

MUSTAPHA MARROUCHI

Rootprints

THE STORY OF EDWARD SAID'S LIFE sounds like a fairy tale. The son of a prosperous Palestinian-American businessman who headed an office equipment company and published books, Said had already, by the time he graduated from Princeton, studied at Harvard and had passed all examinations as a senior with the highest average in Mount Hermon School (Massachusetts). A scion of the Arab *haute bourgeoisie*, Said is a tireless troublemaker but a learned entrepreneur, a sort of *homme de lettres* destined to become lord mayor of literary New York through the judicious deployment of quick-witted prose and decisive critical dicta. From *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1975), he has disguised himself in what Virginia Woolf once termed a "four-piece suit," while arming himself with a remarkable talent and a mordant irony; accurate insights and revealing detail are his speciality. At the same time, to many, Said is a profoundly hybrid writer who is never shy about his aspirations. Indeed, if Said resembles anyone, in his clean, combative prose and unfeigned heart, it is Raymond Williams. And whereas Williams had a sense of social and emotional nuance, Said starts where society ends. Williams, in fact, was so close to his world that he was content merely to record it; Said, by contrast, cannot stop trying to peel the surface or *za'bir* of the world back to find the metaphysical core or *ba'tin*. In the process, he does not try to satisfy our expectations; he simply takes us into the heart of the matter and—caught in his strange exile (he seems to live in constant displacement)—makes fewer compromises than any cultural critic around. If we consider the sheer weight of his ambitions, we remember that Tolstoy might almost have been running interference for him in *War and Peace*: "One step beyond the bound-

ary line, which resembles the line dividing the living from the dead, lies uncertainty, suffering and death You fear and yet long to cross that line."¹

In the days when Said was growing up, European genteel tradition held sway over all Cairo. So much of the city was captive to Western high art: an annual opera and/or ballet season, recitals, concerts by the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics, regular visits of La Comédie Française and the Old Vic, all the latest American, French and British films, cultural programs sponsored by the British Council and its continental equivalents. Culturally speaking, then, he was the unfortunate, unwilling heir of European imperialism: the building of the Empire had been sanitized for him by his school-books, teachers and language. Later, Said would write:

The moment one became a student at VC one was given the school handbook, a series of regulations governing every aspect of school life—the kind of uniform we were to wear, what equipment was needed for sports, the dates of school holidays, bus schedules and so on. But the school's first rule, emblazoned on the opening page of the handbook, read: "English is the language of the school; students caught speaking any other language will be punished."²

The factual fog was pretty thick. He knew that Napoleon Bonaparte led the French expedition in 1798. This was enough to whet the imperial appetite: Paris dispatched the army to Egypt and an expedition turned into conquest. Later, in secondary schools led by the British, even the most liberal history masters underplayed the gruesome details of that conquest and others that followed as they evolved into full-scale colonization. Textbooks were embarrassed and pious: on the one hand, the white man behaved atrociously; on the other, roads and hospitals provided the natives with some kind of "mission civilisatrice." After all, even Marx saw some positive aspects to colonialism. If it could be "constructive" as well as "destructive" in India, why not in Egypt?

¹ Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace* (New York: Modern Library, 1950) 97.

² Edward Said, "Between Worlds," *London Review of Books* 7 May 1998: 3.

In this context of western high art on the one hand, and imperialism on the other, it is something of a miracle to come upon someone like Said, who, even though schooled in the foreign masters' classroom, remains fearlessly Arab at heart, right down to his scorn for the West and of some of its values. Of his relationship with Cairo's Victoria College, then the "Eton of the Middle East," where his schoolmates included people like the future King Hussein of Jordan, actor Omar Sharif (alias Michael Shalhoub) and children of western diplomats, Said merely notes that "it was a really mongrel atmosphere All the masters were English, and they treated us with contempt It was the last days of the British presence in Egypt and they were the last remnants of this rather scraggly empire."³ Against this turbulent background, the British were free to ply their authority as they wished. Said confides to Eleanor Wachtel that "prefects in those schools were allowed the privileges of masters. There was a lot of beating, caning. I got caned the first day I was in school for talking in prayers or something equally horrendous."⁴

Said is the hero of quite another fairy tale—the kind of quest-romance in which the only son in a family of seven sets out as a traveller, rooted nowhere and moving on in order to disprove the illusion of home, seeking a prize he can barely define. Home for him is a metaphysical place—a meditation on space, a sermon on our estrangement. "Which country?" he once asked, and answered with equal aplomb: "I've never felt that I belonged exclusively to one country, nor have I been able to identify 'patriotically' with any Thinking affectionately about home is all I'll go along with."⁵ Yet the fact remains that in recent years his travelling has assumed more of a quest aspect, and as well as being an observer,

³ "Edward Said," in Eleanor Wachtel, *More Writers & Company* (Toronto: Vintage, 1977) 76–77; see also Said, "Between Worlds" 3–7. Said elaborates a breathtaking genealogy of his pre-political life in Jerusalem and Cairo. The essay is moving, at times sad and full of revelations about a man who was to become an icon of resistance. He is one of those figures who, if he did not already exist, the philistines would need to invent.

⁴ Wachtel, *More Writers & Company* 77.

⁵ "Patriotism," Said adds, "is best thought of as an obscure dead language, learned prehistorically but almost forgotten and almost unused since. Nearly everything normally associated with it—wars, rituals of nationalistic loyalty, sentimentalized (or invented) traditions, parades, flags, etc.—is quite dreadful and full of appalling claims of superiority and pre-eminence. Is theoretical patriotism really that much better?" Said, "Which Country?" *The Nation* 15–22 July 1991: 116.

he is more and more a shrewd kind of witness. As he grows older, his pointed comments acquire a greater sense of moral urgency, and his sympathy for embattled peoples including his own has turned into a quiet indignation on their behalf. In recent years, the focus of this anger has been aimed at the PLO leadership. Said has always been a glinting-eyed opponent to injustice (the result, perhaps, of being the one sceptic in a Middle Eastern household of fundamentalism); and he can hardly conceal his frustration.

I regard Yasser Arafat as a Pétain figure who has taken advantage of his people's exhaustion and kept himself in power by conceding virtually everything significant about our political and human rights. What he did after he came to Gaza in July 1994 has worsened the effects of the twenty-nine-year occupation (which still continues), and over months I have reminded my readers, of whom he seems to have been one, that cronyism, a huge security apparatus, kowtowing to the Israelis, buying people off and torturing, imprisoning or killing dissidents at will, are not the ways to establish a new polity for our people.

