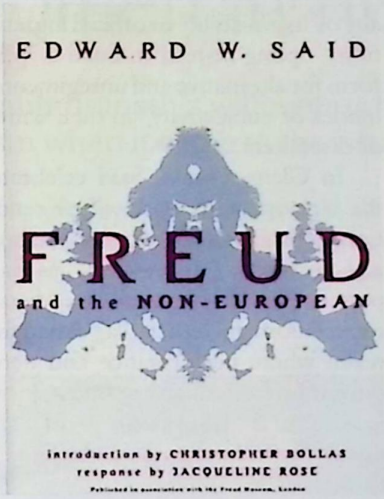
route taken by other educated Zionists who would blot out "Judaism's non-Jewish background." Said implies that these Zionists have leaned on archaeology to affirm their Jewish identity, resorting to knowledge as the surest means of constructing an ideology of difference. In contrast, Freud, he implies, was able to utilize the "intransigent and irascible transgressiveness" characteristic of the masters of "late style" to disturb, destabilize, and to disillusion people who want to hold on to consoling fictions or build edifices dedicated to nationalism and purity.

Late style, then, is style that goes against the grain, against what people have come to expect from the artist as a builder of imposing and pleasing edifices. It is a phenomenon, observes Mariam C. Said, in her moving foreword to her late husband's book, that preoccupied him at the end of his life. He had lectured on it in his last years, discussed it with friends and colleagues, and dealt with it in reviews and essays, obviously with a view to sorting his ideas into a book. Unfortunately, he was not able to finish the work, even though he had left a lot of material behind at the time of his death. Eventually, Ms. Said tells us, the book was put together with the help of some of his student assistants, best friends, and colleagues, and edited by his friend Michael Wood who, however, tells us that though he had "cut and spliced" in assembling the material, "the words are all Said's own."

On Late Style beings with Said's meditation on "Timeliness and Lateness" where he observes that his focus will be on "the last or late period of life," and on how, in the case of some great masters, this was a period when "their work and thought acquires a new idiom." This could be pleasant and harmonious, as is the case with Sophocles, Shakespeare, Rembrandt and Matisse, Bach and Wagner. But this is the road Said will not take. He is interested, as with Freud, with lateness "as intransigence, difficulty, and unresolved contradiction;" of style that "involves a non-harmonious, non-serene tension, and above all, a sort of deliberate unproductive productiveness going against." The road he will travel in the book to investigate this form of lateness will lead him to reflect on the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno; composers like Beethoven, Mozart, Richard Strauss, and Benjamin Britten; writers like Euripides, Thomas Mann, Jean Genet and Giueseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa and C. P. Cavafy; and performers like the pianist Glenn Gould.



Edward W Said. ***On Late Style***. London: Bloomsbury, 2006

Undoubtedly, the major influence on Said's concept of late style is the German thinker Adorno who first diagnosed the phenomenon of lateness in Beethoven's final musical pieces which seem unfinished, testy, discontinuous, challenging, "unreconciled." Such compositions, Said says, go well beyond what had been considered the signature music of the master musician and inaugurate the profoundly alienating note of modernity. As he puts it, seen from Adorno's perspective, lateness is "a kind of self-imposed exile from what is generally acceptable, coming after it, and surviving beyond it," anachronistic, out of time. Said sees Adorno himself as exemplifying lateness, living in the midst of life and yet standing apart, "always critical and ironic." Or to quote Said's pithy take on his favorite thinker's stance: "Late style is *in*, but oddly *apart* from the present."

But Said is as independent-minded, unconventional and spirited in his judgment as Adorno could be, and he does not hesitate to disagree with him when he wants to, as is the case when he takes up the case of Strauss's late works. Adorno, it appears, was convinced that something like senility had overtaken the German composer as he set about to compose his final works. Said, however, feels that if Strauss went back to eighteenth-century idioms and forms in them it was not because he was musically opting to be a throwback but because he was reacting to the emotional turbulence of Wagner by becoming "more and more metamusical, self-consciously and visibly retreating from the world of human affairs into a meditative, composed order." This is another variant of late style: the composer stubbornly resistant to contemporary fashions, even at the risk of sounding antediluvian -- precisely like Adorno in his philosophical essays!

As an example of late style in Mozart, Said spotlights the composer's delightful opera *Cosi fan tutte*. Typical of artworks composed by these masters in the final phase of their lives, this piece seems to be at odds with all his earlier works in being contrary to all expectations that he had generated till then. It is amoral, almost cynical about love, eccentric, taking a stance that puts it at the "the limits of acceptable, ordinary experiences of love, life, and ideas." As far as Said is concerned: "Mozart never ventured closer to the potentially terrifying view he ... seem to have uncovered of a universe shorn of any redemptive