Chapter Four

Said and the Margins: In Continuum

Said's memoir *Out of Place* (1999) recounts the story of his boyhood in detail. It delineates the paradoxes of identity that Said had to traverse through the early years of his life. He starts out by discussing the oddity of his name—the English "Edward" yoked to the unmistakably Arabic "Said" (*Out* 3). He later came to know that he was named Edward after the Prince of Wales, but could find no grandparents named Said. He was also unaware about which language he had spoken first—English or Arabic. Bridging these two identity-markers was never easy for him. Said talks about "this unsettled sense of many identities—mostly in conflict with each other—all of my life, together with an acute memory of the despairing feeling that I wish we could have been all-Arab, or all-European and American, or all-Orthodox Christian, or all-Muslim, or all-Egyptian, and so on" (*Out* 5).

His mother Hilda was his most intimate companion and Said's descriptions about her border almost on a mother-fixation. Said holds her responsible for many of his long-standing habits and perspectives, his interest in music and language, and also "the aesthetics of appearance, style, and form" (*Out* 12). On the other hand, his father Wadie was a strict disciplinarian, which resulted in Said repressing his instincts and desires. Yet Wadie's precept of "Never give up" did influence Said positively (*Out* 9).

Said recounts that though his parents lived in Cairo in 1935, he was born in Jerusalem. His mother had earlier given birth to a male child in a Cairo hospital that had died soon after birth, and his parents had therefore opted for Jerusalem to prevent another hospital disaster. He was delivered at home by a Jewish midwife named Madame Baer (*Out* 20). Said's family home was in Talbiyah, "a part of West Jerusalem that was sparsely inhabited but had been built and lived in exclusively by Palestinian Christians" (*Out* 20).

Said mentions that he took delight in breaking the disciplinary boundaries set by his parents, always looking for "doors that were kept ajar," and reading books to find out what was hidden in them (*Out* 31). He would expand the story-boundaries of books and films, and was fed on fairy tales and Biblical stories by his mother and grandmother. It had never felt strange to him that "the cinematic Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sinbad, whose genies, Baghdad cronies, and sultans" had completely possessed his fantasies, had all "American accents," and "spoke no Arabic" (*Out* 34).

His piano lessons began at the age of six, but he did find the practicing of scales and Czerny exercises running against his "gifts of memory and melody" (*Out* 35). It was only when he was fifteen that he could buy records and enjoy the operas of his own choice. It was the BBC's Sunday afternoon "Nights at the Opera" that opened the world of Strauss and Wagner to him (*Out* 35).

The Gezira Preparatory School which he attended from 1941 to42, and then from 1943 to 46, gave him the first extended contact with colonial

authority “in the sheer Englishness of its teachers and many of its students” (*Out* 42). Outside school, an invisible cordon kept him hidden from them. The school also meted out corporal punishment for many of his deeds. He sadly recalls how he was thrown out of the Gezira Club because he was “an Arab” (*Out* 44). In 1946, when he entered the “Cairo School for American Children,” he found that while all the other American children ate “neatly cut white-bread sandwiches of peanut butter and jelly,” he would have “cheese and prosciutto in Shami bread” (*Out* 81).

Said does record his teenage struggle between body and desire, his few love trysts, and his failed first marriage. His adolescence saw the strict regime of “hours and half-hours governed by classes, church, private lessons, homework, piano practice, and sports, until bedtime” (*Out* 105). The day was always governed by the watch and strictly divided into periods of decided labour. A system of impersonal discipline was ingrained in him as a result of this.

November 1, 1947, was Said’s twelfth birthday, and also the eve of the Balfour Declaration, which he calls “the blackest day in our history” (*Out* 107). Palestine soon became a place “never to be returned, barely mentioned, missed silently and pathetically” (*Out* 115). Years later when Said started to get involved in the politics of his homeland, both of his parents strongly disapproved of it. The Said family was always protected by their “talismanic U.S passports” through customs and immigration offices, but their mother had to face the brunt of being a Palestinian during these protocols since she did not

have any U.S passport (*Out* 117). Said links her "anomalous existence" to the "shattering collective experience of dispossession" (*Out* 118).