Arafat's view at present is, I believe, to rule without question and to try either to efface, humiliate or circumvent any challenge to his tattered authority.⁶

What is fundamentally most damning, however, is what is still probably the most intriguing dimension of the man: his profoundly anti-system commitment to the importance of being earnest in an age of irony, self-consciously stylish order and allusively ambiguous myth. For Edward Said is undeniably earnest, despite his famous gift for polemicism, his high spirits, his sense of the tragic. His *oppositional* criticism—eventually his anti-criticism—has sought in all seriousness to engage the chaos and pathos of the present without a single concession to the knowing smile of the postmodern drawing-room, the disaffected twitch of a Lyotardian eyebrow. True, his has been a postmodernism that knows how it would be re-

⁶ Said, "Bookless in Gaza," *The Nation* 23 Sept. 1996: 6-7.

persists in calling himself a man of the Left, not because he expects "Leftocracy" (in Wole Soyinka's celebrated phrase) to revive and succeed, but because he wants to reiterate the urgent moral need for a fairer, more fraternal, more egalitarian society. He explains:

The net effect of "doing" Marxist criticism or writing at the present time is of course to declare political preference, but it is also to put oneself outside a great deal of things going on in the world, so to speak, and in other kinds of criticism.

Perhaps a simple way of expressing all this is to say that I have been more influenced by Marxists than by Marxism or any other ism. If the arguments going on within twentieth-century Marxism have had any meaning, it is this: as much as any discourse, Marxism is in need of systematic decoding, demystifying, rigorous clarification.⁸

This is the point to keep one's eye on, because it is based on the same logic that Said himself employs by writing and being politically active. Over the years, he has attracted a youthful following drawn to his tough-minded idealism, itself traceable to such incorruptible forebears as C.L.R. James and Raymond Williams, Leftist intellectuals of a more innocent and hopeful age.

Quite apart from his remarkable range of political essays, letters, travel writings and literary/cultural analyses, most by now the fodder for countless deconstruction, Said is a figure of extraordinary fascination, even for those sitting on the opposite side of the fence from him. "He has become," Bruce Robbins observes, "a

⁸ Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983) 29. "It is an undoubted exaggeration to say," Said notes, "that these essays make absolutely clear what my critical position—only implied by *Orientalism* and my other recent books—really is. To some this may seem like a failing of rigor, honesty, or energy. To others it may imply some radical uncertainty on my part as to what I do stand for, especially given the fact that I have been accused by colleagues of intemperate and even unseemly polemicism. To still others—and this concerns me more—it may seem that I am an undeclared Marxist, afraid of losing respectability and concerned by the contradictions entailed by the label 'Marxist'" (28).

public figure in a sense that would apply to very few literary critics, however respected.”⁹ Paradoxically, then, to contemplate works by the author of that famous critical maxim *contrapuntal reading* is more often than not to marvel at the “life-rapidity”—another Lawrentian phrase—of the vehement “distinguished appearance ... [of the] ... well-tailored” artist himself. Indeed, one might say of Said, as Keats said of Shakespeare, that he “led a life of Allegory. His works are the comment on it,” except that Said transmutes Shakespeare, by contrast, into an avatar of his own antipathies toward the “State.”¹⁰

Said’s almost allegorical charisma is of special interest because both his popular and critical reputation have fluctuated dramatically since 1967, when the entire map of the Arab world changed. For the first time, Israel, which had been confined largely to the small boundaries of the state, had overflowed into Jordan, taking the West Bank, Gaza, the Sinai desert and the Golan Heights. It came to be known as the *nakbab* year for it marked both a crushing defeat for the Arabs and a disaster on a big scale in their Realpolitik. For Said, however, 1967 had one salutary effect: it heralded new beginnings.

I remained in New York and continued teaching, but beginning in 1968 I started to think, write, and travel as someone who felt himself to be directly involved in the renaissance of Palestinian life and politics. Those of us who were concerned sought each other out across the oceans and despite years of silence. On the cultural and intellectual level, the appearance of an organized Palestinian movement of resistance against the Israeli occupation began as a critique of traditional Arab nationalism whose ruins were strewn about the battlefields of 1969. Not only did Palestinian men and women take up arms on their own behalf for the first time, but they were part of a national experience that claimed primacy in modern Arab discourse by virtue of openness, honesty, realism.

⁹ Bruce Robbins, “Edward Said’s Culture and Imperialism: A Symposium,” *Social Text* 12 (Fall 1994): 2.

¹⁰ John Keats, *The Poems*, ed. Gerald Buller (New York: Knopf, 1992) 251.

We were the first Arabs who at the grass-roots level—and not because a colonel or king commanded us—started a movement to repossess a land and a history that had been wrested from us.¹¹

The whole idea of being an Arab and then beginning to discover for himself what that meant, being a Palestinian, all really came to the fore in 1968. “That was,” Said continues, “the great explosion and it had a tremendous effect on my psychological and even intellectual processes because I discovered then that I had to rethink my life and my identity, even though it had been so sheltered and built up in this completely artificial way. I had to rethink it from the start and that was a process that really is continuing. It hasn’t ended for me.”¹² In some respects, indeed, the heart of the matter is that an author has a self out of which he writes, a private self, a self that no one sees and that he keeps jealously to himself. It is a self, by definition, very different from his public face, just as my face, lost in this sentence, is different from the one I put on as soon as someone enters the room. In 1968 Said recovered his other self. Yet even those authors like him who know how to reclaim their identity become victims. To be sure, the embattled author of *Orientalism* is not alone among writers in having been labelled a Palestinian polemicist, an anti-Western, an élitist and (no doubt in a range of other formulations I am not remembering at the moment) an *enfant terrible*. And that Said has been at one time or another, in one way or another, most of these things, besides being in some sense “un-English,” is not irrelevant to any discussion of what may perhaps be an ascendancy in his literary standing. As the appearance of a number of essays and books attests, he continues to enthral readers and writers alike. Perhaps it is precisely his intellectual as well as political incorrectness that intrigues us; perhaps—as scholars of his life along with his art—we are bemused, even bewitched, by the ways he does *not* fit into our current systems of thought.

