

Beginning, *Orientalism*, and After: On Edward Said (1935-2003)¹**F. ELIZABETH DAHAB**

For the essence of Said's work was that in it, the ordinary skills of literary and rhetorical analysis were turned outward, away from the writing safely confined between the covers of a book, and on to the world, or rather on to that uneasy junction between action in and representation of the world that is generally known as the ideological.

John Higgins, *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 10 October 2003, 3

To his readers in the Arab world, and in many other places in the third world in general, Said was a grantor of words; he said what all of us were trying to say for the last two centuries. The meanings were held in many hearts and minds for long; Said knew how to express them.

Tamim El Barghouti, *Daily Star-Lebanon*, 30 September 2003, 2

In the narrow confines of this paper, it is impossible to make justice to the vast body of works produced by Professor Edward Said. My purpose here will not be to draw even a remote semblance of an account of the prodigious output of the late Columbia Professor. Rather, this article will offer some highlights of his multifaceted career as a literary, cultural and music critic, a classical pianist, a spokesman of the dispossessed Palestinian people, a polemicist and a passionately engaged public intellectual who, in the words of a younger colleague at Columbia, "created an intellectual place [...] that [...] had a new language, a new syntax, a new vocabulary to which those of us who, like him, felt out of place in a terrifyingly unjust world, could belong" (Massad, *AlAhrum Weekly*). Once this objective is articulated, the question still remains: where to begin and what to highlight? I decided to take a natural (as opposed

to an artificially systematic) approach and to be partly guided in my choice by a representative consensus as to what constitutes Edward Said's most crucial contributions, a consensus distilled so to speak from the scores of tributes paid to this great thinker since his death in New York on September 25th, 2003, by all manners of intellectuals from all over the globe: fellow scholar-critics, former students, colleagues, writers, artists, and political activists published in such outlets as *Al-Ahrum Weekly*, *Al-Hayat*, *Counterpunch*, *The Independent*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The London Review of Books*, *The Economist*, *Le Monde*, *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, *the Guardian*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times* and many more journals and newspapers. And since I agree with the editor of *Critical Inquiry* that "any guise of critical neutrality and objectivity drops away" (Mitchell, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 1) when it comes to speaking of Edward Said, my paper will necessarily be informed and colored by my own commitment, and that of many others, to this exemplary figure most studied at the university worldwide, for "Edward Said left many heirs to his legacy. We are everywhere, inhabiting the place he created for us, and which will always be inspired by his spirit" (Massad 3). Moreover, whenever deemed necessary, and in keeping with the spirit of my tribute, I will let his own voice be heard by quoting from his work.

Edward Said's intellectual trajectory took him from studying Conrad to his latest book, *Humanism and Democratic Realism*, published posthumously by Columbia University Press (in addition to two collections of newspaper articles). In between, he produced about 24 books (including three collections of interviews of which *Power, Politics, and Culture* (2001) and *Culture and Resistance* (2003) are the most recent, as well as hundreds of columns in Arabic and English in *Al Ahrum* and *Al Hayat* as well as newspapers all over Europe, Asia, the US and the Middle East. Though he is routinely vilified or dismissed by some on account of his advocacy of the Palestinian cause, he has achieved a tremendous level of recognition and influence worldwide. He won a number of awards and honorary doctorates (in 2001, he was awarded the Lannan Foundation Literary Award for Lifetime Achievement) and he delivered lectures at over 200 universities around the world. The corpus of his works has permeated a number of disciplines, to mention, English and comparative literature, history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, music, linguistics, philosophy, religious, communication and cultural studies. Many of his books are turning points in the history of western literary criticism, landmarks in the history of ideas; they are infused with the tendency

1 A significantly shorter version of this article was published by E. Dahab in *CLC Web* (see Works Cited).

to study constructs and institutions from a polyphonic point of view with the premise that culture and politics, power and the arts are intimately linked.

