

In celebration of ten years of post-orientalist discourse in Indology, here is an excerpt from a *Post-orientalist Cookbook for Beginners* (to be published later in 2003, and to be offered at a special discount in your INDOLOGY bookshop):

(1) The secret behind the success of post-orientalist cooking is the skill in turning overexposed ingredients of chewy texture into a dazzling array of dainty discourses. Using fresh materials clearly would increase the nutritive value of the preparation, but such goodies are in short supply due to an ever-longer food-chain of post-orientalists with tastes just like yours. So make do with what's on offer and remove the inevitable staleness by marinating everything in theory, combined with a technique called 'chutneyfication,' i.e., cutting all ingredients into very small pieces and making up for loss of substance with acid and spicy stuff. Prepared in this style, even a morsel that has been ruminated several times over will go down like manna. And don't forget, the strength of post-orientalist cuisine is appetizers and side dishes. So don't waste time with substantial main courses that take hours to prepare and may be hard to stomach for your regular customer.

You may try to extend the post-orientalist list of *crudités* with a technique called auto-orientalizing (to be distinguished from auto-*post*-orientalizing; see below). Auto-orientalizing gives you a robust mandate to decide what is orientalist and what is not. And in theory there is nothing that is *not* orientalist. It's all just a matter of crafty stuffing and sophisticated presentation.

Alternatively, you may stretch a discourse on, say, orientalist imperialism by adding other flavours such as nationalism, capitalism, or racism, which works well in any combination, especially when spiced with gendering, i.e., male domination of the ultimate 'other'. This is your chance to acquire some skill in a basic post-orientalist technique known as 'rethinking'. Don't let the term scare you off, this does not imply that you actually have to think a lot! The technique is largely automated. [A Post-Orientalist Rethinker (POOR), currently being developed on the model of the Postmodernism Generator (<http://www.elsewhere.org/poco>), will soon offer a wide range of ready-to-consume post-orientalist preparations, coming with a variety of dressings.]

(2) Once recipe and ingredients are decided, design a state-of-the-art menu whetting your customers' appetite for a rich and *powerful* (keyword - use lavishly!) discourse. Experienced head chefs suggest an enigmatic title or a motto in a foreign tongue as appetizer, a side dish of endnotes prepared *à la Verdun*, spread out like a minefield nobody would want to cross, and for dessert a bibliographical extravaganza, served with a succulent sauce of titles that have no direct relevance to your agenda.

(3) For a tasty starter you would take slender fare like 'This paper is a preliminary report of a project still in progress ...'. Especially for beginners this is an elegant way to provide for unexpected turns of the volatile post-orientalist discourse machine. In a few years' time, everyone, including yourself, will have forgotten about your caveat, provided you have by then successfully marketed your product through a network of circular referencing. This is an important sidekick of post-orientalism. So plan ahead: trade references with fellow post-orientalists!

(4) Before you actually serve up something relevant to your subject – which is unavoidable, considering the still unrefined state of the post-orientalist style – prepare your customers' palate with a flashy cocktail of suspicions about the intellectual credentials of the targeted orientalist item. Putting some or all of its crucial terms in quotation marks will come in handy to enhance

the intended flavour. This alone will *convincingly show* (key phrase – use lavishly!) your customers that the target isn't worth their while anyway, and that it would only be a waste of time to acquaint themselves with it, or with the names and references you deign to drop between courses.

(5) Keep in mind that not all your customers may have acquired a taste for post-orientalism yet. Some may still feed on illusions of empiricism, objectivity, or worse, which may even fool them into thinking that the staple of discourse is 'evidence'. Lend them a helping hand! Gently introduce them to the post-orientalist diet by repeated use of expressions like 'It seems ...', 'This seems (to me [optional]) one way to explain / understand ...', 'One way of theorizing this case is to consider the possibility that ...', 'I have come to regard ...', 'I have begun to sense ...', 'I suggest ...', 'I want to entertain the hypothesis that ...', '... leads me to believe that / ask whether ...', 'We might conceive of ... as potentially being ...', 'At least this seems to me one way to understand ...', etc.

(6) Preclude the ignorant expectation that you envisage some kind of debate where illusive 'facts' are established, futile 'arguments' exchanged etc. You are taking your customers on a post-oriental discourse, with you firmly in the theorizer's seat! It is this virtual absence of dissent that makes post-orientalist discourse so powerful (!), as convincingly shown (!) by its head chefs. And there is nothing wrong with power, as long as you are in control. Those who may raise objections only betray their hegemonic desires, or their inability to grasp the inner logic of the post-orientalist agenda. Either way, they are automatically disqualified.