Said is the critic of the present in what has become a kind of cultural *déjà vu*, an era of post-modernity. He is the godfather of

¹¹ Said, *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination 1989–1994* (New York: Pantheon, 1994) xv.

¹² Said, “The Voice of a Palestinian in Exile,” *Third Text* (Spring/Summer 1988): 43.

what is called “post-colonial literature” in an age when late capitalism or post-modernity is pervaded with spectacular crises and catastrophes: world wars and revolutions, including counterrevolution (the degeneration of the socialist projects in the former Soviet Union and China, among others). Said is also the priest of spontaneity in an era of irony and parody; the acolyte of intuition, of blood-wisdom, of Sufi-like “lappings” from consciousness—the impassioned enemy of wholesale knowledge—in a thought-tormented, computerized, hypertextual, theory-driven *fin de siècle*. And most troublesome of all, he is the paradigm of authorial energy, the proponent of authorial *authority*, in an age when that mystical being once known as the “author” has sickened, failed, faded, been pronounced dead—and been buried with considerable deconstructive fanfare.

One might object that I have summarized here the negative and unpleasant features of the “death of the author,” not mentioning the well-nigh irrepressible virtues of survival and resistance that characterize the various communities of authors. This is because I want to emphasize that the absence of an historical consciousness or collective memory is no longer tenable. What is decisive is the way historical and humanistic discourses are fashioned—either to reproduce hegemonic racial politics or subvert it. I want to point out here that it is precisely this mode of undertaking a scholarly mapping of the *Said story* that I want to insist upon. To do so is to definitely avoid postmodern indeterminacy and aporia and emphasize instead the historical determinations of the subaltern’s passage from an intransitive to a transitive consciousness on the way to full awareness. The pivotal mediation between one stage and another is praxis, “the authentic union of action and reflection.”¹³ In his insightful *Letters to Cristina*, Paulo Freire reiterates his privileging of the reading of the world as an integration of multiple objects and events in social existence. This dialectical epistemology synthesizes object and subject, means (technique) and ends (value): “In the education and training of a plumber, I cannot separate, except for didactic purposes, the technical knowledge

¹³ Paulo Freire, *Cultural Action for Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Review and Center for the Study of Development and Social Change, 1970) 48.

one needs to be part of the polis, the political knowledge that raises issues of power and clarifies the contradictory relationships among social classes in the city.”¹⁴ Ethics, pedagogy and politics are joined in the practice of socially accountable freedom. In this, Freire echoes Gramsci’s elevation of human work as the fundamental educational principle that can equip every citizen with the skills of governing:

The discovery that the relations between the social and natural orders are mediated by work, by man’s theoretical and practical activity, creates the first elements of an intuition of the world free from all magic and superstition. It provides a basis for the subsequent development of an historical, dialectical conception of the world, which understands movement and change, which appreciates the sum of effort and sacrifice which the present has cost the past and which the future is costing the present, and which conceives the contemporary world as a synthesis of the past, of all past generations, which projects itself into the future.¹⁵

Instead of exacerbating the fragmented, schizophrenic condition of the subaltern, Said, like his *maître à penser* Gramsci, employs a radical critique of the ideological mechanisms (schooling being one of the most crucial) that program the hybrid, exotic Other into repetition or silence. In this enterprise, he charts the limits of the possible on the faultlines of what is practical, committed to challenging a Euro-American hegemony “forged in the crucible of patriarchy and white supremacy.”¹⁶

In a handsome tribute, introducing Edward Said in 1986 at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, Salman Rushdie an-

¹⁴ Freire, *Letters to Cristina: Reflections on My Life and Work* (New York: Routledge, 1996) 115.

¹⁵ Antonio Gramsci, “From ‘In Search of the Educational Principle,’” in *Studies in Socialist Pedagogy*, ed. Theodore Mills Norton and Bertell Ollman (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978) 52.

¹⁶ Peter McLaren, *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 34.

nounces that Said “reads the world as closely as he reads books.”¹⁷ Orphaned by Israel’s annexation of what was Palestine, Said is the minority Christian whose fate has become nomadic because it cannot accommodate itself to the exclusionism that the Christians share with other minorities in the Cairo-Jerusalem-Beirut itinerary. That process of instability is summarized in the following excerpt:

I didn’t spend a huge amount of time in Palestine or, for that matter, anywhere really, we were always on the move. We would spend part of the year in Egypt, part of the year in Palestine and another part of the year in Lebanon where we had a summer house. In addition to the fact that my father had American citizenship, and I was by inheritance therefore American and Palestinian at the same time, I was living in Egypt and I wasn’t Egyptian. I, too, was this strange composite.¹⁸

In 1948, Said’s family moved to Cairo, “a city of innumerable adjustments and accommodations made over time; despite an equal number of provocations and challenges that might have pulled it apart.”¹⁹ But Cairo proved to be not the place; in fact, the Saids never belonged there in the true sense of the word, even though they were, and remained, close to the city. In 1963, Said’s parents relocated to Lebanon where they lived until they passed away. Said speaks movingly about the death of his father in 1971 in Beirut. One episode in particular still haunts him to this day: “no Christian church in Dhour except one would accept my father to be buried in the mountain village he had loved while still alive. That he was well known there and had been a benefactor in many ways did not really matter. What mattered was to deny him a little place to rest his soul.”²⁰ The underlying form of his experience of displacement is assimilation—since he remains an Arab, very much part of the culture—inflected by rejection, drift, errancy and uncer-

¹⁷ Salman Rushdie, “On Palestinian Identity: A Conversation with Edward Said,” in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991* (London: Granta Books, 1991) 166.

¹⁸ “Edward Said,” *More Writers & Company* 75.

¹⁹ Said, “Cairo and Alexandria,” *Departures* May/June 1990: 3.

²⁰ Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (New York: Pantheon, 1986) 172.

tainty. The world that governs us would do well to acknowledge and read Said, so, perhaps, sparing him further injustice.

