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The Place of Servants in Edward Said's *Out of Place*

Abstract I: This article reflects on Edward Said's memoir, *Out of Place*, and the ways that in constructing a sense of the intellectual-in-exile it elides other affective shaping forces in his life, particularly that of the servants. That the most expressly emotional encounter offered in the text is placed in the preface and involves the Said family's *suffragi* (butler), invites a reading that attends to the more fleeting signs of the presence of servants within the text itself. The article concludes by suggesting that tracing the elision of the servants enables a more complex, if less austere, representation of the intellectual.

Abstract II: Questo saggio riflette sui ricordi autobiografici di Edward Said in *Out of Place*, tradotto in italiano con il titolo *Sempre nel posto sbagliato*, e su come, nell'elaborare la figura dell'intellettuale in esilio, la narrazione rimuova altre forze formative importanti per la vita dell'autore dal punto di vista affettivo, in particolare quelle provenienti dai domestici. Che l'incontro più esplicitamente emotivo offerto nel testo sia situato nella prefazione e coinvolga il *suffragi* (maggiordomo) della famiglia di Said incoraggia una lettura che dia peso ai segni più effimeri della presenza dei domestici all'interno del testo stesso. L'articolo suggerisce che l'analisi della rimozione di queste figure 'familiari' permette di rintracciare una più complessa, sebbene meno austera, rappresentazione dell'intellettuale.

> All families invent their parents and children, give each of them a story, character, fate, and even language. There was always something wrong with how I was invented and meant to fit in with the world of my parents and four sisters (Said 1999: 3).

So opens Edward Said's *Out of Place: A Memoir*, alerting us to the idea, that, as Doring puts it, "autobiographies do things with words", performing the self in a process of self-*formation* by self-*formulation*. What kind of performance of the self does Said offer us in *Out of Place*? Immediate responses, as Ioana Luca demonstrates, focused on Said's role as a public figure in Palestinian politics, "Without exception, the book was initially analyzed either in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict or in relation to Said's commitment to the Palestinian cause, as its main representative and spokesman in the United States" (Luca 2006: 131). Weiner's infamous accusation that Said overstated his claim to a Palestinian identity in *OP* has been thoroughly rejected and most recent discussions veer away from his reductive emphasis on authenticity. These readings emphasize instead a more nuanced understanding of 'identity' and acknowledge the connections that *OP* suggests between personal, lived displacements and the idea of the intellectual-as-exile so central to Said's work as a critic. Bart Moore-Gilbert argues that this more sympathetic reading allows Said's autobiography to resonate more widely as a biography of the archetypal intellectual, in a manner that he suggests leads "Turner to claim that *Out of Place* is primarily an allegory of the conditions desirable for the modern intellectual to operate effectively, if not, as Confino claims, a 'parable for the modern, or postmodern condition'" (Moore-Gilbert 2009: 121).

Said himself was careful to characterize *OP* as memoir, rather than autobiography, "because I'm not really a public figure" (Said 1998: 78); but, as Huddart argues, this is unrealistic "given the fact of Said's status as one of the

last public intellectuals" (Huddart 2008: 45). Said's preference for memoir over autobiography indicates both modesty and a desire to side-step the expectations of comprehensive and authoritative coverage associated with the latter. Memoir allows a more circumscribed framework for self-revelation and Said opts for an account of his life focused largely on key educational experiences and institutions, leading up to his success as a literary scholar at Harvard. This approach, Confino argues, gives his eventual emergence as an intellectual an air of inevitability:

> In the story of his life, his childhood thus functions as the origins of the adult intellectual. In an age when grand narratives are debunked, especially by literary critics, Said has provided a one-directional, purposeful, grand narrative of his entire life — his personal and professional life, his childhood, and his adulthood — as understood in similar sets of metaphors — vulnerability, heroism, and out of placeness (Confino 2000: 188).