Said's first book, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* (1966), the subject of his doctoral dissertation at Harvard, introduced and developed the idea that rather than being a career, becoming a writer was a project, one that involves pouring oneself into a series of works which come to define who one is. It is a laborious, methodical study of the interplay between the fiction and the correspondence of the exilic Polish writer whose condition held a certain fascination to the young Said, for Conrad, the "great companion of [his] own life" (Cole 2) who always came back to [Said] "in one way or another" (Bayoumi 421) was in his eyes "an example of someone whose life and work seemed to typify the fate of the wanderer who becomes an accomplished writer in an acquired language, but can never shake off his sense of alienation from his new [...] home" ("Between worlds," *Reflections on Exile* 554). His second book, *Beginnings* (1975), a book that bears the mark of eighteenth century philologist Giambattista Vico's *New Science*, was a "political allegory" (Bayoumi xxii), a working out of Said's political *prise de conscience* spelled out and transposed into literary terms, through the explorations of masterpieces of modernism (Conrad, Proust, Thomas Mann), with the contention that beginnings are instrumental in grasping how authors handle the constraints of authority, convention, and the limits of narrative form. In 1976, *Beginnings* won its author the prestigious Columbia University Lionel Trilling Award and a year later Said was promoted to Parr Professor of English and Comparative Literature. For nearly three decades he multiplied his persona through the various genres he produced and left us a widely read autobiography, *Out of Place* (1999).

When Professor Said was diagnosed with leukemia in 1991, he considered the idea of leaving behind him "a subjective account of the life [he] lived in the Arab world [...] and in the United States [...]" (*Out of Place* xi). In his memoir, *Out of Place* (1999), "a record of an essentially lost or forgotten world" (xi), Said scrupulously comes to terms with his past, from shortly before his birth up to his graduation from Harvard in 1964. Despite and perhaps aided by the controversy this book has occasioned when Said was wrongly accused in the right wing *Commentary Magazine* of fabricating his origins in order to elect himself spokesman of the Palestinians, *Out of Place* saw four printings in less than six months and won three awards, notably the New Yorker Book Award for non fiction in 2000.

Edward Said was born on November 1st, 1935 (during a short trip to Jerusalem) to Christian parents, in the Palestinian district of Talbiyah of West Jerusalem that has become part of Israel since 1948 and is presently an upper-class Jewish district. His father, a Palestinian who held American citizenship, had fought in the first world war before returning to his native Palestine. His mother was born in Nazareth and was half-Lebanese. In 1929, the family moved to Cairo where the father set up a branch of his successful stationary business, with frequent visits to Lebanon and, until 1947, to Palestine. The young Edward with the British-Arabic name that contradicted each other grew up mostly in Cairo in British and American schools where Arabic was banned and where he learnt more about British and American history than Arabic history and where he constantly felt like a misfit: "England was the center of the world and the rest didn't matter" (Coles 1). After being expelled from school for being a "troublemaker," he was sent in 1951 to the United States to Mount Hermon, a puritanical boarding school in New England where he felt, once more, estranged and where he excelled. He then spent his undergraduate years in Princeton on a scholarship, graduated Phi Beta Kappa and received his Ph.D. from Harvard. In 1963 he accepted a position as instructor at Columbia University where he remained all his life and where he achieved the highest possible rank, that of University Professor.

As the title indicates, the constant theme of *Out of Place* is feeling, wherever he was and for much of his life, *not quite right*— this was in fact the initial tide of his memoir — not only on account of his being a displaced Palestinian, but also because of the protean nature of his identity and talents that were to exfoliate into the multiplicity of persona we have come to know. Rather than lament it, at the conclusion of his memoir, Said comes to celebrate and claim the polyphony of his true Self:

I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flowing currents. I prefer this to the idea of a solid self, the identity to which so many attach so much significance. These currents [...] may be out of place, but at least they are always in motion, [...] sometimes against each other, contrapuntally yet without one central theme. A form of freedom, I'd like to think, even if I am far from being totally convinced that it is. That skepticism too is one of the themes I particularly want to hold on to. with so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place." (295)