There is always a sense of shrewd organization in Said's performance, an organization that completely eschews scholarly effects, but relies instead on articulation, clarity of interpretation, mastery and control of each subject, down to the most esoteric ones. "Homage to a Belly-Dancer" is a good example of what I mean. The essay pays handsome tribute to a female artist, namely, Tahia Carioca, the enchanting Egyptian belly-dancer *extraordinaire* and *femme fatale*. Said paints her portrait with a fine brush, observing that "she is still active as an actress and political militant, and, like Um Kalthoum, the remarkable symbol of a national culture."²¹ It is, I think, some sort of testimony to the stubborn durability of Saidian prose that fascinating aspects of it emerge in an eccentric work like "Homage," which is a profoundly moving account of the plight of a female artist in the Arab world today, seen not exclusively as the result of oppression and injustice but also as the extension of problems endemic to Arab society in the late twentieth century. Said interweaves a number of strands, all of them connected to the main protagonist, and illustrative in quite inventive ways of the central idea about recovering the life of an artist in the midst of competing Arab narratives.

In the following excerpt, he describes the Cairo in which he set out to write about the official history of this unique Egyptian dancer and actress who performed in more than 190 films. Much the best way to convey an appreciation of his bare, involuted prose is to quote him at length.

There is a paradox in a city at once a great metropolitan center, a great alternative site (1) to the powerful contained interests of the metropolitan West in the Orient and (2) to Alexandria, the Levantine city par excellence; and yet, most impressively, Cairo is a city that doesn't force upon you some sort of already-existing totality. In other words, there's a certain relaxation in the idea of Cairo—at least the way I've gradually grasped it—which

²¹ Said, "Homage to a Belly-Dancer," *London Review of Books* 13 Sept. 1990: 14.

makes it possible for all manner of identities to exist unhurriedly within this whole. The idea is an indistinct one but you can actually experience it. All kinds of histories, narratives, and presences intersect, coexist in what I suggest is a “natural” way. For me that defines the pleasurable urban—not Paris, the vigorously planned city as an Imperial Center, nor London, with its carefully displayed monumentality, but rather a city providing a relaxed interchange between various incomplete, partially destroyed histories that still exist and partially do not, competed over, contested, but somehow existing in this rather, in my view, fascinating way. Cairo has come to symbolize for me, therefore, a much more attractive form of the way in which we can look at history, not necessarily to look at it as something neatly manageable by categories or by the inclusiveness of systems and totalizing processes, but rather through the inventory that can be reconstructed.²²

Said’s archival method of digging out history and culture brings the reader up short with a gesture or a sequence that rends the veil of sentimentalism. Most of the participants (the Lebanese woman who compiled a list of 80 or 90 of Tahia’s films and just gave them to him, the librarian and the belly-dancer herself) are committed people even if they perform the required task with less conviction. Said’s work on the other hand is much more self-consciously avant-garde. His narrative style in “Homage” is understatement, although his realization of the story greatly amplifies and elaborates the narrative. Odd bits of comedy and despair jostle each other. What makes the essay so extraordinary is its contrapuntal unexpectedness, its hypnotic rhythm, its eccentricity, its almost tangential connection to Cairo itself. It is as if this work of narrative mastery, by turns witty and unutterably sad, has established a new medium for Cairo, which in one of its trajectories has gone beyond the dominant and insurrectionary aspect of Arab life.

Cairo has always been at the centre of Said’s life. “Cairo Recalled” (a kaleidoscope of the years of his childhood and ado-

²² Michael Sprinker, ed., *Edward Said: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 223–24.

lence in Palestine and Egypt just before the time when he left to come to America) is a testimony to the world of that grey zone in one's life, what H el ene Cixous terms "frail roots."²³ The paradox of living on the borderline, in-between, puts Said in a double bind. On the one hand, 'Said is American' is a lie or a legal fiction, on the other, to say 'he is not American' is a breach of courtesy and of gratitude due for hospitality. Not the stormy, intermittent hospitality of the state and of the nation, but the infinite hospitality of the language, the medium he uses to write back to the West with a vengeance, is to be taken seriously. Not only in "Cairo Recalled" but also in "Cairo and Alexandria," the theme of memory and forgetfulness are staged conjuncturally: Said the cultural critic conceives of his childhood, which is indivisible from adolescence and adulthood, through a remarkable remembrance of things past. Just as the sliding of signifiers cannot go on forever, the power to remember, no matter how great, is strictly limited. "Since Cairo,' I have often said to my mother, 'since Cairo' being for both of us the major demarcation in my life and, I believe, in hers.... Part of the city's hold over my memory was the clearness of its nearly incredible divisions."²⁴ "Cairo and Alexandria" opens the field of inquiry into the subsumption of Said the child into Said the adult within an eastern context:

Cairo is at least as historically rich in its own way as either Rome or Athens, but you never get the sense of history carefully preserved. Cairo doesn't present itself readily, and its finest spots and moments are either (it would seem) improvised, or surprising in the often spiteful juxtapositions of memory and actuality.... In Cairo you see evidence of many different narratives, identities, histories, most of them only partially there, many of them now either ragged or diminished.²⁵

²³ H el ene Cixous, "My Algeriance: In Other Words, To Depart Not To Arrive from Algeria," *TriQuarterly* 100 (Fall 1997): 261.

²⁴ Said, "Cairo Recalled," *House and Garden* April 1987: 20.

²⁵ Said, "Cairo and Alexandria" 6.

Said develops two ideas here. The first is that memory is always imperfect. We do not use it in a disinterested way, but more often than not to protect ourselves from the past. It is therefore neither faithful nor worthy of confidence. We rearrange the past according to our own interest, and in keeping with prevailing stereotypes. The second idea cannot be treated in the same way. To express this in a way that is not in Said but that seems to me to epitomize his thinking, I would register that exiles like him have the right to remember, while their oppressors have instead the obligation to forget. Only in this way can the latter acknowledge the existence of their crimes; even if they do not expiate them they can at least begin to regret them. In this way too, exiles can find some kind of peace. These observations and distinctions seem incontestable to me; I can only acquiesce. I would simply like to add a few thoughts grouped around the features of memory, exile and resistance in an attempt to make explicit what Said only suggests.

