

confinement. The exile that followed was the start of a period of extraordinary literary productivity as well as political activism. That period, the subject of the current memoir, brought Soyinka into contact, and eventual conflict, with Nigeria's increasingly corrupt and abusive regimes, culminating in repeated bitter exiles, emotional returns, and his own sentencing to death in absentia by the brutal General Sani Abacha. (The memoir's title evokes Soyinka's repeated flights from repressive regimes; his preferred ploy was to pretend to head off into the bush to hunt.) In 1995, Abacha executed Soyinka's fellow playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights activists.

In his 1986 Nobel Lecture, Soyinka shattered taboos by reminding his audience that many of the most revered names of the European Enlightenment—including Locke, Montesquieu, Hume, and Voltaire—were “unabashed theorists of racial superiority and denigrators of the African history and being.” However, he quickly reassured his listeners that his purpose was “not really to indict the past, but to summon it to the attention of a suicidal, anachronistic present.” This new memoir is not an easy read, but it is a profoundly rewarding one. Soyinka weaves the adventures of his adult life into a rich, dramatic narrative that is evocative of African storytelling by word of mouth. Perhaps he intends the complex tapestry of *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* to be understood in the same light: as the synthesis of a wealth of ancient myths and traditions with the best of humanism and modernity, addressing the drama that is not only the author's life but Africa's contemporary reality.

—J. Peter Pham

Unhappy Endings

IT'S COMMON TO THINK OF the late works of creative geniuses as mature, luminous, settled, like Shakespeare's *The Tempest* or Rembrandt's last canvases. Edward Said (1935–2003), the literary critic and Middle East polemicist, had a different and darker vision. For some great artists, he believed, old age brings works of art that feel not serene but

ON LATE STYLE:
Music and Literature
Against the Grain.

By Edward W. Said.
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belated, “untimely,” at odds with the world around them and full of “intransigence, difficulty, and unresolved contradictions.” He quotes the German critic Theodor Adorno: “In the history of art late works are the catastrophes.”

The idea makes intuitive sense—why shouldn't artists, like other mortals, have their certainties thrown into confusion by the approach of death? Even the greatest creative spirits may feel rebellious, or simply detached from a changing world, as they age. Said sees these emotions in Euripides's *The Bacchae*, in the late works of Ludwig van Beethoven and Richard Strauss, in Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's novel *The Leopard* (1958), and in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* (1912).

The meaning of lateness seems to shift from chapter to chapter of this book—with some excuse, since Said died before finishing it, and his wife, along with friend and colleague

Michael Wood, assembled the book from lectures, articles, and seminar notes. And the readings can be idiosyncratic.

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Beethoven's late *Missa Solemnis* and *Hammerklavier Sonata*, for instance, express for Said the quality of lateness because of their technical difficulty and their “disjointed, even distracted sense of internal continuity.” With Strauss, it's just the opposite: The works are ambrosial, and highly popular, but “late” because they flee the world around them to hide in the anachronistic harmonies of the 18th century.

Sometimes the shifting meanings make the idea richer. Said contends that Mann's *Death in Venice* contains qualities of lateness—the loss of previous certainties, the clash of opposites without resolution—even though it was written early in Mann's career. Those qualities emerge more plainly, he writes, in Benjamin Britten's late opera version of the story (1974). He even argues that all of literary modernism has some of this “late” quality, turning to primitive beginnings and strange forms as a way for artists to flee a sense of having lived past the logical end of the history of art. At times, the concept seems stretched to the breaking point. But the attractiveness of the central insight

inclines the reader to forgive inconsistencies. The same was true of Said's reputation-making *Orientalism* (1978).

Armchair analysts will have no trouble linking the themes of this book to Said's own life. Though he made his name as a literary critic and was tenured at Columbia University, Said was best known for his fierce Palestinian nationalism and for views that, in his later years, seemed overtaken by and frequently at odds with the politics of the actual Palestinian Authority (which at one point banned his books). In 1999, *Commentary* magazine, a longtime critic of Said, published a blistering compilation of evidence that he had misrepresented major facts about his childhood—accusations Said never convincingly refuted and seemed tacitly to confirm in his own memoir *Out of Place*, published later that year. But if those last years made him seek reflections of his own troubled emotions in literature, art, and music, his critic's eye remained original and compelling. Not all lives end in philosophical harmony, and the approach of death undoes the sense that there is still time for everything to turn out right.

—Amy E. Schwartz

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Law and Order in Cyberspace

WHEN THE INTERNET BEGAN to reveal its promise in the mid-1990s, utopian rhetoric was the order of the day. At the 1996 World Economic Forum, in Davos, Switzerland, John Perry Barlow, a Grateful Dead songwriter and cofounder of the

Electronic Frontier Foundation, an Internet civil liberties group, issued a "Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace" to governments. It read in part, "I declare the global social space we are building to be naturally independent of the tyrannies you seek to impose on us. You have no moral right to rule us nor do you possess any methods of enforcement we have

true reason to fear. . . . Cyberspace does not lie within your borders."

That cyberspace has not ended up independent of national sovereignty is apparent to all of us. Consumer fraud occurs but is prosecuted by attorneys general; obscenity, though available, is generally illegal; and businesses make contracts online that sometimes are broken and get adjudicated by the same courts that enforce offline contracts. In the face of this inexorable civilization (Barlow called it colonization) of cyberspace, Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu, professors at Columbia and Harvard law schools respectively, seek to convince us that despite the hopes of the early digerati, or Internet enthusiasts, the medium's users have properly recognized its subservience to national law. The authors argue that the very openness of the unregulated space that is the Internet demands borders and national laws, in contrast to the independence sought by Barlow (for whom I worked at the Electronic Frontier Foundation from 1991 to 1994).

Consider what happened when the French government tried to stop Yahoo from offering Nazi memorabilia for sale. Sale of such material is legal in the United States, where Yahoo is based, but illegal in France, where Yahoo does some business. French courts claimed authority to enforce their law. U.S. courts considered whether such control over a U.S. company infringes upon American sovereignty or violates the First Amendment. But in 2000, the French courts prevailed: Yahoo now blocks access to such sales from French websites.

Similar conflicts abound. In libel law, the United States favors free expression, while other countries offer more protection to those harmed by sloppy reporting. Pornography is subject to controls in the United States but not in Europe; hate speech is outlawed in Europe but not in the United States. The authors cite these differences as evidence that we will have to accept national sovereignty, even where it may make us uncomfortable.

No argument there. Yet Goldsmith and Wu are so busy correcting the romantic technological determinism of the digerati that they fall into a sort of legalistic

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Illusions of a Borderless World.

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