It is widely agreed upon that *Orientalism* (1978) is the book that has projected Edward Said to the fore of the international scene and has changed

the course of Middle Eastern Studies, becoming a cornerstone text for the field of postcolonial studies which it launched. It covers various phases from the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, through the Imperialist European expansion in the nineteenth century, to the aftermath of World War II and the emergence of American hegemony. Borrowing Foucault's power-knowledge dichotomy whereby discourses, far from being objective constructions, are in fact strategies of control used by institutions such as psychiatric clinics or prisons, to control the "other" who will not have a chance to represent himself. Said observed that Middle Eastern studies in the west, or Orientalism, one of three meanings he attributed to the word, colluded in subtle and less subtle ways with imperialism by digesting then reproducing about the Islamic Arab world common stereotypes and prejudices (laziness, sensuality, corruption, effemininity, violence, lack of intelligence, etc.) that are divorced from the realities on the ground. He demonstrated how the encounter between the Orient and the Occident was caged in a pseudo-objective, so called scientific discourse by which European culture, represented in great part by novelists and poets, perceived the Orient. "The Orient that appears in Orientalism [...] is a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire" (*Orientalism* 202-203). We find eloquent and incisive pages about Lane's scholarly works as well as Nerval and Flaubert's travel notes — they "saw the Orient as a locale requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption" (206) — and the rapport between those writings and the formally esthetic, historical reconstructions in such novels as *Salammbô* and *Les Tentations de Saint Antoine*. Said was precisely interested in those "western perceptions of the Orient and in the transformation of those views into Western rule over the Orient" (*The Pen and the Sword* 63).

It was the first time in the history of American academy that such daring views, marrying "the two things [Said] was most interested in: literature and culture, on the one hand, and studies and analyses of power, on the other" (*Power, Politics and Culture* 210) were judiciously exposed. Despite the unpopularity of these views amidst *eminent* figures such as Bernard Lewis, the Orientalist Princeton historian whom Said attacked, as well as his half-witted colleagues (to borrow a pertinent phrase I chanced upon recently) from other disciplines who were "enraged [...] and appalled [...] at [Said's] presumed insolence of subjecting white Europeans to an oriental gaze" (Massad 2), *Orientalism* fired the imaginations of students all over the world and established Said's reputation as cultural critic. Moreover, "it opened the floodgate of post-

colonial criticism that breached the authority of Western scholarship on non-western societies" (Prakash 3).² Translated into over 24 languages, and sometimes pirated in the process, it unwittingly became, as Said himself remarked, a "collective book" that unexpectedly superseded its author (*Orientalism* 330) who came to bemoan the fact that, far from being recognized for what it was, as "talking about a very specific form of activity: representation" (*Power, Politics and Culture* 220), *Orientalism* was sometimes misread and mistaken in the Middle East as an anti-Western work that systematically championed Islam and the Arabs. Far from true; in fact, Said was critical of fundamentalist religious trends and oppressive Arab regimes much as he cautioned against over-generalisations against the Arab people as a whole, and he was careful to point out that the tiny groups of individuals who rule those societies "[...] almost without exception, [...] do not represent the best of their people" ("The Politics of Anti Semism" 68).

The invention of the East by the West and "the affiliation of knowledge with power" is a thesis further explored in two books that came to be part of the Orientalist trilogy (*Power, Politics and Culture* 171): *The Question of Palestine* (1979) and *Covering Islam* (1981). In the introduction to *Covering Islam*, Said brings to the fore the affiliation between language and political reality, a fact many Orientalists continue to deny: "Everything about the study of Islam in the contemporary West is saturated with political importance, but hardly any writers on Islam [...] admit the fact" (xvii). Written on the occasion of the coverage in the American media of the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979, the book deconstructs the false representations of Islam — "the Islam being talked about is [supposed to be] some real and stable object out there where 'our' oil supplies happen to be found" (*Covering Islam* xi) — as being the religion of violent, doomed, incompetent and fanatic people, and shows in what ways those false and unjust representations are yet another aspect of support for American foreign policy and self-serving interests, an observation Said continued to maintain and to demonstrate until his death, often with some

