading of the Bali fictions indicates some serious artistic and ideological intent; the protagonist is in fact being profoundly altered or 'hybridized' by the experience of propinquity. The tourist characters who skate across the surface are questioned by those other characters who are prepared to surrender claims to cultural primacy and who immerse themselves more thoroughly in the intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual or sensual pleasures of transcultural communion.

In all the texts there is a recognition that the individual Australian must change and adapt, and that ultimately interaction will produce its effects of hybridization. Even those more commercially directed and popular texts which use the context of Bali to embellish their standard discursive vernacular are inevitably participants in the cultural hybridization process. The Garuda-Elle Macpherson Bali promotion project is an example of a transnational co-operative capitalist venture which has produced a distinctly hybridized cultural artefact. The images of the Bali-Elle calendar, featuring Elle in a range of European, American and Australian fashions, constitute precisely that new discourse described by Jean Baudrillard as

the floating signifier — a rootless image/meaning that projects new ways of conceiving reality. Unfortunately there has been little work done on this sort of imaging in Australia. Rather, analysts have been content to view cultural artefacts like the Elle-Garuda calendar as ideological debauchery, an example of exploitation of the woman and the Third World context.

In defending them against the monadic assaults of the De-Orientalists, I would not claim for these texts some unequivocal moral or ideological virtue. Quite the contrary, since what is interesting about these texts is the internal tensions and ambiguities which parallel the broader complexities in transcultural communication and the phenomenon we popularly call the global postmodern. Perhaps one final example of the alternative version of Australia/Asia communication relationship might serve to conclude this discussion. During a recent visit to Bali, my four year old daughter was invited to model children's clothing for a major French fashion magazine. I had some misgivings but the decency of the production team, the enthusiasm of my daughter and my own curiosity elicited my consent. On the third day of the shoot, taking place in a verdant riverside location near Ubud, the art director decided to include a local child in some of the photographs. This he thought would add to the ambience and authenticity of some of the photographs. Being the only Bahasa speaker in the group, I was sent away with a piece of string dutifully knotted at my daughter's height. I asked around at a nearby village and returned with the head man, a few kids and an entourage of encouraging on-lookers. The production crew conferred and a girl, Putu, was chosen. This was high entertainment and the crowd hooted merrily as Putu was handed across to Charlotte and Karin, the wardrobe and make-up artists. It was a truly Pygmalion transformation. Putu was divested of the grubby, torn dress. She was washed in the river, clipped and combed and re-dressed in the pristine Parisian clothing. Fine velvet shoes were placed on her feet and a sky-blue Mickey Mouse band was placed in her hair. Yet as I watched Putu going through her poses, following the instructions with such filial goodwill, I found myself being gripped by a strange mixture of pleasure and horror. The villagers too had fallen silent. Their gaiety had dissolved and their eyes were now fixed in a cool and expressionless stare. My own daughter had been surprised, delighted and a little confused by these events: by the clothes, the cameras and the attention. But for Putu the journey must have seemed more extraordinary; postmodernity was charioting her, it seemed to me, beyond the reckoning of her friends and family, beyond perhaps the dominions of her own fantasies. Paris was not a point on a map or an emblem observed in the visage of a passing tourist bus; Paris was a sensation that was dissolving with such breathless ease the identity and knowing that had previously been the young girl's universe.

It is likely that the Australian De-Orientalists would find considerable offence in the event, pointing perhaps to the First Worlders' neo-

imperialist exploitation of the native Balinese child for their own aesthetic and commercial gratifications. Worse still, Putu was being treated as a commodity, an exotic backdrop, an alien 'other', by which the centralized figure of the (blonde-haired, blue-eyed and slightly Frenchified) Australian child could be known and experienced as 'self'. But such a reading would, as I have suggested above, seriously reduce the complex interflow of connections, interconnections and transcultural processes which produced the final image and symbol of this strange convergence of people and cultures. This was not the assault of the Foreign Legion or the spirit of Kokoda. Each of us, whatever our ethical or ideological reservations, was a willing participant in the international capitalist game. Each of us was free enough to choose commodification and its rewards in pleasure — even Putu. In the context of the global postmodern we came together for some brief time; we shifted and changed our language, our behaviour, our expectations, our culture, and achieved a temporary but not inconsequential communion.

I have no way of telling what sorts of lasting effects might issue from this relatively unspectacular and ephemeral convergence. The image of the two children, published in the 1994 European summer catalogue, was a contrivance, a piece of theatrical advertising. What is clear, however, is that such imagery is part of the onward march of the postmodern era, and that the theory and ideology of cultural separationism — which is itself effecting a new way of writing our own national heritage — cannot afford to neglect its implications. In fact, cultural analysis generally, with its significant potential for theorizing and investigating 'difference', must confront honestly the contradictions and interflows which are especially extant in transcultural communication. We certainly must account for and where necessary challenge differentials in power. However, we cannot permit this dimension of the postmodern project blind us to other connections and communions. Thus, it is not that the constellation of cultures, histories and individuals that produced the photographs for the French fashion catalogue could dissolve or even suspend those multiplying and contending powers since, as Foucault reminds us, power is inevitable and everywhere. Yet nor is it enough to content ourselves with a description of power that fixes relative positions in a teleological superstructure: we ought not, that is, 'conceive of a world divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one'.⁴¹ Rather, the starting point for cultural and transcultural analysis should be the multiple and contradictory flows that have, and continue to determine our history. Our re-writing of the archive and our imagining of ourselves and our region need to account for and incorporate images like those of the two children; it must ask more compelling questions about discourse, globalism and communication as it reaches behind monadic teleological and ideological definitions.