(7) Indicate clearly and repeatedly that your expertise is far deeper than the treacherous simplicity of your preparations would suggest. Give the customer a taste of your mastery with mouth-watering snacks like 'I want to look (briefly / very briefly [both optional]) at / into ...', 'I want to examine (briefly [optional]) ...', 'I will enlarge on this question a little more broadly ...', 'I will only allude here (briefly [optional]) to ...', 'I will try to sketch out a few preliminary ideas ...', 'It may be useful to consider (briefly [optional]) ...', etc.

(8) Stress the intricacy of the technique, the many problems you had to deal with on your customers' behalf. They will thank you all the more for satisfying them in such a plain fashion. Give them a vivid impression of this intellectual struggle, e.g., with savoury side phrases like '... trying to understand ...', '... help us grasp ...', and garnish with a delightful farce such as 'An adequate analysis of ... is no small order, to be sure; I could not even begin to detail what such a project might encompass,' etc.

(9) Indicate, preferably with a note of regret, that you could not investigate every abyss, and that there may be more skeletons in this particular orientalist closet. Fruity trifles like '... awaits further clarification', '... awaits serious analysis', 'I can examine here in some detail only a few examples ..., an exhaustive typology and analysis are premature ...', 'One focal point that merits more than the brief observations possible here ...', etc. are sure to satisfy your customers' taste buds.

(10) Make it clear from the start that the targeted item is an unpalatable concoction in the old orientalist style that went down twenty-five years ago, when the orientalist *imaginaire* had the magic carpet drawn from under its feet by the out-of-place son of an American salesman, who forged the story of his life and sufferings as a privileged and secluded adolescent in Egypt and

various educational institutions for Western elites into a powerful (!) liberation theology for his distant oriental cousins, simultaneously relieving Western intellectuals from the burden of having to make sense of the orient all the time.

(11) Thoroughly acquaint yourself with the basic techniques of post-orientalist *cuisine* cull(er)ed from the *recherché* recipes of *nouveau vague* French Freudsters. One of its key concepts is self-victimization, i.e., projecting yourself into the mind or shoes of any oriental you can reasonably (or otherwise) conceive of as victimized / marginalized / oppressed by some form of sinister orientalist domination. Don't be concerned, this doesn't mean that you actually trade in the comfort of an academic lifestyle for misery and gloom, or that you have to discard all footwear. It is just a projection, an academic victimization by proxy! If you need something to get you in the mood, punish yourself by reading some of the postmodern theorists you quote.

(12) Draw in as many reputed authorities from unrelated fields as you possibly can. If their writings should not yield a memorable phrase to add some flavour to your discourse, quote them in a creative manner – they obviously counted on your exquisite taste and sophistication in (re)presenting the hidden meaning of their deepest thoughts! If the orientalist camp should call this windy, it is all too plain that they just try to contest your deserved place in academia.

(13) By contrast, the indigestible preparations of your orientalist opponents should be dished up very economically, if at all. You have convincingly shown (!) that they are unsavoury. Therefore, granting their illusive 'arguments' undue space would be counterproductive, and would only prolong their misery. Confine yourself to selected morsels that reveal the depravity of their 'arguments'. Be careful not to foster naïve expectations of 'context' or 'meaning'! Before you actually serve the bites, tell your customers how to handle them. They will be thankful for not having to make up their minds about the appropriate academic cutlery all by themselves. Counter arguments put forward by convicted orientalists in defence of their dubious concoctions can be roasted as self-interested and gratuitous at short order.

(14) Present the selective examples – actually you can confine yourself to just one – as characteristic for a great deal of writing / work on that subject / of that period. This will save you from having to look for another example, and your customers from the increase in complexity this may entail. Phrases like 'A fuller account would include ...' will give everyone confidence that there must be more somewhere out there.

(15) For beginners it is recommended to stay away from the heat of anachronistic academic debate altogether by applying a technique called 'auto-posting', which is short for 'auto-post-orientalizing'. Auto-posting automatically disposes of all the questionable concoctions of the dark orientalist past. Like a time-machine, it projects you into the everlasting post-orientalist presence, in which the past no longer makes any *différance*. Make your customers aware of this revolutionary leap with formulas like 'It is not necessary to review here the long and rather complex prehistory of ...' etc. That's the technique that always makes post-orientalist preparations look so fresh and juicy, no matter how often they are served up!

Now that you are familiar with these basic techniques, wouldn't it be fun to try more extravagant styles, like deep post-orientalism?