Confino reminds us of Said's definition of the intellectual as an individual "with a vocation for the art of representing" (Confino 2000: 181) and notes the way the very first sentence of this memoir, with its Proustian cadences, indicates the author's immersion in literary culture. The point here is not that literary mediation compromises the 'truth' of the text (or of Said's telling) but that it requires a reading attuned to its construction 'as a text', including the metaphors that structure it and plot the self's journey to adulthood - and its omissions and elisions. I share Confino's sense of frustration about the neat trajectory *OP* constructs from schoolboy to intellectual and the way this appears to necessitate the elision of so much else.

The epigraph to Confino's essay includes the following from Said's *Representations of the Intellectual*, "There is no such thing as a private intellectual…Nor is there only a public intellectual…There is always the personal inflection and the private sensibility, and those give meaning to what is being

said or written" (Confino 2000: 182). What Confino implies in his discussion is that Said's memoir allows rather limited access to the "personal inflection and private sensibility" that shaped him as an intellectual, so focused is he on establishing himself as a Palestinian intellectual in exile. Two moments in *OP* provide examples of the "over-intellectualizing" (Confino 2000: 187) that Confino notes. The first is when the young Said is reprimanded publicly by his English teacher, Miss Clark, at the Cairo School for American Children (CSAC): she tells the class that Edward has behaved abominably and disgraced the whole class on their field trip by his lack of attention (lagging behind, fidgeting, biting his nails). The second is when 12-year-old Edward is caught stealing a hot-dog from the campfire at summer school in Maine, and is branded "sneaky" by the 17-year-old counsellor, Murray, and threatened with eviction if he doesn't "shape up, and act like the rest of the fellows" (Said 2000: 136). Commenting on these shaming events, Confino says:

> But did Miss Clark really mean to execute an Orientalist humiliation? Sometimes a scolding is only a scolding, and a hot-dog is only a hot-dog. Not every childhood episode is loaded with significant political meanings. In taking his childhood with such self-importance, he provides a story that at times lacks the spontaneity and mischievousness of childhood, creating at times an aura of over-intellectualizing that leads to pretentiousness (Confino 2000:187).

Whatever Miss Clark or Murray as individuals *intended*, the power of their words lies not just in their individual enunciations but that they are saturated with cultural meanings that have an over-determining authority in those contexts. Even though both moments are invoked briefly in *OP*, it is striking that Said recalls them as moments that seem to crystallize the *difference* he represents. And it is an *embodied* difference that is emphasized: fidgeting and biting of nails in the first and the command to "shape up, and act like the other fellows" in the

second, imply an unruly body that betrays the young Edward's best intentions to fit in. So, to my mind, there *is* a great deal at stake here: sometimes a scolding and a hot-dog really *are* politically significant. And they are emotionally and affectively evocative too.

What allows these moments to be read as over-intellectualized and over-politicized is that Said gives us few details of their immediate, *felt* impact before summarizing and containing them. So he asserts that the power of Miss Clark's comments was that they concentrated other comments that surrounded him at home and at GPS "into one unpleasant steel container, into which I was placed, like Jell-O poured into a mould" (Said 2000: 86). Later on, both moments take on a greater significance for Said when he recognizes the shame of Stendhal's Julien Sorel (under the priest's excoriating gaze) as his own, "I felt myself to be a shameful outsider to the world that Miss Clark and Murray wished to exclude me from" (Said 2000: 137). In other words, these moments, appear to have taken shape and been abstracted out of a wider range and more general climate of humiliations (not necessarily comprised exclusively his own personal experiences) that Said retrospectively processes through literary filters which he now – at the time of narration – names as 'orientalist'. Throughout *OP*, there is a strangely pristine aura to the narrative which is seldom snagged by the prickle of something acutely and particularly *felt*. It is as if the rather glacial control that Said describes as dictating decorum at home combined with the force of a colonial education focused on moulding native minds and bodies into "the proper distribution of sentiments and desires" (Stoler 2006: 2) continues to operate as a powerfully constraining force on Said's own accounting of them in the memoir itself.

