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**Sylvia Kedourie (ed.), Elie Kedourie's Approaches to History and Political Theory: "The Thoughts and Actions of Living Men"**

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Sylvia Kedourie (ed.),  
*ELIE KEDOURIE'S APPROACHES TO HISTORY AND POLITICAL THEORY:*  
“THE THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS OF LIVING MEN”,  
London and New York: Routledge, 2006, 182 pages.

This volume is another welcome tribute to Elie Kedourie, a distinguished intellectual figure of the late twentieth century. Published more than a decade after Kedourie's death, it follows upon a previous *Festschrift* that appeared in 1998, edited similarly by Kedourie's widow and lifelong collaborator, Sylvia.<sup>1</sup> In the present volume, which first appeared as a special issue of *Middle Eastern Studies*, a number of scholars illuminate various aspects of Kedourie's voluminous work; also, a 1973 report by Kedourie on the Cyprus Problem is published here for the first time.

Largely unknown outside academic circles, Elie Kedourie (1926-1992) was a powerful intellectual personality with many and diverse interests, ranging from Middle Eastern history to political philosophy. A Baghdad-born Jew, he was educated in Britain and spent most of his career as a Professor of Politics at the LSE. A curious incident concerns the defence of his doctoral dissertation at Oxford in the early 1950s: rather than heeding the advice of his examiners, he refused to revise his thesis on the role of Britain in the destruction of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East during and immediately after World War I, and thus never got a doctorate. The sheer nerve of such a decision is not to be lightly brushed aside, considering the tradition of the times, plus the prestige of his examiners – Sir Hamilton Gibb and James Joll, eminent “Arab authorities” in their days. Yet, this is how the young Kedourie chose to respond to that early challenge to his intellectual integrity – and it was to prove a truly formative experience, for the considerations which led him to reject his examiners' advice seem indeed to have contained in germinal form the entire structure of his subsequent thought.

Kedourie's unrevised thesis was published independently as *England and the Middle East* (1956), and his interpretation of the 1914-1921 developments in the region proved indeed revolutionary in its approach and impact. Kedourie

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<sup>1</sup> S. Kedourie (ed.), *Elie Kedourie, 1926-1992: History, Philosophy, Politics*, London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998.

had refused to bow to the accepted assumptions of his time, according to which the partition of the Ottoman Empire after World War I constituted a “natural” development towards the self-determination of the subject Arab nations. Instead, drawing almost exclusively on primary sources, Kedourie maintained that the replacement of Ottoman rule by the new Arab states such as Iraq was to be explained by the motivations and actions of the actors directly involved. These included, on the one hand, British officials on the spot, in Cairo and in the Foreign Office, who felt free to indulge in ideologically inspired political engineering by setting up new state entities on supposedly pure national lines; and, on the other, the newly sprung political leaders of the countries concerned, who, under the cloak of national self-determination, were allowed to institute regimes of untold repression and corruption hitherto unknown in the region.

Kedourie’s onslaught on conventional wisdom about the Middle East was relentless. His incisive *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth* (1976) is a detailed archival analysis, revealing the incongruity between the assumptions and record of British policy, and the political and social reality of Middle Eastern societies. The collection of essays under the title *The Chatham House Version* (1970) is a multi-fronted attack on the “liberal” establishment (political and academic) in foreign affairs in Britain, containing brilliant analyses of British actual conduct during and after the Great War – the insidious role of T. E. Lawrence (“of Arabia”), the realities behind the supposedly Arab capture of Damascus in 1918, the fate of religious and ethnic minorities in the new “imitation states”, the British mandate in Palestine, and the entry of Egypt into the age of nationalism are some of the themes explored with exemplary scholarship and faultless logic. Kedourie ventured at the same time into a close study of Middle Eastern personalities, whether Arab nationalists or religious leaders and reformers, many of whom were British protégés, and discovered that they provided a far more realistic and therefore reliable criterion for understanding the nature of politics in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup>

M. E. Yapp’s article (“Elie Kedourie and the History of the Middle East”) in the volume under review sheds fresh light on two particular aspects of this part of Kedourie’s work. Yapp brings to the fore a pivotal point in Kedourie’s approach

