

BOOK REVIEWS

DALLMAYR, Fred: *Beyond Orientalism. Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter*. Albany, State University of New York Press 1996. XXIII + 277 pp. ISBN 0-7914-3070-7.

The title of the book unequivocally expresses its connection with Edward Said's highly influential work *Orientalism* [1978]. The effects of the Orientalism debate, initiated by Said, have been widely felt not only in the arena of theoretical discourse but also in the academic policies. The subtitle signals the author's intention to concentrate on the cross-cultural potential of the debate in an attempt to answer basic questions posed by Said: How does one *represent* other cultures? What is *another* culture?

For the author, Packey Dee Professor of Political Theory at the University of Notre Dame, with an intellectual background in Western, especially Continental, thought, the turn of attention to cross-cultural encounter, particularly encounters with non-Western perspectives and life-forms, represents a considerable shift of interest. The author gives two reasons, one political, one intellectual: the steady advance of globalization, buttressed by markets and information technologies, and the internal self-questioning of Western thought, particularly evident in recent Continental philosophy. Intellectual orientations generally grouped under such headings as poststructuralism, postmodernism and deconstruction, show common preoccupation with "difference" or "otherness". It is the confluence of the two phenomena the author explores in the present volume.

The questions raised in the book are: Will Western science, industry and metaphysics – under the banner of modernization and development – in the end homogenize the world and turn it in its image? This is basically the strategy Edward Said labelled "Orientalism". Or will it be possible to move "beyond Orientalism", that is beyond Eurocentric arrogance and global uniformity through cross-cultural encounter and learning?

The author presents his work as a collection of essays, since, in his opinion, a systematic treatise presupposes a standpoint outside, permitting an objective overview, a sort of superior universalistic perspective, an attitude going against the very grain of cross-cultural encounter. The sequence of chapters is held together by a line of argument, starting with the discussion of various modes of cross-cultural encounter in a historical perspective.

The point of departure is the most dramatic form of encounter: conquest followed by annihilation of one culture by the other. There is certainly no more illuminating example than the Spanish take-over and annihilation of the Aztec and Mayan cultures after 1492. From conquest the author proceeds to less direct and overt forms of cultural domination, mainly to conversion and the policies of assimilation and acculturation taking place both in Western and non-Western societies. In this connection it could have been enlightening to look more closely at probably the most spectacular case of conversion, the result of the encounter of a Jewish sect with the Graeco-Roman world. The author mentions partial assimilation and selective borrowings including for example the influence of Greek philosophical thinking in Rome, the repercussions of Near Eastern cultures on the Roman metropolis, later the dissemination of Muslim scholarship in medi-

eval Europe etc. Maybe we could seriously consider the idea that imperialism and domination are but one side of Europe's story, relatively late and of short duration, while absorption, assimilation and adaptation are the other side of the coin, forgotten and repressed by modern Europe's narcissism. Now, the emerging global village may bring about "dialogue between cultures" promoting unparalleled opportunities for cross-cultural fertilization.

The model of dialogical reciprocity signals an alternative to both domination and self-annihilation. The author develops as a preferred option the notion of a deconstructive dialogue or a "hermeneutics of difference" which respects otherness beyond assimilation. Here the author draws inspiration from the work of two prominent Western thinkers, Hans Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida. Chapter 2 explores mainly Gadamer's views on self-other as well as cross-cultural relations and Derrida's critique of "logocentrism" and the cult of rational transparency.

Among non-Western cultures primary attention in this volume is given to traditions linked with the Indian subcontinent. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with two leading Indian philosophers and intellectuals who have been bridge builders between Western and non-Western cultures, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and J.L. Mehta. The latter, deeply influenced by Martin Heidegger, sought to liberate Indian traditions from the tutelage both of Western metaphysics and of Orientalist "Indology", avoiding, at the same time, uncritical rejection of Western learning.

The subsequent chapter examines the work of one of the most prominent contemporary Indologists, Wilhelm Halbfass. From the issues explored in his recent work the thoughts on the compatibility [or incompatibility] of classical Hinduism with the modern Western conception of democracy and political equality are of special interest.

India has a long tradition of social stratification and inequality as manifest in the caste structure and in the differentiation of forms and stages of life. What surfaces here is a philosophical problem of considerable magnitude resisting easy settlement especially in the growing Westernization, which is to a large extent the militant extension of egalitarianism to the other parts of the world.