In the epigraph Confino takes from Said's *Representations of the Intellectual*, he omits the words indicated in italics here, "There is no such thing as a private intellectual, *since the moment you set down words and then publish them you have entered the public world*" (Said 1994b: 9). If publication

inevitably propels the written word, whatever the "personal inflection" or "private sensibility" informing it, into the public, then Said seems acutely aware of this, managing his memoir with care and offering guarded glimpses of the deeply affecting experiences he encounters en route to becoming a public intellectual. For Confino, this results in, "a sense of lack of contingency, of overselectivity, to his story, and of things one would like to know, but which he does not discuss (first among them, his relations with his four sisters)" (Confino 2000:188). To my mind there is an even more evocative elision in *OP*: Said's relationships with the various servants that the family employs. For the brief but regular references to servants that punctuate the text suggest emotional and affective currents that are all the more intriguing because they are never scrutinized as a significant force in Said's account of his life.

The book opens with a brisk assertion that "the over-riding sensation I had was of always being out of place", caught in the tension between Arab and European cultures encapsulated in his name, "Edward", a foolishly English name yoked forcibly to the unmistakably Arabic family name Said" (Said 2000: 3). But the family life at home described in the early chapters suggests a regime with tightly prescribed codes and manners, where everything and everyone has a precisely designated place. The area of Cairo in which the Saids lived, Zamalek, is described as "a sort of colonial outpost whose tone was set by Europeans with whom we had little or no contact: we built our own world within it" (Said 2000: 22). And yet many of the habits and routines that shape their world appear European, if not Victorian, in tone. When not in school, Edward is expected to spend his time purposefully; the loitering and fibbing of which he is accused, are seen as a worrying lack of direction. The family's leisure time is organized around a routine of "minutely plotted excursions" (Said 2000: 24) that Edward's father, Wadie, insists on filming and which Edward finds excruciatingly staged. Said lists a series of "remedial therapies" including "piano lessons, gymnastics, Sunday School, riding classes, boxing" at whose heart were parents who "determined

my time minute by minute" (Said 2000: 28). These activities, many of them physical, resonate with a familiar English Public School ethos with its emphasis on the importance of disciplining bodies to achieve a properly restrained and civil sensibility. As Ann Stoler argues, under the "racial grammars" of colonial regimes, "certain groups are imagined to have more limited emotive capacities or are endowed with more intense displays of affective expression" (Stoler 2006: 2).

Added to all this, Said describes his parents' concerns about his bodily imperfections: large hands; big chest; too much hair and some of it of the wrong kind; a "long tongue", indicating a lack of verbal decorum; a weak face, especially the mouth – requiring exercises which Said admits doing until he is well past his twenties; poor physical co-ordination and posture so that a back brace was prescribed – and worn. Just before he turns fourteen, Said's father confronts him with a pair of his (Edward's) worn but clean pyjamas, evidence that he has not been having wet dreams and must therefore be masturbating. This last example perhaps provides the most obvious indication of the way the "moral and the physical shaded into each other" (Said 2000: 68) in these regimes of parental control. Later in *OP*, Said remarks on the impossibility of certain kinds of conversation, "my father's past, his money […] Palestine, the simmering inter-familial disagreements were – like sex – off limits to me, a set of issues I couldn't raise or in any way allude to" (Said 2000: 128). Space, too, is demarcated carefully: when his sisters reach puberty, their bedrooms become strictly out of bounds to Edward. He is warned against getting too close to people on buses or trams and against eating or drinking anything from a shop or stand and "above all to regard our home and family as the only refuge in that vast sty of vices around us" (Said 2000: 28). Accompanying his father on the drive to work, the mood and conversation would begin in a chatty, domestic tenor but cease abruptly as they left Zamalek and crossed the bridge to the mainland. The drivers, Faris and Aziz, could only be chatted with when his father was absent. If

Arabic was prohibited decisively at school, it was also restricted at home and its most colloquial form could only be spoken with servants and drivers.