2 As a colleague has pertinently written, "Orientalism is Alive and Well in Iraq!" (El-Affendi) and when the 25th anniversary of *Orientalism* was celebrated at Columbia university in April 2003, reportedly, uppermost on Said's mind was the war on Iraq (Prakash 4). Though outraged by it, Said was not surprised that Bernard Lewis with his inept but popular post September 11 book, *What Went Wrong*, and other Orientalist intellectuals for hire served as willing tools for the Bush administration, and that Orientalism as a body of knowledge played a major role in the invasion of Iraq by the US.

discouragement. In the words of his long time assistant, Dr. Istrabadi, "he would sometimes shake his head saying that things have gotten worse not better over the years" (*Zaman* 2) — witness his searing article entitled "Dignity, Solidarity and the Penal Colony" that appeared in November 2003 in the volume edited by Alexander Cockburn (*Counterpunch* 2003), as well as the large number of interviews and articles he continued to produce up to a handful of days before his death. In the words of Massad:

In his defence of Islam and Muslims against the onslaught of American racist pronouncements, his principled analysis was not shaken by the events of 11 September. He continued to defend Islam as religion and culture against the monstrous misrepresentations of the Western media and Western governments, insisting on humanising Muslims and Arabs in the face of absolute dehumanisation. (2)

In *The Question of Palestine* (1979) published two years after Said joined the Palestinian National Council (a fact which banned him from going to Israel) as an Independent — he remained a member, choosing not to ally himself to any party and taking orders from no one, until 1991 when his health ailed and when the chasm with Arafat became pronounced — Said exposes the savage practices of the successive colonialisms that have beset Palestine and the Palestinians. In disagreement with the PLO, he advocates a two state solution though years later he came to change his stand on this issue in favor of a binational state with equal rights. The book was written with the aim of "[giving] Americans a sense of what the dispossession and the alienation of Palestine meant from the Palestinian point of view" (*Power, Politics, and Culture* 171). It deftly deals with the psychology of Zionism that dismisses the reality and the existence of the Palestinians, witness Golda Meir's infamous 1969 statement "There are no Palestinians," a statement that had set the young Columbia Professor the task of taking on "the slightly preposterous challenge of disproving her, of beginning to articulate a history of loss and dispossession that had to be extricated, minute by minute, word by word, inch by inch" (Said "Between Worlds," *Reflections on Exile* 563), a task he undertook until his death, urged as he was by the necessity of *narrating* the Palestinian experience, relentlessly (*The Pen and the Sword* 145), and in so doing, "working in an almost entirely negative element, the non-existence, the non-history which [he] had somehow to make visible despite occlusions, misrepresentations, and denials (*Reflections on Exile* 563).

In the process of narrating the Palestinian experience, Said produced four books fully devoted to the Palestinian question, *After the Last Sky* (1986), written in collaboration with Swiss photographer Jean Mohr, engaging with visuals in what Mitchell called "an impassioned plea for international recognition of the justice of Palestinian claims" and "a marvelous, many layered reflection on images of the Palestinian people" (2), *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994); *The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination 1969-1994, Peace and its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in The Middle East Peace Process* (1996) and *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (2000).

Said saw in the Oslo agreement a capitulation on the part of the PLO leader Yasser Arafat who, since 1996, has banned Said's books in the region — at the signing ceremony he gave "a businessman's speech" while "Israeli Prime Minister Rabin gave the Palestinian speech" (*The Pen and the Sword* 11) — whom Said called on to resign: "he conceded everything to Israel's occupation on the basis of a very slender recognition by Israel of the representativity of the PLO, and nothing else" (*The Pen and the Sword* 16). The Israel/PLO accord was thus, in Said's eyes, a "betrayal of history" — the tide of one of the interviews with Barsamian published in *The Pen and the Sword* (145-70) because in it "not a word" was said about the occupation or about the reparations of the ravages of occupation for those who have suffered from it and who would continue to be "subordinate dependents" of the Israelis (161). Equally ignored was the issue of those who live outside the West Bank and Gaza, over 50% of the Palestinian population. So, when invited by Clinton to attend the ceremony, Said flatly declined, considering that it "wasn't an occasion for celebration but an occasion for mourning" (*The Pen and the Sword* 110). As Jacqueline Rose has rightly put it about Said's spokespersonship on behalf of the dispossessed Palestinians: "From *The Question of Palestine* to *The End of the Peace Process* on which his judgment was unerring, [Said] made the case more powerfully than any other writer, journalist, intellectual or politician in the West" (1).

