

**Adel Iskandar and Hakem Rustom (ed.), *Edward Said: A Legacy of Emancipation and Representation* (University of California Press, 2010).**

*Edward Said: A Legacy of Emancipation and Representation* is a commemorative volume about Said who, according to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, had such ‘a passion for justice’ that it ‘allowed nothing to deter him in its pursuit’.<sup>1</sup> After an ‘Introduction’ and an introductory essay, the book is made up of 28 essays or interviews dealing with theory, Palestine/Israel and music.

Joseph Massad writes about Said’s habit of speaking ‘truth to power’ and his ideas regarding ‘affiliative forms of intellectual belonging and community in the expansive sense of the term, forsaking filiative forms as too limiting’ (23).

In her interview, Spivak talks about Said with passion, especially mentioning deconstruction: ‘Mind you ... you see that Said was not completely impervious to the seductions of deconstruction [and deconstructionists] ... he did not completely put them aside as nihilists’ (58).

Michael Wood deals with Said’s philosophical ideas about beginnings in contrast to the idea about ‘origin’, the latter characterized as passive and the former as active, one as innovative, creative and non-linear, the other as restrictive.

Laura Nader’s categorises Said as someone who initiated a dialogue between cultures, civilizations and discourses emphasizing the need for the ‘double gaze’.

Nicholas B. Dirks writes about the reception of Said among anthropologists, who ‘often accepted the importance of Said’s criticisms, only to counter with the charge that he essentialised Orientalism as much as it had essentialised the Orient and that he left no role for the true Orient to emerge in any account or to speak back’ (89).

Timothy Brennan discusses Said’s contribution to the field of Comparative Literature and comments: ‘In a generous and accretive idiom ... he methodically crafted a literary discourse that displaced texts from their textuality, recasting them in the sensual mode of the intellectual act’ (103).

Denise de Caires Narain examines the relevance of Said for postcolonial women’s texts:

His insights continue to provide resonant clues for reading across difference and extending affiliative possibilities in our own critical practices as postcolonial feminists. In that process, we can also affiliate Said closer to home. (139)

Katherine Callen King deals with the fictionalization of Said by Soueif in *The Map of Love*. King points out the fact that Soueif lets us see Said ‘as a recognizable generic hero fighting the enemies of *human* civilization’ (154).

Jahan Ramazani deals with Said’s views of the cultural decolonisation as the act of ‘reclaiming, renaming and reinhabiting the land’ and as the act of ‘reclaiming and re-creating a communal history’ (161).

<sup>1</sup> University of California Press, Press release.

Sabry Hafez discusses the relevance of Said for the contemporary Arab world pointing out Said's popularity, and that Said is 'the product of the best strand of the rational, liberal humanitarian Western culture' (171).

Anastasia Valassopoulos writes on Said's views of Arab popular culture pointing out that, 'Said emphasises and promotes an appreciation of Arab culture in which the *Arabness* of that culture (read a particular formulation of politics and/or socioeconomics) is not its defining principle' (192).

Rokus de Groot points out that Said, as a secular humanist, could not idealise or idolise music as 'absolute' as the direct expression of the 'divine' or 'World Soul' and rather valorised polyphony.

In Hakem Rustom's interview of Daniel Barenboim, the Israeli musician, who with Said co-conducted the West-Eastern Divan Workshop, the interviewee talks about the person of Edward Said, his role as a Palestinian activist and as a musician and stresses Said's humanism and pragmatism, 'which was much more difficult for Israelis to deal with' (236).

Adri Imesis writes of Said's view that the intellectual has to maintain an arms-length distance from the 'political/nationalist establishment, mainstream media, religious order, and corporate interest' to nurture a 'culture of dissent' (247).

Avi Shlaim writes that Said stressed the fact that 'the world must see', ... that 'the Palestinian idea is an idea of living together, of respect for others, of mutual recognition between Palestinian and Israeli' (282).

Bill Ashcroft deals with Said's role as a theorist and as an activist for Palestine focusing on his deconstruction of Orientalism as well as the Western media which has perpetuated Orientalism. Said wanted the Palestinians to intervene in this field but was frustrated by the ineptitude and lack of vision of the Palestinian leadership.

Ghada Karmi articulates Said's identity thus: 'as one of their [the Palestinian's] subtlest, cleverest, and most loyal fighters, the foremost cultural bridge that connected and explained their cause to Western sensibilities' (305).

Jacqueline Rose discusses Said's attempts at dialogue on Palestine. Said paraphrased Israel Shahak, Holocaust survivor, with panache thus: 'Once a piece of land is confiscated, it belongs to the 'Land of Israel' and is officially restricted for the exclusive use of Jews ... no other country then designates this [confiscated] land for the sole use of one portion of its citizens' (314).

Ilan Pappé deals with Said's impact on post-Zionist thinkers in Israel, who like the post-colonial thinkers are not a homogeneous group. Pappé enumerates Said's impact in the following fields:

the analysis of Israel as an 'Orientalist' state, the examination of the dialectical relationship between power and academic knowledge within the local context, the introduction of the postcolonial prism into the study of the society, and the critique of the present peace process and the adoption of an alternative way forward. (322)

Ella Shohat deals with the history of translations of Said's works into Hebrew and writes that 'the reception of Said's work in Israel ... has taken place within an institutional context largely shaped by Orientalist-Zionist ideologies' (337).

Marc H. Ellis deals with the concept of 'exile' and 'home' within and outside the framework of Judaism. Said confronted the obfuscations of what he considered 'academic mysticism' with his concept of 'home'. That is why, in reply to Ari Shavit's observation that he sounded 'very Jewish' Said replied, 'Of course, I am the last Jewish intellectual. ... I'm a Jewish-Palestinian' (364).

In his interview Chomsky speaks frankly about Said the man and the intellectual including Said's not so praiseworthy desire 'to be part of the respectable intellectual world' (377), but the impression the interview as a whole gives is one of loss.

Robert Spencer discusses in detail the idea of 'exile' and quotes Said: "Marginality and homelessness"... are to be brought to an end, so that more, and not fewer, people can enjoy the benefits of what has for centuries been denied the victims of race, class or gender' (389).

Abdirahman A. Hussein encapsulates Said's critique of Western metaphysics and theology, thus: 'In other words, he considered modern, post-Enlightenment ideologies to be as fundamentalist, metaphysical, and destructive as anything that preceded them' (426).

R. Radhakrishnan focuses on Said's humanism and points out that even in his late work, Said exhibits the qualities of 'intransigence and a sort of transgressiveness' (448).

Asha Varadharajan deals with the imaginative trajectory of Said which enabled him 'to speak the language of the unrequited' (59).

Lecia Rosenthal deals with Said's late works where Said reaches a kind of Beckettian conclusion: 'And "I conclude with the thought that the intellectual's provisional home is the domain of an exigent, resistant, intransigent art into which, alas, one can neither retreat nor search for solutions..."' (483).

W.J.T. Mitchell deals with Said's *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* and chronicles Said's intellectual development and characterises Said's critical practice as 'secular divination' which was canny rather than uncanny.

Benita Perry deals with contradictions between Said's 'two lives as a literary critic and an engaged public figure' (499), concluding that 'we can hear his own late utterances not as the voice of retreat from persistent and unresolved contradictions but as that of righteous indignation at a disgraceful world' (509).

The book as a whole looks at Said from different perspectives. Sometimes, the angles are opposites. Sometimes, they are complementary. In short, Said is presented as a versatile genius – an exceptional theorist, activist, public intellectual and musician.

### **Golam Gaus Al-Quaderi**