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. especially E. Kedourie, *Afghani and 'Abduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam*, London: Frank Cass, 1966. Cf. also his “Religion and Politics”, in *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle Eastern Studies*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970.

to the 1914-1921 developments: his “revisionist” evaluation of the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement not merely as a division of spoils between Britain and France but as an old-fashioned acceptance of responsibility for the well-being of the peoples of the countries concerned. Yapp also puts into context Kedourie’s clash with the “politically correct” version of Middle Eastern academic history of his day (as expounded by the Royal Institute for International Relations, then residing at Chatham House), and his castigation of the “moral astigmatism” of its exponents (Arnold Toynbee foremost amongst them). It was dogmatic self-righteousness and superficially “anti-imperialist” and “progressive” notions that had led such academic experts to a guilt complex similar to that which had affected the officials involved. Such a collective complex had in turn let scruple decay into scrupulosity – hence the reckless, almost light-hearted relinquishment of the responsibilities of empire for the sake of abstract ideas.<sup>3</sup>

Whether political or academic, intellectual or emotional, the British failings in the Middle East were, for Kedourie, symptoms of a severe *malaise* in modernity. They demonstrated in extreme form the consequences brought about by the dominance in modern times of *ideological politics* – of a novel political idiom which, no longer relying on practical experience of compromise, allows abstract ideals of perfection to overshadow and determine political conduct. To visualise this in Weberian terms, it could be said that Kedourie’s main challenge was addressed against the ascendancy achieved in modern times by the “ethics of conviction” over the “ethics of responsibility” in political life. His focus on Middle Eastern history was but an exemplification of the disastrous effects that the “armed doctrines” of the West had upon Eastern societies still in the grip of tradition.

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<sup>3</sup> Kedourie was amongst the first to draw attention to the sloppiness and irresponsibility of British decolonisation, which, with its appallingly disruptive consequences for the indigenous populations involved, bore a horrid resemblance to the scramble for empire which had preceded it in the late nineteenth century. His point, of course, was not that it was wrong to abandon empire, but that the mode of leaving displayed no sense of responsibility towards the unsuspecting and speechless masses that had devolved into British care. Cf. the scathing criticism of British post-war colonial policy in his *The Crossman Confessions and Other Essays in Politics, History and Religion*, London: Mansell Publishing, 1984. This picture of a “scramble for decolonisation” is also borne out in a recent book by Wm. Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2006.

This most critical point in understanding Kedourie's thought is variably elaborated in the contributions by Noël O'Sullivan, Michael Sutton and Peter Roberts in the volume under review. O'Sullivan ("Philosophy, Politics and Conservatism in the Thought of Elie Kedourie") probes Kedourie's understanding of modern ideologies (nationalism, Socialism, Liberalism, etc.) as, essentially, "secular religions" in that they are all based on promises of this-worldly salvation: what they truly do is propagate the belief that the Kingdom of God can be taken by storm and that political action is a passport to Heaven. This line of critical reasoning of course goes back a long way to Carl Becker's pioneering work on the religious origins of modern secular thought, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (1932), and has been fruitfully followed up by many a scholar since. Kedourie should be placed unequivocally in that continuum, and therefore O'Sullivan is right in hinting at his affinity with the historical and philosophical explorations of such of his contemporaries as Norman Cohn in *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957), Hans Jonas in *The Gnostic Religion* (1958) and Eric Voegelin in his *Modernity without Restraint* (1938-1951), as well as in his five-volume *Order and History* (1956-1987). O'Sullivan is also right in pointing out that Kedourie made his own distinctive contribution to this particular mode of inquiry by trying to understand how Western ideological politics spilled over and spread to non-Western societies – how the West knocked on the door of the East bringing along "slogans and arms".

Several of O'Sullivan's suggestions are thought-provoking and ought to be taken up by more systematic study. This is especially true of his repeated stress (O'Sullivan had made the same point in the 1998 *Festschrift* too) that Kedourie had detected the essentially Gnostic nature of all modern ideologies – the fact that, as surrogate religions, they are but secularised versions of the specifically Gnostic yearning of late Antiquity for a purified world in which spirit is released from all material bonds. The connections with Voegelin's work (for which, O'Sullivan informs us, Kedourie had indicated his sympathy) are here quite apparent, as is the need for further research on this interesting point.