The picture Said paints of his childhood is one of boundaries, restriction and control, extending to encompass *all* aspects of his life. Affection and love seem always to have a disciplinary function attached to them whether it is his father's efforts to make a more robust man of him or his mother's ambitions for him as a pianist. Throughout the account, Said's mother is a powerfully resonant figure, loving and supportive and much loved by Said but also, and not always predictably, harshly critical and manipulative. One of the scenes described most affectingly in the memoir is when mother and son read *Hamlet* aloud together, he taking the male parts, she the female and that of Polonius (Said 2000: 51-52). Here, intimacy happens under cover of a highly performative scene from a play in which the mother/son relationship is pivotal; the literary mediates the more directly personal resonances of this scene, emphasizing Confino's point about the literary mediation of the memoir as a whole.

The strict demarcation of boundaries, limits and controls that dominate Said's account of family life in *OP*, make an effusive encounter described in the preface all the more remarkable and 'out of place'. The preface opens, "*Out of Place* is a record of an essentially lost or forgotten world" (Said 2000: xi) and goes on to describe how Said's diagnosis with leukaemia prompted him to start writing his memoir. Having completed the manuscript, Said traveled to Cairo in November 1998 and he describes a visit he makes to his former neighbours there, the Gindy [sic] family. When he arrives, he is told that somebody is waiting in the kitchen to see him. Said quickly recognizes the "small, wiry man" dressed in the style of an "Upper Egyptian peasant" as Ahmad Hamed "our *suffragi* (butler) for almost three decades, an ironic, fanatically honest and loyal man whom we had all considered a member of the family". Ahmad does not immediately recognize Said, "No, Edward was tall, and he wore glasses. This isn't Edward" (Said 2000: xii) but when he does, there is an effusive embrace,

described at length:

> Suddenly we fell into each other's arms, sobbing with the tears of happy reunion and a mourned, irrecoverable time. He talked about how he had carried me on his shoulders, how we had chatted in the kitchen, how the family celebrated Christmas and New year's, and so on. I was astounded that Ahmad so minutely remembered not only the seven of us – parents and five children – but also each of my aunts, uncles, and cousins, and my grandmother, in addition to a few family friends. And then, as the past poured out of him, an old man retired to the distant town of Edfu near Aswan, I knew again how fragile, precious, and fleeting were the history and circumstances not only gone forever, but basically unrecalled and unrecorded except as occasional reminiscence or intermittent conversation (Said 2000: xv).

We are not given much information about Ahmad Hamed except as it relates to his role as the family's *suffragi*, and that he is now retired and is dressed in the style of a peasant (in dark robe and turban). But the emotional intensity of the meeting is striking. Returning to it after reading Said's depiction of the carefully controlled decorum that characterized his home and family life, this encounter becomes even more remarkable. Not only is there a prolonged, lingering description of an explicitly emotional encounter but one is struck by the immediacy and drama with which this moment is described in contrast to the measured tone in which so much of the memoir itself is narrated, even when highly charged situations and relationships are being documented. There are other intriguing questions and resonances: given that so much of the memoir describes the Said's family life as a tightly circumscribed unit in which servants make very brief, largely functional appearances, how should we interpret Said's remark that Hamed was "considered a member of the family" (Said 2000: xv)? And why, given Hamed's involvement in the daily running of the household, is

Said astounded that he remembers him and his entire extended family in such detail? It was, in many senses, Hamed's *job* to do so – to provide the reproductive labour necessary to keep home and family life going. In an interesting aside to this, in *OP*, Said notes how the ideal American family depicted in his textbooks at CSAC involved the familiar nuclear family along with a household that included "a large black woman housekeeper with an extremely exaggerated expression of either sadness or delight on her face" (Said 2000: 84). But no further reflection is given to solidify the significance *he* attributes to this familiar figure of servitude.