Said's great passion that burned steadily throughout his life, was music — he first studied the piano in Cairo at the Jewish Conservatory Tiegeman — to which he turned as a serious pianist and to which he devoted several books that achieve the marriage between literature and music so dear to comparatists and so rare to encounter. He began writing a music column for *The Nation* in 1987. *Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society* (2002) is the outcome of a series of conversations with Israeli conductor Daniel Barenboim with whom Said had been collaborating since 1991 and is

dedicated "to the young musicians of the West-Eastern Divan Workshop" (see below). The book is a summary of their discussions on music on the occasion of Barenboim's performance of the Beethoven symphonies and concerts in Carnegie Hall (December 2000) and a testimonial to the collaboration of these two men in bringing the power of music to the service of divided peoples. It is informed with the ardent friendship between Said and Barenboim who called Said "a soul mate" (Barenboim, *Time Magazine*, European edition 1). In the words of the Israeli conductor: He saw in music not just a combination of sounds, but he understood the fact that every musical masterpiece is, as it were, a conception of the world. And the difficulty lies in the fact that this conception of the world cannot be described in words (Barenboim, *Electronic Intifada*)

In May 1998, Said participated in a new production of Beethoven's *Fidelia* for which he wrote a new English text replacing all the spoken dialogue, with Daniel Barenboim and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In August 1999 with Daniel Barenboim and Yo-Yo Ma, he conducted a workshop for young Arab and Israeli musicians in Weimar, Germany, as part of a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Goethe, and again at the London proms in 2003, a few months before his death. They both insisted on Barenboim's giving master classes to Palestinian children in Ramallah, a fact that irritated the Sharon government. Together they founded in Weimar the West Eastern Divan, in the spirit of Goethe's collection of poems expressing great enthusiasm for Islam and bearing the same title (Westöstlicher Diwan). The West-Eastern Divan, founded with the conviction that playing music in unison could bring together divided people and elevate the mind, provides a musical forum for young musicians from Israel and Arab countries. The project had prodigious success and in 2002 the couple Barenboim/Said won the Spanish Annual Prince of Asturias Concord Prize — Stephen Hawking was a recipient in 1986 — for, in the words of the Jury Chairman, "their efforts towards peace in the Middle East" and for "getting over historical antagonism and adding to dialogue and reflection" (quoted in El Fassed)

Musical Elaborations (1991) is an outcome of the prestigious Rene Welleck Library lectures Said delivered at the University of California, Irvine, where he accompanied his talks by his own piano performance. The book draws an account of musical developments since Beethoven and reflects on the place of music in society. The chapter entitled "Music as Extreme Occasion" contains very eloquent pages on Glenn Gould whom Edward Said admired greatly amongst other things for his embodiment of the tendency in the mid-

twentieth century for the concert musician to exercise his prerogative by helping himself to selections from the repertoires of operas and orchestras and establishing them in "a new, highly specialized environment" (*Musical Elaborations* 6). His reflections on Gould's contrapuntal technique found application in his cultural and literary criticism especially in his 1993 seminal *Cultural and Imperialism* where he explicitly advances the notion that literary works should also be studied contrapuntally, allowing the balance of power between the dominant and the dominated to be taken into consideration.