If our recollection of the past is not as faithful as we might wish, it is because our memory is not a separate mechanism, completely isolated from our other activities, something that we could replace with the poorly-named 'memory' of a computer, for instance. There is of course a sense in which I could say that I am (and I am no more than) whatever I represent at this specific moment, the perfect identity between me and myself, my body and my brain, here and now. But in another, less commonplace sense, this coincidence between me and myself is a mere illusion. I am always much more than I seem, for I extend far beyond myself in both space and time. I am not simply me, here, because others are part of me, and I am made of my encounters and exchanges with them. And I am not simply me, now, for my past constitutes my identity. To reveal to me that this past is quite different from what I believed, or on the contrary to forbid me to put aside parts of it so as to live happily are actions that challenge not just an isolated compartment of my being, but my very identity. I cannot just allow such things to happen; to exercise control over them is thus in the very logic of things. Let me rephrase: one could argue that the preservation of the past is not good in itself; it is good only as a function of a system of roles and actions. When I tell myself or others the story of my life the narrative falls into a linear sequence: "And then ... and then ... and then" This is the pattern I am

familiar with from novels and autobiographies and it is the one I naturally slip into. But when I am not in the process of telling it, my life does not seem to be like that at all. Far from falling into a pattern it remains dark and confused, without discernible shape and hardly amenable to words.

From one point of view this is a state of weakness, even of anxiety, which writers need to escape from as quickly as possible. But from another point of view it is the stories they tell about themselves which make sense of their lives. They feel that as soon as they start to tell them they are moving from rather than toward themselves. In remembering the past, Said writes about memory and about how memory becomes transmuted, and corrupts or enhances its own contents. "You can't change the past" is a slogan he would not endorse. In his striking and capacious essay, "Between Worlds," he writes: "As the author of a book called *Beginnings*, I found myself drawn to my early days—as a boy in Jerusalem, Cairo and Dhour el Shweir, the Lebanese mountain village which I loathed but where for years my father took us to spend our summers. I found myself reliving the narrative quandaries of my early years, my sense of doubt and of being out of place, of always feeling myself standing in the wrong corner, in a place that seemed to be slipping away from me just as I tried to define or describe it."²⁶ Said's world is peopled by the living dead.

The temptations to deliver judgements based on personal conviction are strong. In "Cairo and Alexandria," Said makes a deliberate effort to avoid the often righteous tone of his ideological writing. It displays an unexpected tolerance of diverse peoples he encounters along the way, along with an empathy even for weakness of character and an appreciation of eccentricity and charm for their own sake. In a remarkable and unexpected passage, which I will give in full, Said cannot, in effect, repress his nostalgia for the colonial days and habits with an explicit reference to his Greek-Orthodox heritage.

The Consulate clerk, a cross Greek woman with better things to do than to speak to an unannounced passerby like myself told me I couldn't expect to come in just like

²⁶ Said, "Between Worlds" 5.

that. When I asked why not, she was slightly taken aback, and then more amiably suggested that I come back in an hour. I didn't leave, for fear that the consulate might disappear; I parked myself on the staircase with the Keeley and Sherrard translation of Cavafy's poetry. After an hour I was shown up to a spacious room in which the Cavafy memorial reposed, unused, unvisited, unconsulted, mostly uncared for. In the bookshelves there were about three hundred volumes of French, English, and Latin works, many of them annotated by the poet, all of them handsomely bound. In the centre of the room were several glass cases exhibiting manuscripts, correspondence between Cavafy and other writers (including Marguerite Yourcenar), first editions, and photographs. The bright young Egyptian attendant told me that the small group of chairs and tables came from the Pension Amir, Cavafy's last home in Alexandria. Other visitors to the city have reported that when they went to the Pension Amir, they were approached with offers from people who had "Cavafy furniture" to sell, so one cannot know whether the pieces at the Greek consulate belonged to the poet or not. Nevertheless the memorial's melancholy situation, hidden away in a city that has no other recollection of one of the greatest poets of our century, corresponded perfectly with what I had already discovered: that those few parts of Alexandria's colonial past which have not disappeared completely have been consigned to decay.²⁷

Said concludes by describing the amputations that Alexandria, a lonely city now, has suffered. The Alexandria that he knew was over: the city celebrated by European travellers with decadent tastes had vanished in the middle of the 1950s, one of the casualties of Arab nationalism which drowned the foreign communities in its wake. At his best—and most of "Cairo and Alexandria" sustains an impressive level of commentary based on remembrance—Said can be passionate and pungent. Summing up a visit to the Alexandria of his youth, he writes as follows:

²⁷ "Cairo and Alexandria" 11.

So forlorn is the city without its great foreign communities, so apparently without a mission, so reduced to minimal existence as a cut-rate resort that it filled me with sadness. Crowds mob once-attractive shopping streets like Sharia Sherif, intent on bargains from stores that have been divided and sub-divided into garishly over-stocked slits where cheap shoes and plastic beach toys hang from the ceiling in tasteless abundance. The one or two little islands of Levantine refreshment—the restaurant Santa Lucia, or Pastroudis, the coffee shop frequented half a century ago by Cavafy—are mostly empty.”²⁸

With yet greater awareness of decolonization, Edward al-Kharrat, another leading Arab writer, born in Alexandria in 1926, claims the city was not only, as Westerners like Cavafy and oddly enough Said have thought, the heir to western colonial glories, but also to the ancient spiritual treasures of the age-old, long-protracted Pharaonic era. In his two novels *City of Saffron* (1989) and *Girls of Alexandria* (1993), al-Kharrat displays his emotional and cultural bonds to his birthplace; Alexandria is “a blue-white marble city woven and rewoven by my heart upon whose frothing incandescent countenance my heart is ever floating.”²⁹ His aim is not just to recover fictional territory, but to express the repressed history of his region and culture. In doing so, al-Kharrat resists the incorporation of his *tur'ath* into the culture of the West—as has happened over so many centuries in the process of “Orientalism,” which made, as Said amply demonstrates, the Arab world exotic space for the western imagination.

In such circumstances writing assumes its basic task of bearing witness, telling the truth and subverting what the French resistance poet Pierre Seghers called the *fausse parole*, the lying word. “How Did They Kill My Grandmother?” Boris Slutsky’s poem asks: “I’ll tell you how they killed her.”³⁰ Al-Kharrat and Said become

²⁸ “Cairo and Alexandria” 10.

²⁹ Edward Idwar al-Kharrat, *City of Saffron*, trans. Frances Liardet (London: Quartet, 1989); *Girls of Alexandria*, trans. Frances Liardet (London: Quartet, 1993).