Throughout the memoir there are frequent references to various drivers, servants and cooks but, although these references are invariably warm and affectionate, they are not given sustained attention or reflected upon as part of the affective terrain that the narrator recognizes *explicitly* as having shaped him. So, on the third page of *OP,* Said describes how, as a child when he had been naughty, he would repeat his mother's taunt that "Mummy doesn't love you" or "Auntie Melia doesn't love you". He then describes how he both concludes this exchange and rescues something from the "enveloping gloom" it generates by saying, "All right. Saleh [Auntie Melia's Sudanese driver] loves you" (Said 2000: 5). As well as providing an evocative instance of self-alienation – Said tells us he regularly referred to himself in the second person – this sequence implicates the driver as both at the bottom of a hierarchy (his love can only be invoked and recognized because it doesn't count in the same way that the mother's or his aunt's does) but also at the same time an important source of support. Later, we are told in passing that another of Auntie Melia's drivers helped make his first day at CSAC "easier" by treating him "as no one else did – with deferential, if familiar, courtesy" (Said 2000: 80). Again, although a fleeting reference, it resonates with added intensity in a wider context that is so bereft of comfort or displays of affection.

Two further references to servants are notable. In chapter IV, Said

describes having the occasion to revisit his father's films of the family while in the process of making a BBC documentary about *Culture and Imperialism*. Looking at them again, he is struck by the staged quality of the footage:

> the artificial quality of what we were, a family determined to make itself into a mock little European group despite the Egyptian and Arab surroundings that are only hinted at as an occasional camel, gardener, servant, palm tree, pyramid, or tarbushed chauffeur is briefly caught by the camera's otherwise single-minded focus on the children and assorted relatives (Said 2000: 75).

Here, servants, chauffeurs, gardeners, landmarks, flora and fauna comprise a list of signifiers of a non-European place and culture that pulses all around the contrived 'European' family tableau, underscoring its artifice. Said does not differentiate between these signifiers of Arab/Egyptian culture that expose the tableau as "a mock little European group", nor does he comment on the fact that the physical appearance of those *within* the posed group might more directly have the same effect. The servants are merged with the surroundings that together undermine the group's performance of a European idea of 'family'. What is it about the servants that makes the conflation of native with nativity so easily assumed here? The one photo in *OP* that includes a member of staff doesn't suggest particularly Arab/Egyptian dress: it appears in the second batch of pictures, following page 204 of the text and shows "Ensaf (the nanny)" with Said and his two sisters. Ensaf appears to be wearing a head-tie but one that doesn't invite remark as obviously 'traditional'. The robe and turban worn by Ahmad Hamed is described as the costume of "a formally dressed Upper Egyptian peasant" (Said 2000: xiv), indicating that he has dressed with the proper decorum for *visiting* rather than *working* in the Said family home. The casual reference to servants as part of a list of details indicating the *actual place* in which the family was filmed keeps the servants anchored firmly and

unquestioningly in their place, as the necessary counterpoint to the Said family's aspirations away *from* that place and towards an idea of 'family' constituted elsewhere. If, in the preface, Said asserts that Ahmad Hamed was a man "we had all considered a member of the family" (Said 2000: xv), the filmic archive of 'the family' and Said's discussion of it, suggests a much more ambivalent position that Said does not seem interested in interpreting.

In the only passage where Said reflects more directly and self-consciously on the role of 'the staff' in families like his, he muses:

> "Our" Ahmed, the Dirliks' Hassan, the Fahoums' Mohammed, were almost talismanic in their presence; they turned up in our conversations as staples of our quotidian diet, like the garden or the house, and *it felt as if they were our possessions, much like old family retainers in Tolstoy*. […] I remember wrestling with Ahmed, conversing about the deeper meaning of life and religion with Hassan, talking cars and drivers with Aziz, much to my parents' disapproval. *I felt that I was like the servants in the controlled energy that had no license to appear* during the many hours of service, but talking to them gave me a sense of freedom and release – illusory of course – that made me happy for the time spent in such encounters (Said 2000: 197, emphasis added).