In the same context, Michael Sutton's paper ("Elie Kedourie and Henri de Lubac: Anglo-French Musings on the Progeny of Joachim of Fiore") brings forward the similarities between Kedourie's thought and the work of other critics of the ideological style of politics – such as Julien Benda's *La trahison des clercs* (1927) and Raymond Aron's *L'opium des intellectuels* (1955). But Sutton focuses on the striking resemblance between Kedourie and another of his

contemporaries, the Jesuit theologian and historian of ideas Henri de Lubac. In his two-volume *La postérité spirituelle de Joachim de Fiore* (1979-80), de Lubac traces the origins of the secularised eschatological yearning of all modern ideologies back to the twelfth-century Cistercian monk Joachim of Fiore, who had first theorised the dawn of a New Age and introduced the idea of a new millennium. Like de Lubac, Sutton maintains, Kedourie too can be seen to follow this medieval Joachism forward to the Enlightenment – and, especially, to Gotthold Lessing's *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (1780), where the final progress of the human race is associated with a new eternal gospel.<sup>4</sup> Both de Lubac and Kedourie, then, are seen as exploring the multiple ways in which theological thought had been reshaped to heterodox ends, thereby leading to the emergence of immanentist ideas in modern politics. Needless to say that Sutton's valuable article not only illuminates this dimension in Kedourie's complex understanding of the secularisation process, but reaffirms the overall "Voegelian" streak in his thought.

Peter Roberts in his article ("History: Puzzle and People or Prescription and Prophecy?") shifts the focus to Kedourie's historiographical views – which, of course, have to be understood in conjunction with his critique of the dominance of ideological abstractions in modern conduct and thought. Striving, as he did, to demonstrate the dangers of accepting at face value either ideological rhetoric or its retrospective rationalisations, Kedourie was concerned to show the discrepancy between the world as conjured by the abstractions of ideologues and the world as experienced by real, living persons. Quite appositely, therefore, Roberts sums up Kedourie the historian as someone who was primarily concerned with rescuing history from both prescription and prophecy. And that could only mean, for Kedourie, finding out and narrating "what really happened".

By current standards, of course, this is regarded as a rather *passé* view of historiographical work. Yet, Kedourie's achievement is that he brought a lot of fresh air into this old and venerable tradition in historiography by his uncompromisingly down-to-earth and deeply humanist concerns.<sup>5</sup> In his own

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<sup>4</sup> This Kedourie did in his lectures on Hegel, published posthumously by his widow and daughter; see E. Kedourie, *Hegel and Marx: Introductory Essays*, London: Blackwell, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> In a review of the 1998 *Festschrift*, it is noted of Kedourie's humanism: "His gaze is fixed in pity and horror upon corpses of the innocent dead, who paid with their lives for the folly and pretentiousness of their proclaimed lords and masters"; unfashionably in the

words, history was but an endless attempt to restore “in all its singularity the meaning of thoughts and actions now dead and gone which once upon a time were the designs and choices of living men”.<sup>6</sup> No wonder, then, that he had little patience for the various modern vogues in historical writing, such as Edward Said’s anti-imperialist Orientalism or, perhaps more importantly, the Annales School and its “history without people”. Both Peter Roberts and Sylvia Kedourie (“Aspects of Elie Kedourie’s Work”) in their contributions to the present volume bring out the intellectual disdain Elie Kedourie felt toward all theorising that purported to demonstrate how events and the lives of men followed some prescribed course or intelligible overall pattern in history. And this, one may add, was no superficial reaction to the intellectual fashions of his day but a fully-fledged philosophical and epistemological stance, securely grounded in the British analytical tradition (A. N. Whitehead, R. G. Collingwood, and of course M. Oakeshott) in which Kedourie was steeped. But perhaps we may have recourse to one of Kedourie’s own (and rather overlooked) passages on the matter:

[W]ith Paul Vayne, we will say that history, that which is made as well as that which is written, is a matter not of science but of prudence; that it is a simple description without method; that in history *expliquer* is *expliciter* is *raconter*; that history has no depths to be plumbbed or main lines to be traced out; that it does not reveal what lies hidden “behind” what has taken place; that therefore there is no tenable distinction between *événementiel* and *non-événementiel*; that, finally, history does not need explanatory principles, but only words to tell how things were.<sup>7</sup>

It ought to be added, also, that to this rejuvenation of the verve of narrative history Kedourie brought, besides his method of painstaking and minute research, a terse but elegant prose and a sharp wit which helped restore another of the great virtues of history-telling: its enthralling style, its very narrativity. One simply dreads to imagine what he would have made of the “methods” and the “styles” of much of today’s post-modernist historiography.

