

## Breaking the Conventions of Travel Narratives: Aspects of Diaspora and the New Concept of Exile in Edward Said's *Out of Place* (1999)

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### Abstract

*Edward Said's Memoir, Out of Place, challenges travel writings conventions by proposing a new definition of exile. This study aims at investigating the narrative aspects of diaspora and the new concept of exile as depicted in Said's narrative by analyzing his personal experiences of exile and dislocation. Understanding the importance of breaking these patterns enables readers to critically evaluate traditional travel narratives and engage with a variety of perspectives. From a postcolonial standpoint, we analyze how Said's work provides a new perspective on the postcolonial world's problems of displacement, belonging, and self-construction.*

**Keywords:** Conventions, diaspora, Edward Said, exile, memoir, out of place, travel narratives.

كسر أعراف روايات السفر والمفهوم الجديد للمنفى في خارج المكان لإدوارد سعيد (1999)

### ملخص

تتحدى مذكرات إدوارد سعيد، خارج المكان، تقاليد كتابات السفر من خلال اقتراح تعريف جديد للمنفى. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي الجوانب السردية للشتات والمفهوم الجديد للمنفى كما صوره سعيد في سرده، وذلك من خلال تحليل تجاربه الشخصية في المنفى والتفكك. إن فهم أهمية كسر هذه الأنماط يمكّن القراء من إجراء تقييم نقدي لروايات السفر التقليدية والتفاعل مع مجموعة متنوعة من وجهات النظر. من وجهة نظر ما بعد الاستعمار، نقوم بتحليل كيف يقدم عمل سعيد منظورًا جديدًا لمشاكل عالم ما بعد الاستعمار المتمثلة في النزوح والانتماء وبناء الذات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اتفاقيات، شتات، إدوارد سعيد، منفى، مذكرات، خارج المكان، روايات السفر.

## *Briser Les Conventions Des Récits De Voyage: Aspects De La Diaspora Et Le Nouveau Concept D'Exil Dans Out of Place D'Edward Said (1999)*

### Résumé

*Les Mémoires d'Edward Said, Out of Place, remettent en question les conventions des écrits de voyage en proposant une nouvelle définition de l'exil. Cette étude vise à étudier les aspects narratifs de la diaspora et le nouveau concept d'exil tel que décrit dans le récit de Said en analysant ses expériences personnelles d'exil et de dislocation. Comprendre l'importance de briser ces schémas permet aux lecteurs d'évaluer de manière critique les récits de voyage traditionnels et d'aborder diverses perspectives. D'un point de vue postcolonial, nous analysons comment le travail de Said offre une nouvelle perspective sur les problèmes de déplacement, d'appartenance et d'autoconstruction du monde postcolonial.*

**Mots-clés:** Conventions, diaspora, Edward Said, exil, mémoires, hors de propos, récits de voyage.

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**Introduction:**

Travel narratives have long been a popular literary genre, enthralling readers with tales of discovery, adventure, and cultural exchanges. These works frequently act as windows into different regions of the world, allowing readers to experience the sights, sounds, and flavors of distant locations firsthand. From Marco Polo's travelogues to Anthony Bourdain's contemporary reports, travel narratives uniquely blend personal experiences, historical background, and cultural insights. The sensation of discovery and exploration is a crucial component of travel narratives. Reflection on personal growth and transformation is a significant part of travel narratives. People are usually forced to leave their comfort zones when they travel, exposing them to new challenges and viewpoints. Travel story writers typically recount their own self-discovery adventures, emphasizing how travel may extend perspectives, challenge preconceived assumptions, and stimulate personal growth.

Another aspect of travel narratives is the reflection on personal growth and transformation. Travel frequently forces people to venture outside their comfort zones, exposing them to new challenges and perspectives. Authors of travel stories usually recount their journeys of self-discovery, emphasizing how travel may broaden horizons, challenge preconceived notions, and encourage personal growth. Besides, travel narratives provide enthralling glimpses into many corners of the world by combining personal experiences, cultural perspectives, and historical context. They arouse curiosity, promote cross-cultural understanding, and encourage readers to start on their self-discovery adventures. Travel narratives continue to engage and inspire people worldwide, whether in traditional print or digital platforms.