Said narrates how his Aunt Nabiha's charity work had a profound influence on him. It was through her that he first experienced the horror and anger of the Palestinian dispossession. She would be always taking care of children and other people with medical issues. Said could feel the suffering of the refugees, who were branded as "the Others," and their desolation "of being without a country or a place to return to, of being unprotected by any national authority or institutions, of no longer being able to make sense of the past except as bitter, helpless regret, nor of the present with its daily queuing, anxiety-filled searches for jobs, and poverty, hunger, and humiliations" (*Out* 119).

Said lacked contact with Palestinian life during the eleven years of his American education. He admired Eisenhower for his resolute position against Israel, while he revolted at Eleanor Roosevelt's avid support of the Jewish state, and could not forgive Martin Luther King for his warmth of passion for Israel's victory in the 1967 war (*Out* 141). Said believed that his greatest gift was memory, by which he could recall visually, whole passages in books and recreate them, giving them further life. This helped him to weave connections between "the trivial surface reality and a deeper level of awareness of another life of beautiful, interrelated parts—parts of ideas, passages of literature and music, history, personal memory, daily observation" (*Out* 165).

Said's writing of his memoir was hastened by the discovery of "chronic lymphocytic leukemia," in 1991, which worsened his physical health (*Out* 215). Mortality became an impinging concern, and the process of writing was a therapy to him. He fondly remembers Kanti Rai, the extraordinary Indian doctor who took care of him during his trying days. The phases of memoir writing and his illness were simultaneous, and he notes: "This record of a life and ongoing course of a disease . . . are one and the same, it could be said the same but deliberately different" (*Out* 216).

The two professors who left a lasting impression on Said were R. P. Blackmur, who was a sheer genius in uncovering the layered meanings of poetry and fiction, and Arthur Szathmary, Professor of Philosophy, who embodied to him "the intellectual life" (*Out* 277). He winds up the book by calling himself "a cluster of flowing currents," an idea that he prefers to "the idea of a solid self," because these diverse currents require "no reconciling, no harmonizing," and it is these dissonances that have shaped him, and made him actually prefer "being not quite right and out of place" (*Out* 295).

Iona Luca points out that Said's memoir *Out of Place* "creates a Palestinian site of memory, and finally turns Palestine from a trope into a full-fledged topos," and that it "works two ways, just like a Derridean *pharmakon*. Given the reactions of the press, it certainly works as poison: given that he fulfills his mission to narrate, it does function as remedy, healing"(140). Luca adds that his autobiography "goes beyond the old model of literary genre with more or less clear boundaries and contours, stubbornly resisting any possible

fixity," and inhabits "a third space of continuous becoming, the space of the Deleuzian 'AND,'" marking "points of crisis, spaces where conflicting values, ideas, and beliefs converge only to diverge anew along lines that construct even wider splits and conflicts" (140).

The 1993 BBC Reith Lectures by Edward Said was compiled together as *The Representations of the Intellectual* (1994). For the young Said, the BBC was always associated with "truth." This notion might indeed be a "vestige of colonialism" but Said notes that it is nevertheless true that "the BBC has a position in public life enjoyed neither by government agencies like the Voice of America nor by the American networks, including CNN" (*The Representations* ix).

Said's lectures navigate the multifarious dimensions of the term "intellectual" and try to unravel its complexities. Said notes that intellectuals have "neither offices to protect nor territory to consolidate and guard"; their representations do not win them friends in high places, or official honours, and it definitely is "a lonely condition," but one that is always better than a "gregarious tolerance for the way things are" (*The Representations* xv).