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present age, the reviewer (D. Pryce-Jones) added, Kedourie “never found an end which justifies cruelty and bloodshed as a means to achieving it”. Quoted by O’Sullivan, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> E. Kedourie, “Genesis of a History”; appendix to the 2nd edition of his *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth*, London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000, p. 343.

<sup>7</sup> E. Kedourie, “New Histories of Old”, in *The Crossman Confessions, op. cit.*, p. 175.

Kedourie's views on and practice of historiography is one among a number of indications as to how close his thought was moving to that of his LSE colleague, the philosopher Michael Oakeshott. In the volume under review, as in the 1998 *Festschrift*, there are various references to their relation that can be read as invitations to closer study. Sylvia Kedourie is surely right when she points out that Oakeshott was no "mentor" to Kedourie, but there is no doubt either that their affinities are many and intense and await closer exploration.

For instance, Kedourie's historiographical views, scattered throughout his work, resemble very closely Oakeshott's more systematic meditations on the subject.<sup>8</sup> Or, to move back a little to a previous theme, Kedourie's disjunction of modern ideological politics with the traditional political ethic of empirical compromise also carries unmistakeable echoes of Oakeshott's treatment of the "rationalist politics" of modernity.<sup>9</sup> The same could be said with regard to Kedourie's profound grasp of the nature of traditional politics in the Ottoman case when compared to Oakeshott's insights into the texture of tradition in general.<sup>10</sup> Their conceptions of Conservatism too, as a "political tradition" rather than a systematic doctrine, as something supremely empirical and entirely non-ideological, are too close to go amiss. All these, of course, place them not only beside one another but in the longer continuum of political scepticism that can be said to have been inaugurated by Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the*

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. M. Oakeshott, "The Activity of Being an Historian", in his *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, London and New York: Methuen, 1962. See also his *On History and Other Essays*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983, as well as the posthumous collection *What is History? And Other Essays*, ed. Luke O'Sullivan, Exeter and Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> See M. Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics", in his *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, *op. cit.* Kedourie contrasts the two thus: "the difference between, on the one hand, ordinary politics in which conflict is the outcome of passion and interest and therefore may be settled by moderation and compromise, and on the other, the deadly, never-to-be-assuaged *acharnement* of the armed doctrine". E. Kedourie, "Conservatism and the Conservative Party", in *The Crossman Confessions*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Consider, for instance, the following passage by Kedourie on the content of traditional Ottoman rule, which whilst formulated in the Wittfogelian terms of Oriental Despotism, could hardly be less "Oakeshottian" in spirit: "In the traditional, despotic, order rulers and ruled shared a common universe of discourse. Their world-view was the same, they took for granted the government did not concern itself, or meddle with certain areas of private and social life like familial relations, education or the economy – provided of course that taxes were paid and the ruler's interest satisfied." *Democracy and Arab Political Culture*, London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1994, pp. 21-22.

*Revolution in France* (1790). It would perhaps be interesting to discover how close Kedourie and Oakeshott really were not only in their views on the intrinsic limitations of political activity *per se* but also in their respective philosophical anthropologies – some of Kedourie's views on the ineliminable imperfections of human nature, on the need for the gracious acceptance of everything that lies outside the control of human will, on the “yawn between thought and action”, or on the “fatal change which comes over thought when flesh and blood enact its consequences”<sup>11</sup> can surely be read through the lens of Oakeshott's philosophy as expounded in his early treatise *Experience and its Modes* (1933)<sup>12</sup> as well as in his final opus, *On Human Conduct* (1975).