Edward Said, a well-known Palestinian-American literary critic and intellectual, wrote memoir *Out of Place* which has been considered as one of the most essential literary masterpieces. Said muses on his childhood in Palestine, his family's displacement, and his journey to forge an identity as an Arab in the Western world in this book. This broadens the narrative's scope beyond his own experiences and allows readers to delve deeper into the historical and geopolitical events that form feelings of home, belonging, and displacement. Furthermore, as a Palestinian-American philosopher, Said uses *Out of Place* to highlight identity issues as well as the connections between culture, politics, and human experience.

The aim of this paper is to examine *Out of Place* and to analyse how he deviates from standard travel narratives' patterns while portraying the concept of exile. By establishing a novel concept of exile, Edward Said's memoir *Out of Place* confronts the reader's sense of identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity. By thoroughly examining Said's creative storytelling strategies and their consequences for comprehending issues of identity and displacement, the research also seeks to contribute to existing work on trip narratives, cultural studies, and postcolonial literature. The importance of this work rests in the fact that it treats diaspora and exile as literary themes, as well as how Said's work contributes to the reframing of these concepts in the framework of human narrative. By investigating this subject, the study not only adds to the existing body of knowledge on travel literature, but it also sheds insight on the experiences of those living in diaspora and exile.

The research objectives include critically assessing Edward Said's *Out of Place* in regard to travel story patterns, examining how diaspora and exile are portrayed in Said's memoir, and investigating the ramifications of Said's work on the redefining of these ideas in the literary world. The research questions of the study are formulated as follows:

- How does *Out of Place* by Edward Said challenge and subvert typical travel story norms?
- What dimensions of diaspora and exile are explored in Said's memoir?
- In what ways does Said's work contribute to the literary reinvention of diaspora and exile?

*Out of Place*, Edward Said's memoir, deviates from typical travel narrative themes by introducing a new concept of exile, questioning the reader's notions of identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity.

### **1-Diaspora, Nostalgia and Challenges of Exile:**

Travel narratives provide a view into the unknown, whether exploring undiscovered territory or immersing oneself in unfamiliar cultures. Authors transport readers to far-off locations with vivid descriptions and captivating storytelling, igniting their imaginations and sparking a thirst for adventure. Travel narratives are also crucial in building cross-cultural understanding and empathy especially in postcolonial era because "Travel writing and postcolonial studies are common bedfellows, the first (a 'genre') a staple source for the second (a scholarly enterprise, if not a bordered discipline). Their relationship has been soldered by historical circumstances"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Authors bridge cultural divides and challenge prejudices by sharing their encounters with various people, customs, and traditions. They inspire readers to accept variety, appreciate the breadth of human experiences, and create a sense of global citizenship throughout their stories. Authors help break down stereotypes and challenge preconceived assumptions by presenting encounters with varied people. This can lead to a more welcoming and receptive attitude toward the rich tapestry of human experiences and perspectives. Travel narratives can instill a sense of cultural solidarity in readers and educate them to embrace diversity. Travel narratives can also pique readers' interest and inspire them to learn more about their surroundings. They can motivate readers to go outside their comfort zones and interact with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Authors contribute to broadening our perspectives and inspiring us to value the richness of human experiences in this way.

Diaspora, nostalgia, and resistance against exile are interwoven concepts that frequently emerge in conversations about immigration, displacement, and the search for identity, mainly in the postcolonial era." Migration and diaspora are results of a multitude of social, political, and economic circumstances which, in turn, result in social, economic, and cultural marginalization"<sup>(2)</sup>. Diaspora refers to the dispersion of a specific group of people, often about their cultural or ethnic heritage. It can be voluntary or involuntary, coming from war, colonization, or economic migration. When individuals or communities are forced to leave their homeland, their sense of self and belonging is often shattered, and they may suffer sentiments of longing for their hometown. However, many diaspora individuals and communities struggle with the intricacies of their multiple identities, feeling divided between their adoptive home and their ancestral homeland. As people and communities struggle to assert their cultural identity and resist assimilation, this tension can inspire a revolt against exile.

In terms of postcolonial theory, the postcolonial Arabic narrative becomes the first point of interest for many critics who have spent the majority of their time studying the Arabic novel, in general, and travel narratives, in particular. They were more concerned with pushing the boundaries of postcolonial Arabic writings in terms of concepts and terms within the theory. "Arabic travel writing boasts a varied history that goes back some twelve centuries"<sup>(3)</sup>. Postcolonial studies demonstrated that travel is an urgent issue, and one of the early studies on the subject was conducted by postcolonial thinker Edward Said and his so-called Orientalism, which means adopting a Western method to impose dominion over the orient. Many critics consider Edward Said's concept as being "one of the most influential scholarly books published in English in the humanities in the last quarter of the twentieth century"<sup>(4)</sup>. Orientalists are particularly interested in travel narratives. The most important aspect of postcolonial Arab travel stories is that they help readers understand the colonial and postcolonial worlds as well as how important they are to postcolonial studies.