Said grounds his lectures on Antonio Gramsci's statement in *Prison Notebooks*that "all men are intellectuals . . . but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals" (qtd. in *The Representations* 3). Gramsci had distinguished between the "traditional intellectuals like teachers, priests, and administrators who continue to do the same thing from generation to generation," and the "organic intellectuals" who were "directly connected to

classes or enterprises that used intellectuals to organize interests, gain more power, get more control" (*The Representations* 3-4). While the organic intellectuals strive hard to change society, the traditional intellectuals remain more or less conservative.

Said also relies on Julien Benda's definition in *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, which celebrated the intellectuals as "a tiny band of super-gifted and morally endowed philosopher-kings who constitute the conscience of mankind" (*The Representations* 4). In fact, Benda's treatise is a vehement attack on the intellectuals who have abandoned their calling and have compromised on principles (*The Representations* 4). Said affirms that "real intellectuals" stand up to truth and justice, disregarding the consequences, and are hence "a clerisy, very rare creatures" (*The Representations* 4). These "clerics" would thus be different from the laity, which is instead motivated by "material advantage, personal advancement, and . . . a close relationship with secular powers" (*The Representations* 4).

Said makes a further distinction that there is no such thing as a "private intellectual," because as soon as you set down your words onto a page, you enter the public world; nor is there someone known only as the "public intellectual," someone who maintains existence just as the spokesperson or symbol of a cause or a movement (*The Representations* 9). The intellectual does face a sense of powerlessness and marginality when lined up against the lucrative choice of aligning with institutions, corporations, governments, or insider groups that make important decisions. Transcending seductive

transgressions, and unmasking reality, the intellectual's mandate would be "to unearth the forgotten, to make connections that were denied, to cite alternative courses of action" (*The Representations* 17).

Commenting on the sad nature of exile, Said notes that "banishment" was a dreadful punishment in pre-modern times, severing one from his family, home, and nation. While the leper, and social and moral untouchables, were once subjected to exile, during the twentieth century it became the turn of whole communities and peoples to undergo exile due to impersonal forces like war, famine, and disease, as against the "punishment of special individuals—like the great Latin poet Ovid, who was banished from Rome to a remote town on the Black Sea" (*The Representations* 35). The Armenians, for instance, who had lived throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and had fled to Beirut, Aleppo, Jerusalem, and Cairo due to the genocidal attacks on them by the Turks (1914-1923), were further dislocated during the revolutionary upheavals of the post-World War Two period (*The Representations* 35).

Said also comments on how exile has produced intellectuals like Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezniski—two extremely high officers in the Presidential administration of United States—who were exiles from Nazi Germany and communist Poland respectively, but have adjusted to their new locale, and have contributed their immense talents to their adopted country (*The Representations* 37-38). In fact, during the Second World War, the U.S. did play the "role of the savior" to "a whole generation of scholars, artists and

scientists who had fled Western fascism for the metropolis of the new Western *imperium*" (*The Representations* 38).

Said does distinguish between the "actual" and "metaphorical" conditions of exile and adds that the "exile tends to be happy with the idea of unhappiness," which in fact becomes a temporary habitation and style of thought (*The Representations* 39). He mentions Adorno's remarks that "the hope of the intellectual is not that he will have an effect on the world, but that someday, somewhere, someone will read what he wrote exactly as he wrote it" (*The Representations* 42). The intellectual-in-exile inhabits a marginal existence, outside the comforts of privilege and power, and remains in a state of in-betweenness, constantly suspended, which can become "a rigid ideological position, a sort of dwelling whose falseness is covered over in time, and to which one can all too easily become accustomed" (*The Representations* 43). But Adorno does not mention the "pleasures of exile," which according to Said are: the "different arrangements of living," and "eccentric angles of vision" (*The Representations* 43).

The intellectual is not like a Robinson Crusoe who tries to colonize his tiny island, but more like a Marco Polo who travels constantly with an unceasing sense of the marvelous and always remains a "a provisional guest, not a freeloader, conqueror, or raider" (*The Representations* 44). This makes him responsive to "innovation and experiment rather than the authoritatively given *status quo*," and prods him to move continuously rather than stand still (*The Representations* 47).