Like Oakeshott's, Kedourie's critique of ideological politics in modernity was launched from the viewpoint of the few, relative but still quite real, advantages contained in the status quo ante of tradition. Compared to that, the cost of all modern ideologies, whether of the Left or of the Right, is the same – “in the end it all comes down to bayonets”.<sup>13</sup> There is no doubt about his views on this point, as he so lucidly explained himself:

The truth...seems to be that since the French Revolution, and particularly during this century, Europeans invented and perfected a demoniac kind of politics, whereby men of terrible and destructive energy, a Hitler or a Lenin, seduce large masses of people into the belief that political action is a passport to salvation, enjoining on their followers, to quote Nkrumah's parody of the Sermon on the Mount: “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all things shall be added unto you.” Such a style of politics is beyond left and right, and is irrelevant to such a distinction.<sup>14</sup>

For Kedourie, then, one of the most critical issues in modernity is that abstractions take hold of reality and eclipse tested experience – it is the very *idea* of social engineering, contained in all perfectionist discourses which take hold of societies evolving or wrung out of tradition, that attracts his critical attention. It is the intrusion of this-worldly utopias, no matter their particular

<sup>11</sup> E. Kedourie, *England and the Middle East: The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1921*, London: Bowes & Bowes, 1956, p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> Which we know Kedourie greatly admired; see M. Sutton, “Orientation in the 1960s”, in S. Kedourie (ed.), *Elie Kedourie, 1926-1992*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>13</sup> E. Kedourie, “The Lure of Revolutionary Revolution”, in *The Crossman Confessions*, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>14</sup> E. Kedourie, “The History of Ideas and Guilt by Association”, in *The Crossman Confessions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-147.

content, into the mundane management of human affairs, that has brought radicalism into modern politics:

By its very nature, this new style ran to extremes. It represented politics as a fight for principles, not the endless composition of claims in conflict. But since principles do not abolish interests, a pernicious confusion resulted. The ambitions of a state or the designs of a faction took on the purity of principle, compromise was treason, and a tone of exasperated intransigence became common between rivals and opponents. Consciousness of right bred a righteousness which excesses could never destroy, but only confirm. Terrorism became the hallmark of purity: "There is nothing," exclaimed St Just, "which so much resembles virtue as a great crime."<sup>15</sup>

This is a bleak diagnosis of the modern condition in politics – and, one may add, of its "post-modern" variety too, with its own politicised religions in the guise of fundamentalism. But, as is well known, Kedourie's critical focus was firmly turned on the most successful ideology of all, nationalism, and he is deservedly respected in the academic community for his path-breaking *Nationalism* (1960), as well as for his edition of (and brilliant introduction to) *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (1970). Unfortunately, though, in today's vogue his laborious path to the understanding of nationalism as, first and foremost, a manifestation of ideological politics is often shunned in favour of more popular theories currently in fashion. That such approaches tend themselves to rely on over-sweeping generalisations is perhaps a bitter confirmation of his views on the hold of abstraction over experience – and something Kedourie had specifically warned against, as the "sociological temptation" in the study of nationalism, in a 1984 "Afterword" to his *Nationalism*, where he is quite explicit on that score: "The assumption...is that nationalism is a doctrine, which is to say a complex of inter-related ideas about man, society and politics. Only if it is so understood does nationalist discourse become accessible to historical understanding."<sup>16</sup> In other parts of his work he also leaves no room for misunderstanding the central fallacy of nationalism *qua* ideology:

The idea of national self-determination assumes quite simply that the world is composed of separate, identifiable "nations", and claims that these nations are, as such, each entitled to form a sovereign state. Since, manifestly, the world is not what this theory assumes it to be, to make reality conform to the theory must involve endless upheaval and

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<sup>15</sup> E. Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 4th edition, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

disorder. For one thing, it is by no means easy indisputably to identify these “nations”; for another, to upset all existing arrangements in order to make national self-determination the sole and overriding aim of all political action is a recipe for perpetual war. National self-determination is thus a principle of disorder, not of order.<sup>17</sup>

It is just as well, then, that Paschalis Kitromilides (“Elie Kedourie’s Contribution to the Study of Nationalism”) chooses to remind us forcefully of the merits of Kedourie’s substantive historical approach and of his stress on the ideological nature of the phenomenon. It is precisely this insight into the understanding of nationalism’s various manifestations that is being lost, because the field, as Kitromilides notes, is today dominated “by the paroxysms of post-modernism and by the omniscience of anthropologists and sociologists”.