³⁰ Quoted in *The Atlas of Literature*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury (London: De Agostini Editions, 1996) 211.

recording angels; it is a traditional role for the intellectual as a representative figure. Writerly brotherliness has been one of the finest humane resistances: the human voice offered to combat the evils of colonialism, necessary or otherwise, of the weight of history imposed. The *nakbab* left a changed map of the Middle East: politically, morally, artistically. Most writing since has been done in its shadow. Generation after generation of writers returned to it as a subject, especially to the struggle for linguistic meaning with which it burdened a grotesque period in the history of the region. Much more typical is the daily stress on the randomness of suffering and mere human endurance, in Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness* and Hoda Barakat's *The Stone of Laughter*—and, even more arresting, the recurrent sense of standing up against all kinds of oppression: of labour by management, of faculty by administration, of female by male, of the dark races by the white. This is manifest in Said's distinguished career. His conscious determination to place his narrative outside history—to explore identity, memory, exile—may strike some as coy. Yet for me it is in his boldness, and his transcendence of boundaries that we can get a full sense of his trajectory.

For most of his life, Said has lived in exile. Such turbulence is simply too much for a human life, which is too short to absorb all the shocks and changes. Ironically, he insists on the irreducible mystery of life, a mystery no political or religious solution can unravel. And even though his bruised wariness is shared by other exiles, he maintains that exile has given him a detached, guarded scepticism—about notions of collective, nation, language. Such detachment, according to Said, is a “privilege” as well as a burden; the exile experiences life as “multiple, complex,” and full of illusions.³¹ Though it confers on him certain responsibilities of witness and engagement it also puts him in touch with a larger truth of loss: that life cannot be pushed back. Biology is not a reversible process. “Between Worlds” honestly manages to take us through Said's accomplishments: the burdens of history, the determining social effects of culture and lyrical modernism, love, dislocation, death, betrayal and the anxiety of the individual's responsibility for

³¹ Said, “The Mind of Winter: Reflections on Life in Exile,” *Harper's Magazine* Sept. 1984: 48.

his own fate and name. "With an unexpectedly Arab family name connected to an improbably British first name—my mother very much admired the Prince of Wales—I was an uncomfortably anomalous student all through my early years."³² The essay is also rich in intimate observation: Said rummaging in a pile of miscellaneous objects in the endeavour to find broken and discarded things (a picture of his grandfather on horseback, a small rug, an old Jerusalemite expression, a fragmentary story, an odd coin or medal, one photograph of his mother) he likes to restore and surround himself with (to his family's patient dismay) or, recounting the qualified pleasures of exile, including a knowledge that one's sleep will be disturbed only by nightmares, by dreams of being at "home" (in Palestine) and unable to get out, a nightmare common to many exiles, rather than by the midnight knock of the state police.

The energy that drives the *Said story* is best captured by Said himself in the following excerpt, which describes the feelings and thoughts of a Palestinian (*ghareeb*, a stranger, is the euphemism) longing to recapture a memory of *his* Palestine: a memory that is both voluntary and spontaneous, perceived through the language of the senses rather than the language of thought. It is triggered by smell, touch, sound and sight while it remains invisible, and, like snapshots from the past, it sneaks in and out of consciousness, acting like a hook by which he maintains a tactile but unspoken knowledge of his personal history. Thus in a penultimate passage of *After the Last Sky*, Said breaks into a litany of reminiscences—his family, the school, the show.

Memory: the summer of 1942—I was six—we rented a house in Ramallah. My father, I recall, was ill with high blood pressure and recovering from a nervous breakdown. I remember him as withdrawn and constantly smoking. My mother took me to a variety show at the local Friends school. During the second half I left the hall to go to the toilet, but for reasons I could not (and still do not) grasp, the boy-scout usher would not let me back in. I recall with ever-renewed poignancy the sud-

³² "Between Worlds" 3.

den sense of distance I experienced from what was familiar and pleasant—my mother, friends, the show; all at once the rift introduced into the cozy life I led taught me the meaning of separation, of solitude, and of anguished boredom.³³

The gist of this passage lies in Said's memory of Palestine as he knew it, which has remained with him all his life; it is such that in struggling to forget, it succeeds in fact to recall. Put differently, anytime memory is suppressed, it gains power. While we consider memory at times to be a matter of choice, it is not so readily determinable, in that it is easy to feel that life leaves too many traces or too few, scarcely ever the right emphasis: either fingerprints everywhere or total erasure. In such a mood, one's memory itself becomes a double agent, and we may be ready, like the hero of Orson Wells's *Mr. Arkadin*, to hire a private eye to explore our own past. This exploration Said does. The ability not to forget, the remembering makes his most recent work something of a *retour*, in Aimé Césaire's sense, to his native Palestine. This "return," in which the foldings of memory and identity converge, becomes an errantry that re-engages the author that is Said across the mediating distance he has travelled. He lives between worlds while making sense of his scattered life as a *ghareeb*. He, like Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, leaves his native land and seems destined not to go back. Yet he stays bound to the inventory of its streets and its place-names, as if in Jewish covenant: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."³⁴ An idea that sets him within a field of memory that precedes his *açala* (biographical authenticity, roots, basis): the idea of Palestine. He explains:

Palestine is central to the cultures of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism; Orient and Occident have turned it into a legend. There is no forgetting it, no way of overlooking it.... The sights, wares, and monuments of Palestine are

³³ Said, *After the Last Sky* 48.

³⁴ *The Book of Ester* in *The New American Bible* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1970) 507.

the objects of commerce, war, pilgrimage, cults, the subjects of literature, art, song, fantasy.... When we cross from Palestine into other territories, even if we find ourselves decently in new places, the old ones loom behind us as tangible and unreal as reproduced memory.³⁵

Palestine is much more than the land of lands; it is a metaphor for an expedition for all of us seeking the sources of our identities. The history of the Palestinian peoples is encased in its mystery and its historical significance. While it has been coveted by all colonial powers, it has been conquered by none. Similarly, or metaphorically, what matters for Said is that he, too, has not been vanquished. In spite of all that has happened to him and the scars he carries within himself as a result of dispossession, he has managed to survive with his memory intact. Memory of an ancient homeland. Memory where the idiom is not the burden of defeat, but the value of constant struggle. And when the reader awakes, he may exclaim, along with Roland Barthes, "c'est précisément parce que j'oublie que je lis."³⁶ Thus, writing, for Said, is an act of remembering, a faculty of "memory for forgetfulness," in Mahmoud Darwish's celebrated phrase, for retaining mental and physical impressions in, and for recalling them to, the mind. For the reader, the writer's act of remembering is transformed into a text, and his recollection becomes an act of memory, a remembrance *against* forgetfulness.