However, for Edward Saïd, "[This Orientalism] is something more historically and materially defined than either of the two. Taking the late 18th century as a very roughly defined starting

point Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient”<sup>(5)</sup>. For example, *Out of Place* by Edward Said defies travel narrative conventions and posits a new definition of exile. Said digs into his personal experiences in this compelling book to address problems of identity, displacement, and belonging. Said's divergence from the typical travel narrative is immediately apparent. Rather than providing a chronological synopsis of his excursions, he weaves fragmentary recollections, thoughts, and reflections together. This new technique allows readers to enter his mind and appreciate the profound impact of exile on his sense of self.

Said's *Out of Place* reinvents the travel story form by combining autobiography, memoir, and travelogue. According to historians such as Timothy Brennan (2001), this fusion allows Said to transcend typical narratives and build a more sophisticated perspective of diaspora and exile. Consequently, Said invites readers to critically engage with the complexity of power, history, and society by combining personal experiences with sociopolitical critique. “Writing a memoir, for Said, is to face a mental drama because it means turning back to reflect on his own ‘autodidacticism’, his own ‘self-learning’, his own ‘beginnings’, his own ‘authority’ as an author – and his own authority as a dissenting author”<sup>(6)</sup>. This technique enhances the tale and challenges readers to consider their notion of home, belonging, and displacement in the context of an immense sociopolitical backdrop. *Out of Place* by Edward Said deviates from the traditional travel narrative and broadens the scope of the biography. He encourages readers to consider the impact of colonialism, imperialism, and cultural hegemony on the more critical historical and geopolitical issues that determine ideas of home, belonging, and displacement. Exile, on the other side, frequently results in a great yearning for one's homeland, culture, and past experiences, manifesting as nostalgia. Said's nostalgia research in *Out of Place* digs into these complex emotions and their effects on people.

### **1-1- Diaspora and Nostalgia:**

Exile was crucial in shaping Edward Said's intellectual and literary achievements. Said dug into his personal experiences of exile throughout his meetings and especially in his works, such as *Out of Place*, which substantially shaped his viewpoints. He detailed his journey in this memoir, delivering a profound perspective on the complications of exile and cultural hybridity. By sharing his story, Said highlighted his challenges and gave readers a lens to appreciate better the more remarkable human experience of living in exile. Said improved his analytical insights through his literary examination of exile, giving a distinct perspective to his writings and promoting a greater awareness of identity, belonging, and the obstacles experienced by persons living in exile. Said argues:

“Along with language, it is geography- especially in the displaced form of departures, arrivals, farewells, exile, nostalgia, homesickness, belonging, and travel itself—that is at the core of my memories of those early years. Each of the places I lived in –Jerusalem, Cairo, Lebanon, The United States- has a complicated dense web of valences that was very much a part of growing up, gaining an identity, forming my consciousness of myself and of others”<sup>(7)</sup>.

His complicated journey of exile began in 1935 when he was born into a Christian family in Palestine. His father was of American nationality, but his mother eventually acquired Lebanese nationality. Said's early experiences were strongly influenced by the region's political volatility, which led to his family's displacement and later resettlement in Egypt. Said's exile journey inspired his writings and contributed to a greater awareness of displacement and its ramifications. He attempted to challenge prejudices and biases through his literary and intellectual pursuits, fostering empathy, understanding, and discussion across different cultures and ideas.

Edward Said's life embodied intelligence as he traversed the complicated terrain of exile between two diverse cultural environments: Arab and American. That came to be later considered as diaspora and diasporic writings. However, Edward Said adopted a paradoxical view at the same time when dealing with multi-angles, and it caused troubles in American institutions. He argues:

“Recall that in the United States many college campuses have been shaken during the past couple of decades over what the canon of Western civilization is, which books should be taught, which ones read or not read, included, or otherwise given attention. Places like Stanford and Columbia debated the issue not simply because it was a matter of habitual academic concern but because the definition of the West and consequently of America was at stake”<sup>(8)</sup>.