By the completion of the Ubud shoot that day everyone had seemed modestly satisfied. The production team were happy with their photographs, the villagers had had their entertainment, and Putu's family had received an unexpected financial boon. My daughter and I joined the cattle handlers for a swim in the river and we talked about what had happened and what it all meant. As we talked we both waved to Putu who was leading a train of young admirers along the track toward the rice fields. The sun was setting and Putu was back in her bare feet and the dirty dress. In one hand she carried a can of Coke and in the other a half eaten chocolate bar. In her hair she still wore the sky-blue Mickey Mouse band which the production crew had given her as a memento.

NOTES

1. There is of course considerable debate over Foucault's definition of 'discontinuity'. Mark Poster (1989) suggests that Foucault's use and development of the concept is largely rooted in Foucault's desire to distinguish his own historiography — archaeology and genealogy — from conventional Marxist teleology. In either case, Foucault's major historical writings in the middle period of his work (esp. *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality Volume One*) demonstrate his interest in broad historical patters as well as the 'microphysics' of historical detail.
2. Alison Bronowski, *The Yellow Lady: Australian Impressions of Asia*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.205.
3. Ross Garnaut, *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendance* (Canberra: Report to the Australian government, 1989).
4. Stephen Castles, Mary Kanlantzis, Bill Cope and Michael Morrissey, eds. *Mistaken Identity: Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*, Second edition (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1990).
5. Simon During, 'Postcolonialism and Globalization', *Meanjin*, 31, 3 (1992) pp.349-53.
6. During, p.350.
7. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993) p.8.
8. Said, p.8.
9. Bronowski also includes in her criticism female writers like Blanche d'Alpuget whose two major works set in the region, *Turtle Beach* (1981) and *Monkeys in the Dark* (1980), explore the cross national sexual affairs of two Australian women. In a relatively superficial analysis Bronowski considers d'Alpuget's heroines to be comparable to the male heroes of Koch and Robert Drewe — the action of the novels is driven by Australian sexual adventurism while the exotica of Asia merely provides a convenient background. See Bronowski, pp. 181-185.
10. Chilla Bulbeck, 'Third World Women: Dialogue with Western Feminism', *Meanjin*, 31, 3 (1992) 319-32. p.325.
11. Peter Mares, 'Reporting "Asia"', in *Media Images of Australia/Asia*, eds. C. Slade and A. Applebee (Canberra: Australian National University, 1993) p. 73.
12. Richard Gehrann, 'Australian Perceptions of Asia', *Pelangi*, Summer, 9, 4 (1993) pp. 18-20. Gehrann points out to us that no particular Asian country has an

- indigenous word for Asian or Asia, though they do have words for their own national type. Gehrman would do well to read Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* which of course points out that the concept of nation and the language which gives it form are both relatively new. Indonesia's sense of nation is particularly recent, as indeed is the national language which has no word for Asian or Asia. Gehrman seems also unaware of the fact that Indonesia and our other regional neighbours do use the words such as Asia, Asian and the West; they do have a regional consciousness (cf ASEAN) as well as other internationalist or collective propensities (cf Mahatir's Islamic consciousness).
13. Mares, p. 75 (Mares' parentheses).
 14. Sylvie Shaw, 'The Asian Screen Test', *Cinema Papers*, March-April, 87 (1992) p.37.
 15. Shaw, p.36.
 16. Shaw, p.36.
 17. Annette Hamilton, 'Aborigines, Asians and the National Imaginary', *Australian Cultural History*, 9, (1990) p.18.
 18. Hamilton, p. 18.
 19. Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia? An Argument concerning the Social Origins of Australian Radicalism and Nationalism* (Melbourne:Penguin, 1978) p. 2.
 20. Siew Keng Chua, 'Reel Neighbourly: The Construction of South East Asian Subjectivities', *Media Information Australia*, 70, November (1993) 28-33, and Suvendrini Perera, 'Representation Wars: Malaysia, Embassy and Australia's Corps Diplomatique', in *Australian Cultural Studies: A Reader*, eds. J. Frow and M. Morris (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1993) pp. 15-29.
 21. Perera, pp. 16-17.
 22. John Docker makes a similar point in his discussion of Australia's academic and cultural journals. According to Docker, there is a prevailing ideology which now excludes any ideas that do not conform to precepts like 'pluralism' and 'multiculturalism'. See Docker, John, 'The Temperament of Editors and a New Multicultural Orthodoxy', *Island*, 48, Spring (1991) 50-55.
 23. I have pursued these issues at length in my doctoral thesis, 'The Blind Puppeteer: Australia Indonesia Communication in the Postmodern Context,' RMIT, Melbourne. All of these analyses rely on the theoretical foundations of poststructuralism. They will all make claims about the nature and character of representation of Asia by Australian media and fictionalists. Most will go on to argue that these images are distorted, inaccurate or bear no resemblance to the reality. However, other than some oblique references to specificity, none of these writers give us a clear definition or description of this reality. Indeed, even Said himself, who is far more theoretically aware than many of his Australian followers, is guilty of this kind of slippage.
 24. Criticisms of poststructuralism and deconstruction methodology abound. For a concise summary of some of these criticisms see Mark Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989) and Peter Dews, *Logics of Disintegration: Post-structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (London: Verso, 1984). For a more specific discussion of deconstruction methodology and Asian studies, see John Legge, 'From reconstruction to deconstruction', *Journal of Cultural History*, 9 (1990) pp. 93-102.
 25. I would include the writings of Homi Bhabha, Chakravorty Spivak and a number of those writing for *Screen*. Bhabha, in fact, is quite hostile toward those who have reduced Lacan's conceits into simple polemical constructs of self and other. This tends to be the approach of many of the Australian cultural commentators discussed in this paper. See various discussions in Homi Bhabha, ed., *Identity: The Real Me*