Memories originate in memory. We make sense of our lives through our senses—through what we see, taste and smell. It is scarcely surprising that Said, in writing about exile, comes up with stories prompted by the memories and associations that Palestine evokes in him. Speaking of his forthcoming memoir, he observes:

It's a text that I think exists only in performance and not something I can easily describe. But it would certainly be an attempt to connect ... the imaginary and fictional resonances. A lot is based on the following: in much of my childhood there was in a certain sense, an unknow-

³⁵ *After the Last Sky* 12.

³⁶ Roland Barthes, *Leçon* (Paris: Seuil, 1978) 13.

ing too much, for all kinds of reasons that have to do with my schooling and my family, the restrictions, the sense of belonging and a little series of compartments that led me into the colonial avenues and finally brought me to this country. There was a constant narrowing from the English system into the Western cultural orbit. Part of what I am trying to do now is to go back and to open up the things that I didn't know then, to see if I can do that, since I can only do it through speculation and memory and imagination.... I want to try and do the Cairo-Jerusalem-Beirut axis, which is the one I grew up in, in a pre-political way in which all the political realities of the present nevertheless are somehow there in a figured or implicit form, held in suspension.³⁷

The *Memoir*, like the rest of Said's writings, is meant to be a lesson in how stories should evolve—a reminder that well-wrought stories not only are rooted in memory but also are there to be taken seriously; they need have no moral except the one that teaches you to view the world not as a place to dash about and moralize by yourself but as one to be shared with others; they need not call us to some higher order except for the one that gives the intellectual the chance to be a rebel against the hidden and open pressures and manipulations, a doubter of systems, of power and its incantations. It is also meant to give him a chance to make sense of his life. And that is plenty.

What is at work, at least in some uses of the power of remembering, may be seen from a close look at *After the Last Sky*, Said's evocation of "Palestinian lives" and his own position among them: "A part of something is for the foreseeable future going to be better than all of it. Fragments over wholes. Restless nomadic activity over the settlements of held territory. Criticism over resignation. The Palestinian as self-consciousness in a barren plain of investments and consumer appetites. The heroism of anger over the begging bowl, limited independence over the status of clients. Attention, alertness, focus. To do as others do, but somehow to stand

³⁷ Wicke and Sprinker, "Interview with Edward Said," *Edward Said: A Critical Reader* 227.

apart. To tell your story in pieces, *as it is*.”³⁸ An essay about being deprived of a home, the book is structured, as are all his books and articles on Palestine, in brief, clear-cut episodes. It crams into a short space a large number of diverse lives, and does so by cherishing each encounter with uprooted Palestinians *f-al-da'khil* (inside) and *f-al-qa'rij* (outside) as if it were a short story, shaping it, giving it a turn or a twist, as evidenced in the one about, among others, the former mayor of Jerusalem and his wife, in exile in Jordan. Behind them, a photographic mural of the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem occupies the entire wall of their living room. “The collaboration of image and text here,” Tom Mitchell writes, “is not simply one of the exile whose memories and mementos, the tokens of personal and national identity, may ‘seem ... like encumbrances.’ The mural seems to tell us that the former mayor and his wife *cherish* these encumbrances, but their faces do not suggest that this in any way reduces their weight.”³⁹ Nobody reading *After the Last Sky* could mistake it for an attempt to give a comprehensive or balanced view of its characters. In fact, Said is discarding some of the storyteller’s traditional concerns. In doing so, he brings to his work the technique of a novelist. The four chapters—miniature-like in their composition—are reminiscences of the old country that read like fiction. He leaves out explanations of how he got from one place (Jerusalem) to another (Beirut). The voice the reader hears is elliptical, pungent; and the eye is that of someone clearly drawn to the unexpected, the contradictory, the sharp-edged. There is autobiography but no personal confession. There is reportage, history *and* storytelling.

After the Last Sky slides from fact into fiction. Consequently, the form that Said has chosen for this *travail à deux* between his words and Jean Mohr’s photographs does not “tell a consecutive story”; its form is “unconventional, hybrid and fragmentary” and is “quite consciously designed” as an “alternative mode of expression to the one usually encountered in the media, in the works of social sciences, in popular fiction.” The result is that everything in it moves insofar as “no clear and simple narrative is adequate to the com-

³⁸ *After the Last Sky* 150.

³⁹ W.J.T. Mitchell, “The Ethics of Form in the Photographic Essay,” *Afterimage* Jan. 1989: 11.

plexity of our experience.”⁴⁰ The photo-essay therefore becomes a work not about exile but about migration: objects migrate, people migrate, archaeology and origin begin to shift uneasily as strange ideas about man’s ancestry are floated. The essay itself circles back to its accumulated sources, the form of the author’s notebooks, from which extracts are pillaged, juxtaposed, rearranged in the manner of a collage or a long modernist poem. It will not and cannot settle its materials, mainly because it is the most jewelled of Said’s works on *his* Palestine. The paragraphs are tiny. The sentences are short, clenched and lapidary. There are words and arcane pieces of information as well as pictures of Palestinians as they go about their daily chores. “The relation of photographs and writing in *After the Last Sky*,” Mitchell explains, “is consistently governed by the dialectic of *exile* and its overcoming, a double relation of estrangement and reunification.”⁴¹ The essay is also Said’s most horror-filled: there are beatings, torture, deportations, killings. The cruelty of his material oppressed him. He had not found it difficult to expand a point or add a story, nor had he found it difficult to cut. The reader is made to feel that nothing was slapped down; nothing was provisional.⁴²

Ever since 1992, when he journeyed back to Palestine with his family, Said’s visits have been more frequent. His summer 1996 visit made him, however, realize that he is no longer welcome there. “Feisal Hussein was expecting us at his Ramallah office,” he writes in “In Arafat’s Palestine”:

we headed north again with some apprehension. I had no idea what our reception would be like. I sometimes suspected (though I was usually able to banish the thought from my consciousness) that Arafat, or one of his over-zealous security people, might mean me some physical harm, or that they would try to detain me in some fashion.⁴³

⁴⁰ *After the Last Sky* 6.