The intellectual does gets hemmed in by the pressures of professionalism, to which Said offers the antidote of "amateurism"—"the desire to be moved not by profit or reward" but by the "love for and unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across lines and barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a specialty, in caring for ideas and values despite the restrictions of a profession" (*The Representations* 57). Said decries the kind of excessive specialization and technical formalism which makes one lose sight of the "raw effort of constructing either art or knowledge," wherein a specialist of literature has to shut out history, music, or politics, and be tame and bereft of the sense of discovery and excitement, donning the garb of laziness, ending up "doing what others tell you, because that is your specialty after all" (*The Representations* 57).

In this regard, Said points out the example of Noam Chomsky, who, though a linguist, has been invited by mathematicians to speak about his theories, and is bestowed with respect despite his relatively ignorant mathematical lingo. On the other hand, when Chomsky tries to speak about the U.S. foreign policy, especially from an antagonistic perspective, experts on foreign policy try to prevent him, citing his lack of certification as a foreign policy expert (*The Representations* 59). To be an amateur would thus mean to be someone who considers that being "a thinking and concerned member of a society one is entitled to raise moral issues at the heart of even the most technical and professionalized activity," and to reinvigorate even the most

professional routines by not just doing them, but by asking “why one does it,” and “who benefits from it” (*The Representations* 62).

The mode of intellectual intervention should be in a way which is likely to be heard best, and represented in the most apt method to influence the processes of peace and justice. Said confirms that “the intellectuals’ voice is lonely, but it has resonance only because it associates itself freely with the reality of a movement, the aspirations of a people, the common pursuit of a shared ideal” (*The Representations* 75). The responsibility of the intellectual is to speak truth to power by “carefully weighing the alternatives, picking the right one, and then intelligently representing it where it can do the most good and cause the right change” (*The Representations* 75).

Having been an intellectual who took direct participation in the Palestine National Council, Said cautions that “if your eye is on your patron, you cannot think as an intellectual, but only as a disciple or acolyte. In the back of your mind there is the thought that you must please, and not displease” (*The Representations* 89). The true intellectual should avoid this trap and be a “secular being,” with a mind always alert and skeptical, standing and talking back to authority, “without hardening into an institution, or a kind of automaton acting at the behest of a system or method” (*The Representations* 90). Said did indeed live up to his ideals.

Power, Politics, and Culture (2001), edited by Gauri Viswanathan, is a fascinating collection of Edward Said’s interviews. Viswanathan notes in her Introduction that “books offering critical perspectives on Edward Said have

become a growth industry in themselves" (Viswanathan xi). Yet the relevance of a collection of interviews is that they have taken place in locations spanning Asia, Middle East, Europe and the United States, in both print and broadcast media, confirming the world's passionate interest in his humanism, erudition, commitment, and alternative views. Said's ability to revisit, defend, and elaborate his arguments clearly indicate the range and fluidity of his thought (Viswanathan xi, xii).

Though the book is divided into two sections titled "Performance and Criticism," and "Scholarship and Activism" in order to facilitate "the reader's grasp of the parallel and often intersecting strands of development in politics and culture," Viswanathan notes that these divisions are arbitrary since "Said rarely talks about literature without also engaging in politics" (Viswanathan xix). The book tries to capture Said's "speaking voice," "interlocutory presence," and "pedagogical engagement," reiterating how powerful a speaker and teacher he was. These interviews contain the sparks set off from well-considered questions, following a chain of reflection and dialogue (Viswanathan xx).