(London: ICA, 1987).

26. I am relying on Betts' citation of *The Age Poll*, November 4, 1991. See Katharine Betts, 'Public Discourse, Immigration and the New Class', in *The Politics of Immigration*, eds. J. Jupp and M. Kabala (Melbourne: Bureau of Immigration Research, 1993) pp. 222-42. See also Katherine Betts, *Ideology and Immigration: Australia 1973 to 1987* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988).
27. I have no wish to pursue these various interpretations. See, Peter Putnis's discussion of the term and its evolution in 'Constructing Multiculturalism: Political and Popular Discourse', *Australian Journal of Communication*, 16 (1989) pp. 165-72.
28. Betts, p. 225.
29. Stuart Hall, 'The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity, in *Culture, Globalization and the World System*, ed., Anthony King (Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1991) p.29
30. Hall, p.33. In fact, Hall regards the global postmodern with some suspicion. He asks the question whether the global postmodern and international capital have marked themselves as history's final arbiters. The only true resistance to the embrace of globalization, Hall finally contends, resides in the real voice of ethnic liberation. Once again, Hall retreats to the liberatory voice of the marginalized and diasporic of the world. Only here, it seems, and not in the cosmopolitan cuisines of the West, can true opposition be found.
31. See A. Lipietz, 'New Tendencies in the International Division of Labour: Regimes of Accumulation and Modes of Regulation', in *Production, Work, Territory: The Geographical Anatomy of Industrial Capitalism*, eds. A. Scott and M. Storper (London: Verso, 1986); Immanuel Wallerstein, 'The National and the Universal: Can there be such a thing as World Culture?' in *Culture, Globalization and the World System*, ed. Anthony King, pp. 91-106; David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origin of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).
32. For example Chua, Perera, and Sneja Gunew, 'Postmodern Tensions: Reading for (multi) Cultural Difference', *Meanjin*, 1 (1990) pp. 21-33.
33. See articles already cited by Mares, Bronowski and Garnaut.
34. In adapting Derrida's original analytical paradigm, these 'postcolonial' deconstructionists have really reconstructed a version of truth and reality that Derrida would not accept. See Jeff Lewis (1994) *The Blind Puppeteer*, doctoral thesis, RMIT, Chapter 2.
35. See for example Jacques Derrida, trans. Alkan Bass, *Writing and Difference*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979); and Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981).
36. Adrian Vickers, *Bali: Paradise Created* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1990).
37. This film was originally to be shot in Bali but political difficulties led to its relocation to the Thai tourist resort of Phuket. The Bali connection was retained, however, in the character of Ra, the Balinese dancer who has lost his *tatsu*, or magical dancing spirit. The relocation in fact tends to intensify the themes of cultural estrangement and cultural communion; these significant issues are entirely overlooked by Annette Hamilton's reading of the text.
38. Gerard Lee, *Troppo Man* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1991); Inez Baranay, *The Edge of Bali* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1992); Caron and Nigel Krauth, *Sin Can Can* (Ringwood: Puffin Books, 1987); Glenda Adams, 'Letters from Jogja', *Journal of Cultural History*, 9 (1990) pp. 3-13.
39. See Hamilton.
40. Lee's comic novel does in fact distinguish between different types of tourism,

though he seems to be quite suspicious of many of the pretensions of 'ethical' or 'spiritual' tourism.

41. Michel Foucault, trans. Robert Hurley, *The History of Sexuality Volume One*, (New York: Penguin, 1981) p. 100.