

About the journal

Exilium Revista de Estudos da Contemporaneidade/Journal of Contemporary Studies is produced by the Edward Said Chair of the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research at Unifesp and is dedicated to contemporaneity in its historical, geopolitical and cultural constitution, in all its *thauma* and wonder, as well as trauma and suffering. Focusing on issues of exile, exodus, voluntary or forced departure from war, racism, persecution or loss of symbolic and affective belonging, the Latin word *exilium* destabilises the belief that a mother tongue or place of residence define us, and reveal *exilium* as an opening to the Other, as a first foreign *pharmakon*, and simultaneously as a remedy to another life and the difficulties of living in strange and foreign countries. As Edward Said noted in his work *Reflections on Exile* on the Palestinian exodus from their lands with the founding of the State of Israel, a nation has been displaced and since then has been cast out in permanent refugee camps, and now extends to entire populations:

is as close as we come in the modern era to tragedy. There is the sheer fact of isolation and displacement, which produces the kind of narcissistic masochism that resists all efforts at amelioration, acculturation, and community. At this extreme, the exiled can make a fetish of exile, a practice that distances him or her them from all connections and commitments. To live as if everything around you were temporary and perhaps trivial as to fall pray to petulant cynicism as well as to querulous lovelessness. More common is the pressure on the exiled to join – parties, national movements, the state. The exiled is offered a new set of affiliations and develops new loyalties. But there is also a loss – of critical perspective, of intellectual reserve, of moral courage.¹

It is now clear that war is a condition of a globalisation that prevents the formation of a shared world, as there are no longer boundaries that

¹ SAID, Edward W. *Reflections on exile, Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000. p. 146.

determine it. Total war, in the sense that a point of conflict has an immediate impact on the “Whole” and is a “battle without borders” means that not feeling at home is now “something to be expected”. On some occasions completely rejected, and at others on the margins of society neither rejected nor accepted by history, traditions, values and ways of life, it is a matter of understanding this new uprooted Subject more widely, as the reorganisation of modern capitalism and the new order of the world – the deinstitutionalisation of structuring institutions such as the Nation-State, family, religion, education, work – are all rapidly changing, producing certain social dysfunctions that are necessary to maintain continuous technological innovation and prestige, as well as those of the market and its functioning. This is why *Exilium Journal of Contemporary Studies* seeks to broaden the scope of analysis of current issues of those in exile, those who have been completely abandoned, – severed from their roots, values, shared memories, and landscapes – and reaches out and calls us to come to our own decisions: it is a call to non-abandonment. An approach to foreign experiences can shed light on our own world, and can therefore contribute to a more cosmopolitan sense of friendship and hospitality.