A sequel to *Orientalism* (1978), *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) covers the same time period, from the end of the eighteenth century to the present; however, it focuses on parts of the world other than the Middle East, such as India, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America where there were major Western investments in the form of empire or direct colonialism. It expands the scope of *Orientalism* in that it studies instances where the natives talk back and retort. In Said's own words: "[...] Unlike *Orientalism* where I only looked at European and American writers and policies, in this case I look at the great culture of resistance that emerged in response to imperialism and grew into what in the twentieth century is called nationalism" (*The Pen and the Sword* 64). whereas in *Orientalism* one encounters names such as Massignon, Maspero, Renan, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Nerval, and Flaubert, in *Culture and Imperialism* Said deals with such writers and theoreticians as Austen, Conrad, Dickens, Forster, Camus, Memmi, Fanon, and Sartre.

Edward Said was often criticized for having politicized such a seemingly apolitical novel as *Mansfield Park*, though the novel actually won his praise (*Representations of the Intellectual*¹). His objective, however, was to allow for a polyphonic voice of history to be heard, one that makes it possible "to read *Mansfield Park* from the point of view of [slavery and the British-owned] Antigua plantation of the Bertrams, instead of reading it exclusively from the point of view of *Mansfield Park*" (*Power, Politics, and Culture* 211), and in so doing, establishing what he called a reading which is based on counterpoint, "many voices producing a history." (*The Pen and the Sword* 70): "My point was that just as Austen talks about goings-on in Britain and in British overseas possessions, so too must her twentieth-century readers and critics, who have for too long focused on the former to the exclusion of the latter" (*Representations of the Intellectual* xi). Similarly, Said's "against the grain" interpretation of Camus' "The Adulterous Woman," a story that takes place in the South of Algeria, one which has always been read as an existential parable, found under his incisive eye and much to the disagreement of many

who found the shift uncomfortable, a *contrapuntal* reading quite at odds with that of a whole generation of literary critics who failed to see in the climax of the story that what was supposedly the staging of a deep communion between the protagonist, Jeanine, and the earth, was actually and quite plausibly — after all, Camus was known for his refusal to give up the idea of *L'Algérie française* — "an assertion of a colonial right of French people, because Jeanine is French, to the land of Algeria, which they think is theirs to possess" (*The Pen and the Sword* 75).

At the heart of Said's critical writings, as we have seen, there is a constant underlying awareness that things — novels, plots, cultural and political events — are worldly: they occur in a given time and place. In *The World, The Text and the Critic* (1983) with its celebrated "Traveling Theory," "Roads Taken and not Taken," "Criticism Between Culture and Systems" and others, Said bemoans the worldlessness and the cult of professionalism that transform scholars into myopic highly specialized individuals: both ailments threaten literary interpretation. The worldliness he advocates, one which is a constant feature of his works, Said defines as "a knowing and unafraid attitude toward exploring the world we live in" ("Between Worlds," *Reflections on Exile* 565), an attitude that entails reading texts in their historical context with an awareness of the circumstances that play on readers, writers and texts. His constant "operating assumptions," he writes, are that "fields of learning, as much as the works of even the most eccentric artist, are constrained and acted upon by society, by cultural traditions, by worldly circumstance, and by stabilizing influences like schools, libraries, and governments" (*Orientalism* 201-02). A view intellectuals in the academic world should sensitize themselves to.

An outcome of the prestigious lecture series for the BBC, *Representations of the Intellectual: The Reith lectures* (1994) is mainly devoted to the tasks of the contemporary intellectual and links Said's political and cultural writings. He asserts that "the intellectual belongs on the same side with the weak and underrepresented" (22). The book contains his famous phrase, the title of one of the chapters, "Speaking Truth to Power," a mode of action which applies to those "intellectuals with an alternative and more principled stand that enables them" to oppose (97). In this work, Joyce's Stephen Dedalus, amongst a host of protagonists created by Flaubert, Turgenev and Genet, with his impeding desire to express himself as freely as he possibly could, holds a central place: "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church [...]" (17). A sentence that could be descriptive of Said himself! In the chapter entitled "Intellectual Exiles:

Expatriates and Marginals," Said uses the notion of metaphorical exile as opposed to *actual* exile to characterize the role of the intellectual as *outsider*, the nay-sayer at odds with his society, as opposed to the intellectual as *insider*, the yea-sayer who belongs fully to the society as it is: "Exile for the intellectual in this metaphysical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others" (53). In this context, writing becomes one's true home, and he quotes Adorno whose exile in the US was actual and who had been in metaphysical exile in his native Germany: "For a man who no longer has a homeland writing becomes a place to live" (58).