In his contribution to the 1998 *Festschrift*, Kitromilides had associated Kedourie’s grasp of the essence of nationalism with his own understanding of the tragic events in Cyprus in 1974.<sup>18</sup> It seems therefore somberly fitting that his article in the present volume is preceded by a hitherto unpublished report submitted by Kedourie less than a year before the Greek junta’s *coup*, the Turkish invasion and the *de facto* partition of the island. Kedourie was acting as *rapporteur* to an international seminar held in November 1973 in Rome, at the invitation of the American Center for Mediterranean Studies. His report, written the following month, is a succinct and judicious summation of the basic contradiction underlying the Cyprus Problem: that of a clash between the demands of nationalist ideology (whether Greek or Turkish) and the demands of peaceful coexistence under a regime of political democracy. The latter’s central condition, of course, is that majority and minority should not be permanent – but this is exactly what had been precluded in advance in the Cypriot case. It was the infestation of Cypriot politics by nationalist passions that had inevitably made such a mockery of the 1960 constitution of independence and had forced a new generation of Cypriots to grow up during 1963-1973 along nationally separatist lines. Kedourie could not of course have foreseen the tragic events that were to follow in a few months’ time. But his admonition that the only hope for a united island was that Cypriots should feel increasingly at home in the Republic of Cyprus, and should have strong reasons

<sup>17</sup> E. Kedourie, “A New International Disorder”, in *The Crossman Confessions, op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>18</sup> P. M. Kitromilides, “The Debt of a Student of Nationalism”, in S. Kedourie (ed.), *Elie Kedourie, 1926-1992, op. cit.*, esp. p. 94.

to prefer independence to being merged into another state, seems to presage prophetically the emergence of non-ethnic “Cypriotism” on both sides of today’s divided island.

There is a plethora of intriguing issues that arises out of Kedourie’s work which the present review cannot go into for reasons of space, though some of them are discussed or touched upon in the volume under review. I would somewhat randomly single out, as necessary additions to the research agenda that is building up on this important scholar, Kedourie’s understanding of the relationship between religion and politics, and its Durkheimean overtones; the Sorelian dimension in his conceptualisation of tradition; his creative adaptation of Karl Wittfogel’s concept of Oriental Despotism; his evaluation of the relative merits of Ottoman rule in the Middle East; his views on Judaism and on Zionism; his profound understanding of both traditional and modern Islam; his fascination with Hegel; and, last but not least, his deep grasp of the existential problems besetting the individual *manqué* of modernity – and his affinities on that count with Isaiah Berlin and his *Russian Thinkers* (1948) or *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* (1990).

For, as much as he may have approached the political phenomenon with sceptical detachment and suspicion (like a Professor of Oncology looking at cancer, as Cyril Mango memorably put it),<sup>19</sup> Kedourie was no cynic. On the contrary, his pragmatic view of politics runs alongside a profound empathy for the human beings caught in the ideological mindset and its consequences. Such persons included not only the actual victims of ideological politics (the “speechless masses” for which he pleads in most of his work) but also the petty ideologue, the lost soul, the failed politician, the true believer, the angry youth. It is the “tragedy of success” of this New Man that really captures Kedourie’s deeper interest, and it is his attempt at understanding the disoriented individual of modernity that underlies his distinctive humanism. In his own original way, then, what Kedourie does is hearken to the birth pangs of the new subjectivity emerging with the dissolution of traditional order. That is why Kedourie’s work, while covering seemingly disparate subjects, is so impressive in its substantive cohesion – as if the small diagnostic truths he unearths in most of his writings were but the foundations for a deeper kind of understanding, such that a Dostoyevsky or, better still, a Turgenev would have appreciated.

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in O’Sullivan, p. 55.

However far off the mark these last reflections may be, one cannot deny the fecundity of Kedourie's thought and the endless stimulation it affords to his readers. It is indeed fortunate that interpretative studies such as those contained in this slender and elegant volume are enhancing our understanding of Kedourie's genuine originality.

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