Talking about the role of the literary academic, whose base is the university, Said points out that "he or she exists in a condition of institutionalized marginality," yet teachers do keep alive "irrefutable things in the life of society," by addressing "the mind"—tutoring, doctoring, informing, evaluating, criticizing, and reforming it (Viswanathan 19). Said vehemently criticizes the trait of Orientalism which equated Arabic literature with the

Koran, and notes that no one would ever propose an opposite field called Occidentalism which studies Christianity, instead of Shakespeare, and the literary figures of the West. Said pronounces that the Orientalists “do not know how to *read*, and therefore happily ignore literature” (*Power* 33). It is no accident that literature and the human subject behind it is hidden from view. The parallels between Orientals, Blacks, and women are striking—all being victims of total political and cultural usurpation. Said notes that to understand the Arab world and its happenings, it would be better to read say “five recent poems, novels, or essays than by reading a whole shelf of publications put out by . . . any avowed Orientalist . . .” (Viswanathan 34).

Imre Salusinszky makes these perceptive comments about Said:

> The work of Edward Said represents “practical criticism” in a new, powerful and, above all, oppositional mode. Said’s has been the skeptical voice inside literary theory, constantly reminding it of how impractical its habitual strategies are, since they serve (like the older “practical criticism” associated with I. A. Richards) to split literature and criticism off from wider social practices. By conceiving of “literariness” or “the aesthetic” as isolatable affects open to formal theorizing, critics have marginalized both literature and themselves; and by failing to see the way in which literature—and criticism—are intercalated in a wider field of power and action, they have consciously or unconsciously served the interests of ruling-

> class power. Said writes against critical modes which, like deconstruction, have a tendency to substitute a pure theoretical consciousness for a critical or oppositional one. (Viswanathan 69)

It is this oppositional voice of Said that created powerful reverberations in the corridors of power, dislodging lethargy, inaction, and insensitivity.

Said's passion for literature was sparked off not just by his interest in it, but also because it was connected to a large number of other human activities—philosophy, music, history, political science, and sociology. The other alternative to him was to return to family business, which was quite impossible due to the prevailing background of Middle Eastern business, which always retained a ruling class fervour (Viswanathan70). Said mentions that, to many, being a Palestinian and a literary critic simultaneously meant a contradiction, "somebody who is supposedly a terrorist carrying on in a fairly civilized way" (Viswanathan 73).

Said acknowledges the influence of Harold Bloom on him, especially the notion of "intertextuality," but rejects Bloom's doctrine of criticism as "being totally personal and without context" (Viswanathan 83). He dismisses clerical attitudes that mystify, gnosticize, and theologize literature, by reverting to a hermetic, hierophantic mode, which obscures language. Said, on the contrary, was interested in illuminating literature, "putting it in conjunction with other things," and considering it involved with many other things, "in an enchanting way" (Viswanathan 84).When asked whether his interest in

historicism has made him write less about literature and more about "appropriative structures," Said answers that he indeed finds it tough to "separate out literature from other things, except in the curricular sense" (Viswanathan 85). He also admits that he is more of a "plot and narrative person," thereby accounting for the lack of talk about lyric poetry in his work (Viswanathan 87).

The university, to Said, was a privileged locus which allowed critics like him and Chomsky to have an audience, yet the American university, while fostering a critical consciousness, really promoted individualism, rather than a class consciousness (Viswanathan 90). Said believed that teaching was an almost "impossible" task and the best one could do was to "read with students" (Viswanathan 90). His vision of the teaching process was as follows:

> I've always thought of my teaching, which I do all the time with great excitement and nervousness, as actually performing acts of analysis or reading or interpretation, rather than providing students with methodologies that they can go out and apply to situations. In other words, I think of myself as providing opportunities for students and friends, rather than encoding insights in some way that can make them useful tools later on. I just don't seem to be able to do that. (Viswanathan 146)

He was least interested in creating disciples or conveying a method or message to be adhered to in an acolyte fashion.