Edward Said has had to come to terms with his own condition of displaced intellectual exile living in between two cultures (Arabic and American) at odds with each other, feeling totally at home in neither, a fact which, instead of bemoaning and lamenting, he resolves and elevates to a positive condition of enlightened existence in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (2001), a spectacularly diverse array of 50 literary and cultural essays — from reflections on Foucault, Hemingway, Gould, Mahfouz, "Conrad and Nietzsche" to studies on "Egyptian Rites," "the Future of Criticism," to "Homage to a Belly-Dancer" — many of which had appeared in *Critical Inquiry* and *The Tendon Review of Books* over the years:

Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that — to borrow a phrase from its contrapuntal[...]. There is a unique pleasure in this sort of apprehension [...]. There is also a particular sense of achievement in acting as if one were at home wherever one happens to be. ("Reflections on Exile" 186)

Which is not to say that Said was not aware of the pathos of exile and its predicament. Far from that. His is a contrapuntal awareness of the agonies and ecstasies of this mode of existence that many of us in today's world are acquainted with. In a moving passage of "Reflections of Exile," Said sums up "the achievements of exile" in the following terms, strangely evocative and containing a latent lyrical dimension that points to the genesis of his own colossal endeavors as a writer:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home; its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even

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Expatriates and Marginals," Said uses the notion of metaphorical exile as opposed to *actual* exile to characterize the role of the intellectual as *outsider*, the nay-sayer at odds with his society, as opposed to the intellectual as *insider*, the yea-sayer who belongs fully to the society as it is: "Exile for the intellectual in this metaphysical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others" (53). In this context, writing becomes one's true home, and he quotes Adorno whose exile in the US was actual and who had been in metaphysical exile in his native Germany: "For a man who no longer has a homeland writing becomes a place to live" (58).

Edward Said has had to come to terms with his own condition of displaced intellectual exile living in between two cultures (Arabic and American) at odds with each other, feeling totally at home in neither, a fact which, instead of bemoaning and lamenting, he resolves and elevates to a positive condition of enlightened existence in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (2001), a spectacularly diverse array of 50 literary and cultural essays — from reflections on Foucault, Hemingway, Gould, Mahfouz, "Conrad and Nietzsche" to studies on "Egyptian Rites," "the Future of Criticism," to "Homage to a Belly-Dancer" — many of which had appeared in *Critical Inquiry* and *The London Review of Books* over the years:

Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that — to borrow a phrase from music — is contrapuntal[...]. There is a unique pleasure in this sort of apprehension [...]. There is also a particular sense of achievement in acting as if one were at home wherever one happens to be. ("Reflections on Exile" 186)

Which is not to say that Said was not aware of the pathos of exile and its predicament. Far from that. His is a contrapuntal awareness of the agonies and ecstasies of this mode of existence that many of us in today's world are acquainted with. In a moving passage of "Reflections of Exile," Said sums up "the achievements of exile" in the following terms, strangely evocative and containing a latent lyrical dimension that points to the genesis of his own colossal endeavors as a writer:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home; its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even

triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever. (173)

"The achievements of exile" mentioned in the above quotation, vast as they are in their diversity, in Said's case, are the achievements of an ardent humanist aware of his vocation as such and seeking answers to dilemmas. In an interview he gave in August 1999 that was set in the context of a discussion on globalization and the free market economy that has become, in Said's view, the hallmark of a humanism which is nothing but a bankrupt western liberalism, he asks: "Can one formulate a valid humanism, one that has to do with knowledge, rigor, commitment to pedagogy, and yet remain committed to citizenship in society? How does one, as an intellectual, do that? How do we define a humanism in a situation that is very embattled, where the world is creeping in on it" (Bayoumi 435). These are some of the questions he addresses in his forthcoming posthumous book, *The Relevance of Humanism in Contemporary America*.

