



Title: Paradoxical Citizenship: Edward Said

Author: (Ed.) Silvia Nagy-Zekmi.

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Reviewed by: Dr. Klejda Mulaj

Senior Researcher

Gulf Research Center

This volume offers a theoretical critique of the work and lifetime achievements of Edward Said (1935-2003) – a distinguished intellectual, teacher, writer and artist – who dedicated his life to the concerns of those who lacked power, who were weak and unrepresented. At the same time, the volume is intended to be a homage to Edward Said showing the profound impact of his work.

Overall, the volume presents a balanced analysis of Said's thought including contributions from Said critics such as the Israeli critic Ella Shohat, who sees Said's work as flawed and partial, and Ranjan Ghosh and Robert Ficociello who locate Said within a broad analysis of the influences of contemporary Western theory and his resistance to it.

The volume opens with a neatly written and well articulated Introduction by Gareth Griffiths, which provides a comprehensive overview of the papers of the volume and a "portrait" of Said's thought and his achievements. Edward Said was a man who defied easy characterizations. He sympathized with dispossessed Palestinian youth and publicly threw a rock across the border between Lebanon and Israel (an act which was used by his opponents on the Right to accuse him for supporting terrorism). At the same time, Edward Said continuously asserted his belief in a common humanity, one which might both acknowledge racism and discrimination, and simultaneously move beyond it. Said was a champion of the need to see Western European derived cultures as the source of a profoundly discriminatory discourse which homogenized much of the rest of the world as the Other. Yet, Edward Said was also an exponent and champion of the powerful cultural and aesthetic achievements of Western Europe, a lifelong lover and practitioner of its music, and a frank admirer of its classic art and literature. The essays of Kiyoko Magome, John Hawley and Yifen Beus deal with the arts with which Said's work engaged, namely photography and music.

Said had the unique distinction of being targeted both by the American Right and by many of his own people when he refused to endorse the Oslo Accord and continued to champion a solution which was inclusive of the needs of both the Palestinian and Israelis in a shared national space. As Griffiths explains, Said's refusal of the Oslo Accord was grounded on his belief that the Palestinian state envisaged in that Accord would be too weak

to resist neo-colonial forces, and too partial in its construction. Said conceived that Accord as being postulated on an implicit acceptance of racism which led to the expulsion of the Palestinians by the Israelis, in the first place. The leadership of such a state – in his view – would incorporate the very ideas of nation and state, based on fixed concepts of ethnicity and culture, which the Palestinian Resistance to Zionist oppression was meant to resist.

Gilbert Doha's essay also embraces the theme of ethnic identity as the core element in nation building. Doha grounds his approach on ethnicity, i.e., the strong commitment to ethnic identity as a solid foundation for a new nation in Cameroon. He insists that ethnic diversity does not always lead to the hatred, or eradication of the Other. On the contrary, in a continent made up of numerous ethnic groups, the strategies used to locate oneself in one's ethnic group while participating in the new nation building leads to what, paraphrasing Edward Said, he calls "the ambivalent identity." This consists in a free development of both ethnic and national identity. In this way, the ambivalent identity becomes dynamic in the sense that Said views the paradoxical identity of the colonized.

Understanding and characterizing how Said fitted into the Arab intellectual world and into the Western academic discourses with which he engaged is a concern of several essays in this volume, such as those of Gauri Viswanathan, John Ochoa, and Laura Rice and Karim Hamdy. Edward Said, a Palestinian, Christian Arab, resident for much of his childhood in Egypt and Lebanon and for most of his adult life in the United States, was the example par excellence of "insider outsider" of our time. He was one of those who understood – in the words of John Ochoa – that "the more one is able to leave one's cultural home, more easily is one able to judge it ... with the spiritual detachment and the generosity necessary for true vision."

Other essays in the volume (such as those of Rasha Ramzy, Sarah Fulford, Tamara Silvia Wagner, and Nabil Boundraa) address the degree to which the "insider-outsider" dichotomy permeates Said's work and creates a space for a rereading of the Western culture from inside, especially so its classical and canonical texts.

Tamara Silvia Wagner engages in a rereading of the nineteenth century Occidental canonical culture from an outside "Orientalist" perspective. She argues that the resulting so-called Occidentalism is seen by some as a resistant practice which offers both a means of recognizing how the Other played a role in its own construction within the discourse of the dominant and a force of overt resistance. This is so because by playing back the force of construction against its oppressor the new Occidentalism may act to engage the dominant in a reversal of power roles. She suggests that Occidentalism is a strategy of great complexity with its whole purpose, of revenge or revision, being hotly debated.

Steve Barfield considers how the Occidentalist obsession with the Orient, especially as a realm for locating Western fantasies of power and sexuality has now entered the space of the nostalgic. The ongoing power of Imperial India as a symbol of lost glory continues to haunt contemporary British media, even as Britain declines in real power and is increasingly marginalized within a larger European Union. Barfield shows how this sets up the conditions for a reversal strategy employed by both diasporic intellectuals and popular cultures in Britain, and how this works to address issues of location and belonging in contemporary British Indian theatre companies.

A group of essays in this volume explore the ways in which Said's work can be employed to engage spaces beyond the Middle Eastern world through which his own work is exemplified. For instance, Hernán Taboada's contribution aims to apply Said to the issues raised by Latin American representations and to respond to Said's assertion that there was a special character to Spanish orientalist thought, resulting from the peculiar intimacies of Spanish and Islamic cultures in the period of the high Moorish civilizations of the southern Iberian peninsula and beyond. Taboada explores the process by which peoples in Latin America were processed through an oriental frame. His analysis reveals how the images of the Orient imported to Latin American contexts could

migrate, alter and yet carry a consistent baggage of prejudice and effectiveness as a creator and sustainer of difference and subalternity.

Lidan Lin's essay also explores the ways in which Said's work can open up reading of social and cultural texts beyond the geographical limits of his direct concern with the Middle East. Lin explores how Orientalism affected the representation of cultures in Southeast and East Asia. He also gives a detailed account of the role of cultures of the East on artistic and intellectual life in the West.

Matthew Abraham's essay examines Said's lifelong search and articulation of a "rhetoric of resistance" that joined the political resistance of the Palestinian experience to the intellectual resistance of the exiled critic. Abraham reiterates the daily struggle Edward Said waged against the misrepresentations by certain "experts." For instance, the ease with which Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein are connected highlights the guiding assumption of Orientalism, namely the essentialist view of foreign – in this case Arab – people. In Abraham's view, this is "the intellectual failure of Orientalism – its pernicious tendency to subject geographic areas and its peoples to the most debilitating assumptions and stereotypes."

Being the most comprehensive collection of papers – to date – to explore Edward Said's work, this volume will be of great interest to academic circles and beyond.