Born into a Christian Palestinian family, Said's upbringing was heavily impacted by his Arab ancestry and the region's political turbulence. This early exposure to Arab culture and the Palestinian fight for self-determination impacted his worldview and laid the groundwork for his later intellectual endeavors. Nostalgia, on the other hand, played an essential role in Edward Said's life, causing him to revisit and reflect on his experiences under the effect of recall. Most prominently, “Far from leading to disengagement, nostalgia provides the conditions to establish the hybrid identities that Edward Said and other postcolonial thinkers consider to be necessary to confront existing political conditions”<sup>(9)</sup>. This great love for the past, especially for his nation and Palestinian ancestors, was increased by his illness following his diagnosis with Leukaemia in 1994; he turned to writing to chronicle and preserve his memories during his illness. His memories served as a tool for him to deal with the difficulties of his identity and to revisit the places and people who had shaped him. Said's writings attempted to capture the essence of his events, offering a personal and introspective narrative of his trip.

To deal with his illness and the challenges of exile, Said embraced writing as a therapeutic release. This creative outlet enabled him to express himself and share his ideas with others, resulting in a better grasp of the human condition and the complexity of identity. Because the period spent in writing the autobiography coincided with the time spent sick, “THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN MOSTLY DURING PERIODS OF ILLNESS, or treatments, sometimes at home in New York, sometimes while enjoying the hospitality of friends and institutions in France and Egypt”<sup>(10)</sup>. According to him, the exiled person can write about all the countries he has left behind by recalling geographical patterns.

Establishing a sense of place and belonging can be a complex process for individuals like Said, who are caught between these different contexts. It frequently entails accepting the complexities of their identities, understanding the hybridity that results from their multiple cultural inheritances, and finding strategies to bridge the gaps between these cultures. Judith Butler (2004), for example, investigates the significance of trauma and memory in Said's work. *Out of Place* investigates the psychological impacts of exile, focusing on how memories of one's lost homeland affect one's sense of self and relationship with the past. Butler's research highlights the significance of memory and trauma in understanding the exile experience. Exploration and celebration of one's cultural history is one method for someone in the diaspora to connect with a place. Individuals can develop a sense of continuity and connection to their ancestral home by connecting with their roots and interacting with their original language, customs, and traditions. Edward Said could not visit the location, but writing became a better and more creative place for him to live because the missing world is always present in his memory. He states that:

“its essential sadness can never be surmounted. Moreover, while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, and even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, there are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever”<sup>(11)</sup>.

Said's memoir is a testament to his refusal to be silenced or defined solely by his Palestinian exile status. He actively pursues scholarly endeavors and pushes for justice and equality, rejecting the notion of exile as a passive state. Said's insurgency against exile serves as a rallying cry for others to fight for their rights and reject the erasure of their identities. In *Out of Place*, Edward Said delves deeply into these issues, offering a profound and personal perspective on the complexities of diaspora, nostalgia, and resistance to exile.

### **1-2- Rebellion against Exile:**

According to Edward, revolting against exile is a natural reaction to the displacement and loss that accompany forced relocation or exile. He claims that insurrection can take several forms, from political activism to cultural expression. Individuals in exile use revolt to reclaim their agency and proclaim their rights while fighting the institutions and forces that drove them away. According to Edward, these concepts are interconnected and multifaceted, affecting and molding the lives and experiences of people affected by migration and exile. At the same time, he recognizes that no single story or experience applies to everyone, as the influence of Diaspora, Nostalgia, and Rebellion against Exile varies widely depending on the setting and individual circumstances.

Edward Said defies his banishment, refusing to be constrained by their surroundings. He embraces a neutral perspective as he stands on the borders of two universes, transcending the differences and animosity that separate these realms. Said is highly committed to researching things relating to the Arabic world, delving into its rich history, colourful culture, and convoluted politics. He resists his exile by recovering and enjoying his cultural history, refusing to allow his identity to be defined exclusively by his displacement. In his work, *Reflections on Exile*, he states:

“Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted”<sup>(12)</sup>.

The experience of Edward Said's exile included traversing two completely different worlds, covering geography, language, customs, traditions, and even the unpleasant hostility between these domains. “Finding a sense of belonging and making a place feel real while navigating the diaspora between an Arabic oriental world and a Western world is a complicated and very personal endeavour. If we view Said as an actual but unheroic exile (rather than a metaphorically heroic one), his authenticity as an exile is enhanced by a very touching weakness that he is at pains to screen from view”<sup>(13)</sup>. However, the memoir plays a vital part in the career of Edward Said as he wrote about Palestine in numerous situations, making it the first of all the writings about the oppressed and the disadvantaged.