The author, however, reproaches Halbfass for putting in doubt the role of hermeneutical understanding in Oriental studies. In the opinion of Halbfass, expressed in his later work, understanding alone is no longer seen as adequate in the absence of critical distanciation and conceptual analysis. What is required is a neutral and universal standpoint from which all traditions can be objectively assessed without bias. Halbfass believes such a common basis can be provided by logical and linguistic analysis, by the methods of modern analytical philosophy. He, of course, is not the only one who feels uneasy in the atmosphere constantly stressing the subjective and arbitrary nature of our categories and the uncertainty of the knowledge derived from them.

Proceeding to a broader comparative level, the next chapter compares Western and Indian thought along the lines of an opposition between context-sensitive and context-free culture. The remaining chapters deal with concrete social-political problems such as development, multiculturalism and the prospects of a global democracy. The last issue is surprisingly elucidated through recourse to the Buddhist notion of "emptiness" (*sunyata*).

As many times underlined in the volume, the intellectual foundations of Gadamer's hermeneutics and Derrida's deconstruction come basically from Martin Heidegger. Now, association of Heidegger with fascism is common knowledge. However brilliant his philosophy may be, there are some genuine political problems in his legacy that should not have remained without comment.

The book is a fine work, providing valuable insights and guideposts on the arduous journey beyond Orientalism.

Jarmila Drozdíková

EDZARD, Lutz and Mohammed NEKROUMI (Eds.): *Tradition and Innovation. Norm and Deviation in Arabic and Semitic Linguistics*. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag 1999. 208 pp. ISBN 3-447-04185-4.

The present collection of studies follows the general theme of the 27th Deutscher Orientalistentag (Bonn, September 30, 1998) "Norm und Abweichung", further reflected in the panel "Tradition und Innovation – Norm und Abweichung in der arabistischen und semitistischen Linguistik".

The volume is introduced by a short Preface (in English). The articles, dealing with a wide range of problems, are divided into three sections: I. Modern Perspectives on Comparative Semitic and Afroasiatic (9–52); II. Modern Perspectives on Native Arabic Grammatical Theory (53–100); III. Modern Linguistic and Literary Theory Applied to Arabic (101–204). From a total of eleven articles, seven are presented in English, three in German and one in French. The volume is closed by an Epilogue (205–208), in French.

I.

Olga Kapeliuk (Jerusalem; *Regularity and Deviation in Peripheral Neo-Semitic*) examines innovative features in what she calls Peripheral Neo-Semitic, referring thereby to the North-Eastern and South-Western extremities of the Semitic language area. The former group is represented by the Eastern Aramaic dialect cluster (to the exclusion of the Turoyo variant), the latter by the Semitic languages of Ethiopia. By comparative parallels with their respective linguistic ancestors, old Syriac and Ge'ez, this peripheral linguistic area is integrated in the general domain of Semitic linguistics.

What R. Voigt (Berlin; *Die Präpositionen im Semitischen – Über Morphologisierungprozesse im Semitischen*) describes the prepositional complexes with affixal pronouns, such as the Syrian *menhon* '(some) of them' (25), in terms of their substantival status (die Position eines Substantivs). Their *word status* might have been a more insightful labelling, cf., also the stress-contoured phonological word, marked by {} in the following Cairo Arabic examples, e.g.:

{*luhum*} in {*'ult'*} {*luhum*} "I/you said to them" (the stressed syllable is marked by underlining), as against clitics in {*'ult' -lu*} or neg. {*ma- 'ulti-lū*}.

The inclusion of the Hungarian *-ban* (<**ban* 'interior, inside'), in e.g. *ház-ban* (31), among the Semitic prepositions of a substantival background seems to be somewhat misleading: while the Arabic *bi-*, for instance, can operate as a local (*bi-baitihī*), temporal (*bi-l-laili*) or even a (syntactic) indicator of causativity (*naḥaḍa bi-šai'in*, roughly equivalent to the derivative *'anḥaḍahu* or to a lexical periphrasis *ḡa'alahu yanḥaḍ*, the Hungarian *-ban*, as well as all other agglutinative grammatical indicators, has *only* one function, here, to mark the (stative) locative case (Tompá 1985: 114 f.: Kasussuffix der Deklination: *inessive case*)).

The study provides a nearly exhaustive stock of carefully classified set of Semitic prepositions and examines the process of their grammaticalization.

Andrzej Zaborski (Cracow/Vienna; *Remarks on Derived Verbs in Hamitosemitic*), on the ground of rich comparative material re-examines a number of dubious hypotheses in the domain of verbal derivation (e.g. 'deverbal hypotheses' of the Semitic causative prefixes).