The terms in which Said describes the value of the servants' emotional and reproductive labour is, again, intriguingly ambivalent: the "Our" in quotation marks implies an unease about the possessive, objectification of the staff, but the parallel drawn with "old family retainers in Tolstoy" immediately deflects this critique from the immediacy of his own lived location and transposes it to a canonical literary location. And, though he recognizes the physical, intellectual and emotional intimacies that he shares with the various servants, its significance is entirely focused on the impact on *him* and the release from his parents' prescriptions that they collectively enable him to experience. The irony again

here is that the servants who must perforce always *know their place* help Said to escape from *his* designated place. Said has written repeatedly about the interconnectedness of all human lives, perhaps most memorably in *Culture and Imperialism* where he argues:

> There is no Archimedean point beyond the question from which to answer it; there is no vantage outside the actuality of relationships among cultures, among unequal imperial and non-imperial powers, among us and others; no one has the epistemological privilege of somehow judging, evaluating, and interpreting the world free from the encumbering interests and engagements of the ongoing relationships themselves. *We are, so to speak, of the connections, not outside and beyond them* (Said 1994a: 65, emphasis added).

That his identification with the servants is pursued here so exclusively in terms of his own sense of being out of place, undisturbed by any possible contrapuntal resonances, is surprising. In several places in the text, he acknowledges and remarks on the wealth and privilege of the circumstances in which he was raised, noting visits to the opera and theatre as well as being sent to elite schools in Egypt and the US. Despite such acknowledgment, there remains a sense that Said's account of his route to becoming an intellectual cannot accommodate the messy, ordinary and everyday affects encountered along the way. Just before his fourteenth birthday, Said starts attending Victoria College where he is presented with *The School Handbook*, the first rule of which he notes "turned us into "natives" by stipulating that only English was permitted and warning that "Anyone caught speaking other languages will be severely punished". If at home colloquial Arabic was relegated to the servants, at school Arabic became "our haven, a criminalized discourse" (Said 2000: 184). In a review of *OP*, the Egyptian novelist, Ahdaf Soueif draws parallels between the circumstances of her own and Said's lives:

> The life lived simultaneously in English and Arabic, the imagining of oneself into the comics or novels we read, *the response to the different and authentic energy in the conversation and company of maids and drivers* (Soueif 2004: 255, emphasis added).

Soueif succinctly conveys the polarized terms in which hers and Said's worlds were organized, suggesting possibilities for imaginative immersion of the self in one (English literature) and a more reactive response in the other (energetic conversations in Arabic with servants). That Said does not reflect more substantively on the impact of "the different and authentic energy" that he too ascribes to servants in *OP*, resonates with his arguments in *Orientalism*, about the astonishing lack of any *lived* sense of the orient and Orientals in European-authored texts, "the almost total absence in contemporary Western culture of the Orient as a *genuinely felt and experienced* force" (Said 1991: 19, emphasis added). It is as if the edifice of 'the home' that the Said parents construct, in all its rigidity and constraint, cannot be evaded – or be made to accommodate other experiences and feelings, even in retrospect.

It also indicates an uncharacteristically unreflective understanding of 'home', when considered in relation to the wider context of his writings on 'homeland'. LHM Ling also comments on the lack of critical engagement with a more intimate idea of 'home' in Said's oeuvre:

> Said remained intriguingly unreflective, however, about home. In focusing almost exclusively on 'the exilic condition', home became an assumption, an unquestioned origin, a reified way of being. Said did not theorise on how home may relate differently to different subjectivities like daughters and servants in contrast to sons and patriarchs. His contrapuntal method registered seemingly disparate events or conditions or cognitions of being but he did not see an underlying commonality binding them, perhaps

producing them (Ling 2007: 136).