Words become a universe, and events form life, and all that is accomplished through writing has been a bridge between the exiles and the motherland, which is always there in memory. Geographically speaking, Palestine was imagined by Edward Said to make exile a location where he may dwell despite being absent. Most prominently, the writer rebelled against his exile, standing on the borders of the two worlds and deciding to be neutral. He is always occupied by focusing on topics related to his Arabic world, but without forgetting the world he is living in. While the experience of diaspora and the hostility between different societies provide substantial problems, efforts to navigate and reconcile these complexities can ultimately lead to a fuller and more nuanced understanding of one's place in the world. Individuals like Said can carve their pathways and create a feeling of belonging in the face of exile by embracing the diversity of their experiences and actively striving toward cross-cultural understanding.

Said also investigated the issue of many identities, particularly in the context of being an immigrant or exile. He contended that people who live in different cultures simultaneously are not divided or fragmented beings but instead have a rich and diversified range of experiences and

perspectives. He rejected the idea of a fixed or singular identity, instead embracing the hybridity and complexity of inhabiting multiple cultural areas. In addition, he emphasized language exile, which refers to the loss or distortion of language and the difficulty in expressing oneself in a foreign cultural and linguistic setting. He emphasized the power dynamics at work when a dominant language suppresses or marginalizes other languages. According to Said, language exile is a political issue reflecting larger institutions of power and control.

Said's book dives into his personal experience of dealing with the complexity of his identity as well as the difficulties of being in exile. He speaks on his experience of displacement and his attempt to reconcile numerous cultural and linguistic influences. Said's analysis of these themes throws insight on the larger challenges confronting people who are split between cultures and languages. While *Out of Place* does not overtly address rebellion against exile, it does provide a nuanced look at the impact of exile and the yearning for a feeling of belonging. Said's memoir asks readers to reflect on the difficulties of identification and how language and cultural history impact our view of ourselves and the world around us.

## **2- Multiple Identities and Language Exile:**

Unsurprisingly, the challenge of living in exile, as Said suffers from fission and the split between an identity he allowed to express his cultural heritage of origin and a new identity in a place, is a source of concern. The Palestinian-American critic who spoke a language he had never known, whether it was the language he uttered for the first time or a language he had been forcedly taught in his homeland, and who belonged to another country that was not his original homeland, is one of those critics who lived outside the place, suffering from identity anxiety between an Arab identity Palestinian and Western American identity, calling for cultural hybridity. *Out of Place*, Said's connection with the English language, for instance, demonstrates yet another facet of diaspora. Meltem Girik (2009), for example, underlines how his use of language and literature as a method of resistance and expression helps to a better understanding of linguistic diaspora. Girik examines how Said's examination of literary works reveals power dynamics and depicts the influence of numerous civilizations on the diasporic experience. As a result, the issue of exile in Edward Said's personal and academic life became a point of contention for many commentators, as he spent his whole life travelling and writing while migrating from one nation to another.

### **2-1- Subverting the Idea of the "Exotic Other":**

Due to his broad geographical and linguistic origins, academic multidisciplinary, and political activism, Edward Said's identity remains complex and nuanced. Said's writings continuously questioned established identities and emphasized the importance of understanding and critical investigation of power dynamics, making it impossible to categorize him. "In describing the complexities of his identity, one could use the expression for the infinite regress or an escutcheon within an escutcheon, a nest of boxes pleasure"<sup>(14)</sup>.

Edward Said faced a long internal struggle of someone stuck between two civilizations. His dual identity as a Palestinian and an American caused him to feel dislocated and alienated. This struggle between different identities is a constant issue in his writings, as he sought to navigate between his local culture and the Western intellectual traditions he engaged with in his academic efforts. Language, in particular, played an essential role in Said's examination of identity. He moved effortlessly between Arabic and English because he was multilingual, but both languages also expressed a sense of exile. Said felt disconnected from his roots and an outcast by speaking in a language, not his home tongue. This unique and linguistic anxiety experienced by Edward Said was caused by his family because, according to him, "ALL FAMILIES INVENT THEIR PARENTS AND CHILDREN, GIVE each of them a story, character, fate, and even a 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"<sup>(15)</sup>. All the struggles between both languages are transparent

enough in the writings of Edward Said, and exile for him is not just far from the place but in language, too. He points out:

“I have never known what language I spoke first, Arabic or English, or which one was really mine beyond any doubt. What I do know, however, is that the two have always been together in my life, one resonating in the other, sometimes ironically, sometimes nostalgically, most often each correcting and commenting on the other”<sup>(16)</sup>.

