Dedicated to the memory of Edward Said, scholar and humanist

1 November 1935 – 25 September 2003

It is only a few weeks since Edward Said was on British television introducing, with his friend Daniel Barenboim, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, that Goethe-inspired symbol of hope in our time, about to give one of the Promenade Concerts in London's Royal Albert Hall. Two days ago a crowd of many thousands stood for a minute's silence in Trafalgar Square to remember him. They had gathered to protest against the situation in the Middle East, and against the illusion that war can solve problems and create the stability in which justice can flourish. Edward Said was a believer in bridges, the cultural bridges symbolised by the orchestra which he and Daniel Barenboim founded, of young Israeli, Palestinian and other Arab musicians making music together. He was also a person of huge moral authority, who never failed to speak out against hypocrisy and exploitation or to call for a compassionate and nuanced understanding of the human condition. He campaigned tirelessly for a more just world, particularly in the Middle East where he was born.

The bridge as trope, the theme of this issue, is clearly of very diverse application. It can suggest links across a spatial or temporal divide, between worlds or ideas, between mind and matter, between languages or cultures, between bodies, between, in fact, almost any two categories you care to mention. And of course the classic bridge between *two* diverse polarities is only one way of conceiving it. It may,

of individual and collective encounters between cultures is addressed, as are dilemmas to do with individualism and pluralism in maintaining a sense of identity, as well as profoundly political questions about the nature and use of iconography and language.

The first item is a poem by an American about an iconic image of a bridge from Japanese culture. It initiates a group of pieces presenting East/West bridges, which put the question of orientalism, in the specific sense Edward Said defined, again at the forefront of our minds. Thomas Fortenberry's "People Crossing an Arched Bridge" responds to a nineteenth-century print, a woodblock illustration of a poem by the ninth-century Japanese poet Ariwara no Narihira, using the aesthetic image of the scene with its bridge to reflect on less tangible links to other dimensions.

Japan is associated also with the next contribution, an essay by Antony Adolf, a Canadian resident, which posits a bold post-Bakhtinian argument about the nature of language and polyglossia. The piece draws on works by Martin Heidegger, the German philosopher who was in contact with Japanese scholars, in particular Count Kuki, who visited Germany in the 1920s and engaged with Heidegger in debates about language and aesthetics—a salutary reminder of the internationalism of German culture before the Third Reich. Taking polyglossic texts by Heidegger as his starting point, Adolf argues that while monolingualism sustains the illusion of linguistic stability, we should look to multilingualism to expose or highlight the instability of language—and also to overcome it. That the use of signip18.48 .5(ar 39(e)4. diile)4.s.usbhur(c)4.6rihira, systems in one proposition or utterance brinsy an
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Andersen story “The Nightingale.” It tells how a manuscript found by an American in Korea proves to be an eighteenth-century Korean narrative in the Chinese tradition, telling a story close to Andersen’s, though with significant differences. The moral fable he presents is one of evident political relevance to our time. Walter Benjamin’s famous essay springs to mind, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” published in 1936, and still prescient: “The destructiveness of war furnishes proof that society has not been mature enough to incorporate technology as its organ.” The “China” of the story is an imaginary location, in many ways already familiar to us, its origins embedded in the history of the cultures of other parts of the world as much as in those of China itself (a process Said’s concept of orientalism anatomises), and of course, in the story, seen from the subtle distance of a Korean perspective. The absolute power of the long-gone emperor is fabulous in every sense, yet not so remote from contemporary actualities as we might wish. That the story is dedicated to Charlotte Church means that it dovetails to our time, and to a modern vision not only of aesthetic beauty but of youthful innocence. The singer in the story is a figure of such innocence, but proves also to be one of great wisdom, and power of a different kind, as the story unfolds. The tale has the surface simplicity but resonant

subject “Dignity, Solidarity and the Penal Colony,” published in *The Politics of Anti-Semitism* edited by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, is available online (see www.counterpunch.org and www.indybay.org). In that part of the world there seems no prospect of a bridge, though.7(ghTle))2.4.4(ip2)eor of the road map h.4(ip2s been d)-10.7(e)3.1(pl))2 not a little desperation in recen

The reading and misreading of cultural and gender signifiers by outsiders is the starting point of the next item, as we revisit the Middle East. Fashion among young Muslim women in Egypt today, exercising choices between western and eastern styles, is Isobel Ryan's topic. Her analysis of the semiology and aesthetics of clothing and other aspects of fashion challenges some of the glib assumptions about women and Islam often made from a western perspective. She concludes paradoxically that the veil, in its different manifestations, can be a more liberating choice for women than its alternatives. The essay also includes a brief overview of historic feminist reformers of Egyptian social mores. In a sort of parallel piece to Ryan's, Sumana R. Ghosh gives an analysis of the cultural presentation of the female body in India (*EnterText*'s first contribution from the subcontinent), in which she argues that the body in being operated on as raw material for culture is inevitably othered. Unlike Ryan's, however, it is less about modern fashion than about tradition. Interestingly both papers refer to the prevalent use among the groups they discuss of the cosmetic cream Fair and Lovely, a reminder not only of global capitalism but of the underlying racism evident in the cultural privileging, in so many societies, of a lighter skin.

If the image of a bridge implies some sort of solid link to sustain transit, the overarching trope of Cyril Dabydeen's story uses a much less secure setting, the water itself. It deploys the figure of a swimmer in a municipal swimming bath, whose idiosyncratic stroke is emblematic of his marginalised identity as a tropical South American in cold Canada. This maps onto the story of Dabydeen himself, a Guyana-born Canadian resident, but the story could be about any similar migrant. It is a powerful parable about assimilation as threat, as it engages with the pressures to conform—to perform according to mainstream convention. Yet here there is no

in injustice and exploitation today. Philip's undoing of convention in her approach to language is expressed through linguistic and typographic innovation (as illustrated here), in the name of an assertion of the feminine in the teeth of masculine tradition. Ultimately her address to memory and re-membering via Ovid enables this African Caribbean writer, Fumagalli argues, to build a bridge to an ancestral memory of Africa, since it was African spiritual tradition which fed that of ancient Greece. Thus what is held out is the promise of collapsing the gulfs of time and space and the divisions and losses due to cultural dislocation: an interesting parallel to Dabydeen's theme. It is particularly pleasing that this essay alludes to the trope of the bridge in the distinctive guise familiar to readers of Wilson Harris. For him, the only resource capable of bridging what he calls the architecture of space is the imagination.

Finally, Sarawut Chutiwongpeti's contribution forms a welcome addition to our publications in the visual arts field, and brings us back to Asia with our first contribution from Thailand. Images of his installation project, a series of vibrantly colourful spaces created over the last seven years using architecture, light and sound, are here reverting to their initial condition as digital works, as they were developed on computer before being given three-dimensional form. In their address to the concept of living space arcing over time and place, and as a luminous expression of their creator's concern for cross-cultural encounters, these images make a fitting

themselves which matters. It is perhaps significant that one of the works played by the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in London on 22 August was Schubert's Eighth Symphony, the Unfinished. Contemporary events, dominated as they so often are by drawbridge attitudes rather than openness and a will to reach across to the other—to bridge gulfs—are always radically unfinished, even though individual contributions have to come to an end. Edward Said will be greatly missed, but he will also be greatly remembered.

Paula Burnett, Editor

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