⁴¹ “The Ethics of Form” 11.

⁴² I have dealt at greater length with these issues in “The Critic as Dis/Placed Intelligence: The Case of Edward Said,” *Diacritics* 21 (Spring 1991): 63–74, and “Counternarratives, Recoveries, Refusals,” *Boundary 2* 25 (Summer 1998): 205–57.

⁴³ Said, “In Arafat’s Palestine,” *London Review of Books* 5 Sept. 1996: 13.

The essay is a counter-text that runs the risk of slippage from the oppositional to the surreptitiously collusive position he has embraced since the signing of Oslo I and Oslo II. The narrative that tells us of his visit to Palestine, following an invitation from his son, Wadie, who worked as a volunteer in Ramallah at an NGO called the Democracy and Workers' Rights Center (DWRC), is split between a feeling of belonging and another of rejection. At its heart lies the unresolved conflict between the colonial master and the colonized, which the mystery at the centre of its plot both figures out and conceals. The essay's discourse therefore establishes a dynamic between the unspoken and the "spoken for"—on the one hand the silenced colonial subject rendered inadmissible to discourse, on the other that discourse itself which keeps telling the story again and again on its own terms. Here is how Said puts it:

The regular confrontation of a sullen, almost impersonal authority directed at one's personal freedom, in which one can only acquiesce without complaint—this was the reality that prevailed throughout the Middle East from my father's generation under Ottoman and British rule to mine under Israeli and undemocratic Arab rule. Now my son was experiencing it. Each generation seemed to hand it on to the next.⁴⁴

"In Arafat's Palestine" cannot unbind all its historical ties to Palestine. Conversely, its ability to retrace the unseen and the un-said of an oppressed people renders it peculiarly well-adapted to articulating the untold stories of oppression. The emphasis on the "unspeakable," both in the intensive sense of nameless horrors perpetrated by the Israeli army, and in the play of the narrative structure itself, with its many folds, stories within stories, secret confessions and general difficulty in getting the story told at all, is great. One of the most difficult encounters between colonizer and colonized, as provided by Said, runs as follows:

Wadie only spoke to [Israeli soldiers] if they addressed him; and invariably he did so in English. "What should I

⁴⁴ "In Arafat's Palestine" 12.

say?" I asked him. "Don't say anything until they speak to you. Don't even show your passport until they ask," he answered. I let him be the guide in this, except for the one time that a soldier appeared on my side of the car. "Passport," he asked, "Where are you from?" to which I almost replied "from here" but prudently settled for "New York" instead. "OK," he said noncommittally, and nodded us through.⁴⁵

As a result, the *Said story* does get through, but in a muffled form, with a distorted time sense and accompanied by a kind of despair about any direct use of language. The essay is a passionate, seductive and obdurate celebration of the plight of the Palestinians under Arafat. Its form is semi-autobiographical, and in the tales of family pride and tribal loyalty, there is a good deal of sentimentality and nostalgia, offset by violence and counter-violence. Its primary concerns are the fatal flaws of the PLO's bargain with Israel as well as the banality of working-class deprivation among poor Palestinians, depicted with an energy that is more visceral than intellectual. Perhaps this gutsy defence of his own position was Said's only tolerable option, a last-stand testimony, written in the summer of 1996, six months before the Israeli semi-withdrawal from Hebron.

Said's language of passion captures the siege mentality that dominates the area. A string of endearing family portraits and actual friends forms a fragile archipelago of insular and would-be innocent lives overwhelmed by the rising tide of Jewish and Arab fundamentalisms. At times, one senses that Said has his back to the wall to summon up a family history, nowhere more battered and engaging than in the evocation of the father, whose dislike for Jerusalem had a disarming combination of panache and pathos.

My father spent his life trying to escape these objects, "Jerusalem" chief among them—the actual place as much as its reproduced and manufactured self. Born in Jerusalem, as were his parents, grandparents, and all his family

⁴⁵ "In Arafat's Palestine" 10.

back in time to a distant vanishing point, he was a child of the Old City who traded with tourists in bits of the true cross and crowns of thorn. Yet he hated the place; for him, he often said, it meant death. Little of it remained with him except a fragmentary story or two, an odd coin or medal, one photograph of his father on horseback, and two small rugs.⁴⁶

Said, too, voices the same discomfort with the City of Jerusalem:

As the Holy Land's nerve centre, and the likeliest source of future unrest, Jerusalem has never been especially attractive to me, although I was born there, as were my father, his father and several generations before them. There is something unyielding about the place that encourages intolerance; all sorts of absolute religious and cultural claims emanate from the city, most of them involving the denial or downgrading of the others.⁴⁷

The sting in the tale here brings a studied and cutting reversal of the terms *born* and *intolerance*, as Said presents an exile's view of the reality at hand. And yet these heady family memories form a clear, and, most might say, dangerous anachronism when seen alongside the bloody actuality of occupation. They establish, too, the America-Palestine axis that gives the essay its backbone and the conflict its cutting colonial edge. The future is now the subject:

After three-quarters of a year there Wadie now feels that he too is not moving forward. The daily tensions and uncertainties have accumulated; frustration turns into neck and head pains, insomnia, weight loss. My wife and I think it is time for him to leave, and he is coming round to that view. "But," he told me on our way to the airport, "I will always come back."⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *After the Last Sky* 14.

⁴⁷ "In Arafat's Palestine" 10.

⁴⁸ "In Arafat's Palestine" 14.

The road to freedom for those Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank seems clear. *They* are the ones who must bring about the changes for the better. Said must continue to live in exile while articulating the testimony of lived suffering. His sense of belonging, his pride in Palestine's heroism and his pain at its defeats, are felt from a distance. And ultimately, "In Arafat's Palestine" stands as a valediction, a leave-taking that is both private and public. Thus, Said, even though divided between his sense of loyalty to both his native Palestine and his adopted home (America), is against a supposed "end of history," which alternates with an apparently irremediable loss of a *wataán* (homeland). "I think I needed the chance metaphorically to bury the dead, and, what with the large number of funerary associations for me, what had been Palestine was indeed a mournful place." However, the *Said story* can also now serve to favour new regroupings, new questionings and new exchanges. "But I can feel and sometimes actually see a different future as I couldn't before."⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Said, "Palestine, Then and Now," *Harper's Magazine* Aug. 1993: 55.