While Said's diasporic existence produced some physical insecurity, it also gave him a unique viewpoint and an in-depth understanding of the issues of identity, culture, and imperialism. His exile and dislocation experiences significantly shaped his intellectual development and critical beliefs.

Said's personal tale questions the concept of a single “home” by reflecting on his origins as a Palestinian in Egypt and later relocation to the United States. He struggles with the intricacies of his identity, feeling both connected to and disconnected from numerous cultures and regions. This sophisticated inquiry emphasizes the fluidity and complexity of identity, challenging the idea of a fixed and unified notion of home. Furthermore, Said's work indirectly challenges the concept of the “exotic other” by humanizing his own experiences and providing a counter-narrative to the preconceptions commonly associated with the Middle East and its people. He combats the exoticization and marginalization that dominant narratives typically promote by describing his personal journey. While the subversion of the “exotic other” and the concept of a solitary “home” are not prominent themes in *Out of Place*, Said's memoir indirectly contributes to these debates by presenting a personal perspective that challenges simplistic and essentialized notions of identity and belonging.

### **3- The Notion of a Singular "Home":**

*Out of Place*, Edward Said's book, is centred on the concept of a solitary house, which molds his identity and sense of belonging. Said addresses his ambivalent relationship with his hometown of Palestine as well as his experiences as a diasporic person throughout the book. Said speaks on his youth in Palestine, emphasizing his attachment to the land, culture, and people. For him, Palestine was a one-of-a-kind home, a place of comfort and security. He criticizes the notion that a person has only one home, claiming that being out of place allows for a more expansive view of selfhood.

Furthermore, Said analyzes the broader consequences of displacement, particularly for Palestinians denied the right to return to their historic homeland. Through his personal experiences, he sheds light on the larger issue of forced displacement and the loss of a single home for many individuals all over the world.

#### **3-1-Returning to a Familiar Homeland:**

Belonging to a specific social group was impossible for Edward Said, especially when he was in Cairo. He felt he had no identity because he did not belong to the English culture, but was thoroughly American regarding clothing and education. Since he was educated in colonial schools, he always considers himself as one who is not categorized due to the discrimination of those colonialists who prefer the English students over the Americanized ones, and this is obvious when he says,

“To say “ I am an American citizen” in an English school in wartime Cairo dominated by British troops and with what seemed to me a totally homogenous Egyptian populace was a foolhardy venture, to be risked in public only when I was challenged officially to name my citizenship, in private I could not maintain it for long, so did the affirmation wither away under existential scrutiny”<sup>(17)</sup>.

When Edward Said was in Cairo school, he began to feel a sense of alienation. This is much illustrated when he says:

“retained this unsettled sense of many identities- mostly in conflict with each other – all my life, together with an acute memory of the despairing feeling that I wish we could have been all-Arab, or all-European and American, or orthodox Christian, or all- Muslim, or all-Egyptian, and so on”<sup>(18)</sup>.

Consequently, the non-belonging sense has created the feeling of being out of place since he has no identity like all the citizens. Even his body has been under many modifications by his parents, as if the Arab identity that is inside him is land for many modifications, too. From his American father's point of view, he should own back the Western identity, which has always dominated the Asian one.

Said questions the concept of a single “home” by emphasizing the intricacies of his own identity and the diverse cultural influences that have moulded him. He focuses on his Egyptian childhood, his Western education, and the sense of displacement that comes with being a Palestinian in exile. Said underlines through his personal narrative that home is not a permanent or singular term, but rather a fluid and dynamic concept intricately connected with personal and collective histories. Furthermore, Said underlines the importance of confronting and reclaiming personal and collective history. He goes into his own family history, examining the impact of colonialism and political struggles on his identity and sense of belonging. Said hopes to regain agency and challenge prevailing narratives that have excluded and suppressed specific cultures and identities by connecting with his personal and collective past.

### **3-2-The Need to Confront and Reclaim Personal and Collective History:**

The issue of identification was central to Edward Said's life. He experienced such an experience in Cairo, and things only became worse when he was banished as a foreigner in the United States, even though he has American nationality and belongs to Palestine because it is his motherland. That is Edward Said, the sarcastic thinker who was able to determine the calm of the West and make it more muddled as if the uncertainty of Western identity was a weapon against the United States, which has long supported Jews in their colonization of a place that is not theirs. Consequently, he adopted the Palestinian issue and won the title of spokesman for the issue.