I agree with this suggestion that 'home' retains a taken-for-granted quality in Said's critical writings and, though Ling does not discuss *OP*, her arguments are suggestive in relation to the curiously austere account of home life offered in it. To return to Confino's argument about Said's over-selectivity in narrating his path towards becoming an intellectual, it strikes me that Said's investment in writing as a public event seems to necessitate a certain decorum in his memoir, whether to protect loved ones, himself, or an idea of the intellectual itself. This decorum helps explain a pervasive sense that expressive emotion of any kind appears out of place in *Out of Place*. So, Hamed and Said's emotional reunion is carefully placed in the preface and the energy, care and conversations of the servants only occasionally and fleetingly offer glimpses of another order of experience and affect in Said's life. These glimpses hint at an emotional and experiential hinterland that readers can only imaginatively reconstruct. One reader particularly well-placed to populate some of this hinterland is one of Said's neighbours Nadia Gindi (the family in whose home Said's encounter with Hamed takes place). She offers some interesting reflections in 'On the Margins of a Memoir: A Personal Reading of Said's *Out of Place*', suggesting a much noisier and more intimate interaction between the two families than the memoir indicates, with the children in and out of each other's homes. She also tells the story of how Am Sayed, the Said's cook, became a standing joke between the two families when, in response to yet another chore, he gave a despairing cry, "But Sayed has only got two hands!" (Gindi 2000: 288). Details of this kind might have snagged Said's account in suggestive and engaging ways and allowed "the controlled energy" (Said 2000: 197) that the decorum of the Said household prohibited both he and the servants from expressing to disturb the smooth narrative surface of *Out of Place*. As it is, Said's account of his family home remains stubbornly un-revealing. It is perhaps in *After the Last Sky*, in the text Said wrote to accompany Jean Mohr's photographs of Palestinian life in the

occupied territories, that Said's most personally expressive prose appears. There he recognizes the importance of ordinary everyday routines and the role of women (and men) in the interior spaces of home that allow a life of some sort to be lived with a degree of dignity. In one evocative passage he describes the sense of being a displaced people by using the house or home as metaphor; a collective Palestinian identity he suggests provides both a sense of solidarity but is also restrictive:

> The structure of your situation is such that being inside is a privilege that is an affliction, like being hemmed in by the house you own. Yes, an open door is necessary for passing between inside and outside, but it is also an avenue used by others to enter. Even though we are inside our world, there is no preventing others from getting in, overhearing us, decoding our private messages, violating our privacy (Said & Mohr 1986: 52-53).

This metaphor and the sense of "being hemmed in by the house you own" seems to me to resonate beyond the immediate context of Said's desire to convey the complex contradictions of being a Palestinian, to convey something of the disabling and enabling confines of *his* own home. Constraints of space allow me only to gesture here to the greater sense of affect and emotion inscribed in *After the Last Sky*; but reading it alongside *Out of Place* provides suggestive resonances that disturb the careful construction of the pristine intellectual self that the memoir is so anxious to construct. Attending to the glimpses we are given in *OP* of other lives and energies pulsing beneath the text's designated focus and narrative decorum, allows a more complicated portrait of the intellectual-as-exile to emerge than perhaps Said was comfortable with, or able to present himself. Gregg and Seigworth argue that "affect is persistent proof of a body's never less than ongoing immersion in and amongst the world's obstinancies and rhythms, its refusals as much as its invitations" (Gregg & Seigworth 2010: 1). My reading of *OP* here is an attempt to

bring more sharply into focus those affective currents that Said recognizes but finds so little place for in *Out of Place*. I argue for a reading of the memoir that allows what is relegated to the margins to snag and disturb the carefully controlled narration Said offers; it is perhaps then, to suggest a *contrapuntal* reading. In the final paragraph of *Out of Place*, Said eschews ideas of a "solid self" and reflects that "I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flowing currents" (Said 2000: 295). While the flux this implies is slightly at odds with the careful control that has characterized the preceding narration, the emotional and affective currents associated with the servants goes some way in keeping this fluidity in play.

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