With a bend of mind that ultimately characterizes Professor Said as an optimist, he believed that the American university, despite its being "in cahoots with the corporate world and the military," is the last possible Utopia and "the last remaining protected space" (Bayoumi 436). In an exhilarating article entitled "On Defiance and Taking Positions," we find his formulation of the ideal role of the true intellectual: one who commands a vast knowledge of his discipline; who is rigorous in his analysis of literature; who views his being an intellectual as a vocation; the intellectual who considers it necessary to step into the public sphere and to speak truth to power, namely to question, interpret and understand authority rather than consolidating it; to step out of the boundaries of the academy "to connect oneself, to affiliate oneself, to align oneself with an ongoing process or contest of some sort" possibly with the aim of improving the lot of the oppressed (*Reflections on Exile* 504); the intellectual who functions as a kind of public memory, "to recall what is forgotten or ignored" and "to make the connections that are otherwise hidden," "to provide alternatives for mistaken policies" (503), and "resources of hope," as he reflected a few weeks before his death in *Selves and Others* (2003). Recommendations that have all been part of the activities and profile of Professor Said the scholar-activist. Speaking of Said's own vocation as "an academic iconoclast," the following eloquent statement was made in the *Times Higher Education Supplement*

He broke two of the main taboos of institutionalised academic study. The first of these was the unspoken rule that forbade the making of direct connections between the ideals of culture and the reality of past and present political life. [...]. The second was the refusal of disciplinarity and specialisation, which he believed tended to weaken and depoliticise the intellectual strengths of academic writing. (Higgins 3)

In keeping with Edward Said's injunctions about the critic's awareness of the *worldliness* of texts, I would like to end this paper on a semi-personal note pertaining to the *worldly* genesis of his latest *published* book, *Freud and the Non-European* (2003) which deals with questions of unresolved identity related to Freud's relationship to his Jewishness, and the bearing of those issues on contemporary Zionism. This little book is in point of fact the outcome of an aborted lecture Said was due to deliver on March 1, 2002, at California State University Long Beach as Keynote Speaker at the 37th Conference of the Department of Comparative Literature and Classics where I am a faculty member. Unfortunately, he was suddenly taken ill three hours before his scheduled talk as a colleague and I (Charles Jernigan) found out, *much to our alarm and horror*, when we went to fetch him at the Four Seasons Hotel where he was staying. We came back empty-handed to break the news to a stunned then saddened conference audience while Edward Said was being rushed to the hospital urgent care with a bout of pneumonia of which, luckily, he recovered shortly after. A few months later, he gave "Freud and the Non-European" at the Freud Museum in London. Initially, however, Said had planned to deliver "Freud and the Non-European" *at the 2001 Freud Memorial Lecture in Vienna*. However, it was cancelled by the hosts at the last moment with the pretext of "the political conflict in the Middle East" (*Freud and the Non-European* 78) but I well remember reading at the time that the cancellation occurred not long after Said had thrown a rock (2000) at an Israeli army post on the Lebanese border in a symbolic gesture of solidarity, an incident many of us have heard about because of the uproar it had caused in Zionist circles that subsequently dubbed him "Professor of Terror" and demanded his dismissal from Columbia, an incident Said relates during an interview he had with the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* ("My Right of Return," *Power, Politics and Culture* 443-58). *Irvnita/context* for an interview? Perhaps so, but Said's *contrapuntal*[^] and works are punctuated by such semblances of irony. One exigency of his views is that he wanted justice and equal rights for *all involved*, and not just for his own people. As Daniel Barenboim has put it: "he had an unusual understanding of the human spirit, and of the human being, and he recognized

that parallels and paradoxes are not contradictions [...]. he always looked for the 'beyond' in the idea, the 'unseen' by the eye, the 'unheard' by the ear" (*Electronic Intifada*).

California State University, Long Beach

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