In Edward Said's conception, a hybrid has been accomplished by the presence of two cultures, Arabic and Western, without one being defeated. On the contrary, they coexisted to generate a feeling of free thought in a thinker who refused all forms of authority. However, hybrid is still a dream for many writers. Building an Arabic identity in Western culture is not simple, simply because the ideological fight between the Orient and the West persists. After all, the latter has the upper hand over the Arabic one. “Said recognizes that this concept of the hybrid cultural artifact goes against the grain of traditional cultural criticism which is usually organized under such categories as the creative writer, the autonomous work of art, national literatures, genres, and other abstractions 'that have acquired almost fetishistic presence’”<sup>(19)</sup>.

Said's memoir highlights the significance of engaging with one's personal and collective history to get a greater comprehension of oneself and the world. Individuals can challenge prevailing narratives, question power systems, and demonstrate their agency in forming their identities by facing and reclaiming history. Furthermore, Said investigates the concept of insider vs. outsider, underlining the binary antagonism that exists in society. As someone who has seen numerous cultural influences and lived in multiple countries, Said navigates the complexities of being both an insider and an outsider. He rejects the assumption that one must fit into a single category and instead values the flexibility and variety of identity. By analyzing the insider-outsider dynamic, Said challenges readers to challenge and transcend binary oppositions, realizing that identities are complex and can exist beyond strict categorizations. By recognizing the various experiences and perspectives that people bring to their interactions with the world, this worldview promotes inclusiveness and understanding.

#### 4- Insider or Outsider: A Binary Opposition:

Edward Said was a well-known academic and critic noted for his ground breaking work in postcolonial theory and the study of Orientalism. He introduced and carefully researched several fundamental notions, including binary opposition, which refers to the conceptual partition of the world into binary pairs or oppositions in perpetual conflict or tension—he maintained that binary oppositions such as East/West, Orient/Occident, and Self/Other are not natural or objective categories but creations that serve dominant forces' interests.

In his work *Orientalism*, Said highlighted how the binary antagonism between the East (Orient) and the West (Occident) was utilized to justify and legitimize Western control over the East. According to Said, Orientalism arose as a way for the West to identify itself in contrast to the Orient. “Binaries exist, and no pretending would gloss them over: this is what Said contends. And the fundamental binary opposition is that where the Orient is placed and seen through a process of othering, and however Edward W. Said: Orientalism 93 circumspect one may be, there is no denying that ethics and politics are the two cornerstones that demand human attention”<sup>(20)</sup>. The West portrayed itself as rational, sophisticated, and civilized, whereas; the Orient was portrayed as strange, backward, and uncivilized. Because of this binary conflict, the West could assert its supremacy and legitimize its colonial ambitions.

According to Said, the binary opposition of Orientalism is profoundly founded in a Eurocentric worldview that views the East as the “other” against which the West defines itself. This binary separation is founded not on objective information or comprehension of the East but rather on subjective views, prejudices, and preconceptions. Through the binary opposition of Orient/Occident, the East is presented as a homogeneous and timeless entity, efficiently reducing multiple cultures, histories, and peoples to a single, immobile other. Said also investigated how the binary opposition of Self/Other functions in colonial and postcolonial contexts. To explain their dominance and control, colonial powers created a binary divide between the colonizers (Self) and the colonized (Other). This binary opposition was utilized to create power hierarchies in which colonists were regarded as more incredible and advanced than the colonized.

The memoir *Out of Place* by Edward Said makes extensive use of the concept of binary opposition. Some of the book's primary demonstrations of binary antagonism are the distinctions between East and West, colonizer and colonized, and insider and outsider. The binary antagonism of insider and outsider is another significant theme in the work. Said, of Palestinian and Egyptian descent, is generally considered an outsider in Western countries. As an academic, he struggles with being regarded as an intellectual outsider within his culture, as his views and critiques threaten established conventions and internal power structures. This contradiction between insider and outsider highlights the intricacies of identity creation and the battle for acceptability and acknowledgement.

Edward Said never became fully or comfortably American. He begins his memoir by discussing his name, where he discovers the first image of the identity paradoxes that shaped his life and career. He realizes later that he is the invention of his parents since they shaped his life as they wished. The name represents a contradictory identity. "Edward, a foolishly English name, yoked forcibly to the unmistakably Arabic family name Said”<sup>(21)</sup>. His mother told him that the name was inspired by the name of the English Prince of Wales because Edward was born the same year as the Prince. Because the other half of his name is traditionally Arabic, the paradoxes of his name remain unresolved. Furthermore, Edward Said cannot recall whether his first language was Arabic or English. But “the two have always been together in my life, one resonating in the other, sometimes ironically, sometimes nostalgically, most often each correcting and commenting on, the other”<sup>(22)</sup>. This demonstrates Edward Said's mother's significant influence, as she uses both languages to interact with him and ensure that he belongs to both, even though she prefers to write to him in English rather than Arabic.

Edward Said grew up in a home with two distinct parents, a Palestinian father and a Lebanese mother, and he strives to satisfy both of them. His father was an American citizen who later changed his name from Wadie to William, significantly contributing to Edward's identity's contradictory image. He points out: "I still do not know where "Said" came from, and no one seems able to explain it" (23). According to Edward, changing one's name from Arabic to English is a sign of losing one's true identity." I called my father Daddy until his dying day, but I always sensed in the phrase how contingent it was, how potentially improper it was to think of myself as his son. I never asked him for anything without great apprehension or hours of desperate preparation. The most terrible thing he ever said to me- i was twelve then- was, "you will never inherit anything from me; you are not the son of a rich man,' though literally of course i was" (24). This was the primary cause of Edward Said's self-division. According to him, he can never find his real identity since his parents are lost between two identities, too. For him, the contrasting image of his family is described as being "beginners in their circumstances, always making themselves over and a new: Could Edward's position ever be anything but out of place?" (25).

Even at the novel's start, Edward depicts the image of a completely conflicting, broken childhood. He does not finish here, but he symbolizes loneliness as getting youthful. Edward is a simulacrum that travels through the real world, on the one hand, and an internal or underground self that regularly disagrees with that reality, on the other. His opposing but equally demanding parents put him under continual strain, and he works hard to keep their affection and favour. He juggles the opposing impulses they appear to embody: his father's protestant work ethic, with its principles of hard labour, emotional repression, and self-discipline, and his mother's more sensual interest in the aesthetic and the life of the mind. This sets the tone for Edward's existence, and his lack of roots becomes a recurring structural theme in much of Said's work. As a result, a profound identification with Conrad, a sense of a split but also reflecting self, the experience of what he would later refer to as transcendental homelessness, the lack of a clear identity and the need to reconstruct it repeatedly is apparent in Edward Said's work.

### **Conclusion:**

In short, the main purpose of this research is to question the traditional structure of travel narratives by delving into the issues of diaspora and the novel idea of exile in Edward Said's *Out of Place* (1999). *Out of Place*, Edward Said's memoir, is a gripping investigation of diaspora and exile, exposing the conflicting realities of those separated from their cultural and physical roots. Said urges readers to identify to the more prominent themes of displacement and the desire for a sense of belonging by sharing his own tale of displacement and the difficulties he had in creating his identity. Said uses the process of writing and narrating throughout the memoir to preserve one's memories and personal history and critique typical travel narratives. He criticizes the prevalent Western mindset, which romanticizes travel while ignoring the misery of people who are forcibly or wilfully uprooted from their homes. *Out of Place* also critiques the binary oppositions in travel narratives, such as the dichotomy between the traveller and the "other".

On the other hand, Said emphasized cultural connectivity and shared humanity that transcends geographical and cultural divides. His tale emphasizes the necessity of recognizing the diverse viewpoints of persons living in diaspora and a more nuanced understanding of migration's complexity. Finally, Edward Said's *Out of Place* is an excellent reflection on diaspora and exile issues. Said's personal memoir questions traditional travel tales, sheds attention on the significant effects of movement on individuals and raises difficulties concerning binary oppositions. Finally, his work reminds us the persistence and humanity of those stranded between cultures and geographies.

Said considered how belonging to a diasporic group can lead to a reinvention of identity and a sense of solidarity among those who have experienced comparable relocation. He underlines the need of identifying and appreciating diaspora's different narratives and viewpoints, disputing the

notion of a single narrative or experience. According to him, exile can also be a state of mind, a state of being permanently separated from a fixed sense of home. This concept of exile questions traditional concepts of belonging and urges readers to reflect on the intricacies of identity development in a globalized environment. And most importantly, he emphasized the importance of storytelling and the written word in maintaining and recovering cultural heritage as well as establishing connections and understanding among communities.

**Endnotes:**

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