Jennifer Wicke and Michael Sprinker, in their interview with Said, point out that he had always stated "I've never said I'm a Marxist" and not that "I'm not a Marxist," to which Said replies that he believes Marxism to be "an orthodoxy, an ontology, even an epistemology" which strikes him as "extraordinarily insufficient," and that his encounter with Marxism has been primarily academic, and it has always struck him as "more limiting than enabling" (Viswanathan 158). He notes that, within the Palestinian movement, the Popular Front, which declares itself to be a Marxist movement, does not qualify to be so in its rhetoric, analyses, and organizational practices; it badly lacks a popular base while the Fatah party, on the other hand, which has a mass base, is not a Marxist party but a nationalist one (Viswanathan 159).

Ruminating on the tensions between being a literary scholar and simultaneously involved in political issues, Said admits to have turned down political offices that were offered to him, because his literary reflections required privacy and solitude. He comments: "Politics is the art of the gregarious, in a way. It is the art of being with a lot of other people. And I am not made that way . . ." (Viswanathan 173).

Said's critical enterprise shifted the thrust from "time" and "history," to "space" and "geography." He was in fact interested in the interaction between the two. Said understands globalized history essentially as the struggle over territory. This struggle over geography was also accompanied by a struggle over justification, philosophy, and epistemology, which made it possible for England to make Australia a penal colony, America the new Eden,

and Palestine the Jewish homeland, disregarding the rights of the people who were already living there (Viswanathan 251). Reading texts which deal with this painful history would require a careful decolonizing attention to its nuances, unlike reading it for a test or for an English course, stripping it off all assumptions, rejecting and rewriting its history from the point of view of the colonies.

Viswanathan points out that Said always believed that scholarship matters and that there was “a battle to be fought over imagery, information, and vocabulary” (Viswanathan 262). His work has made readers aware that “knowledge production is never disinterested, that it is deeply rooted in the materiality of history, circumstance, and location” (Viswanathan 262). Said interestingly adds that though he had good teachers, he never had “great” teachers, from under whose sheer force he had to wrestle free, thereby making it easy for him to discover for himself the events around him (Viswanathan 265-266). This in fact made him an independent critical voice, which steered clear of prevailing orthodoxies and ruling dogmas. His notion of the role of the intellectual in society was always against a “priestly tradition” which turned out disciples who thought what one thinks, and did what one does (Viswanathan 266). As a teacher, Said felt that he always learnt during the class, depending on student reactions and comments to stimulate lines of thought and discussion which he had not prepared beforehand (Viswanathan 280). He visualized education “as a form of resistance against the invasion of

the mind by wall-to-wall television, prepackaged news and the rest" (Viswanathan 283). He was thus a teacher-educator par excellence.

In an interview given to Ari Shavit of the Tel Aviv *Ha'aretz Magazine* in 2000, Said comments: "Of course. I'm the last Jewish intellectual. . . . The only true follower of Adorno. Let me put it this way: I'm a Jewish-Palestinian" (Viswanathan 458). Gil Z. Hochberg notes that, by making this statement, "Said seems to . . . oppose Zionism (as a ethnonational ideology) to Judaism, or at least to a critical Jewish sensibility as observed in the writings of Adorno, Hannah Arendt, or more recently Zeev Sternheel, Uri Avnery, and Ilan Pappe" (47). These words effectively scandalize Said's readers, not only because they know that he is not Jewish, but also because of his juxtaposition of "Jewish" and "Palestinian." Hochberg observes:

> The hyphenated identity Said proclaims collapses the structure of oppositional differences without, however, erasing difference itself: 'Arab' or Palestinian no longer appears in opposition to 'Jew'; neither Jew nor Palestinian vanishes into the other. It is this keeping-in-difference inseparability of the Jew and the Arab that Said emphasizes in his various writings about memory and the politics of memory in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. (47-48)

Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays (2001) contains more than forty six essays by Said on varied topics written over a

span of thirty five years, many of which first appeared in *Raritan Review*, *The London Review of Books*, and *Critical Inquiry*. In its Introduction, Said notes:

> The greatest single fact of the past three decades has been, I believe, the vast human migration attendant upon war, colonialism and decolonization, economic and political revolution, and such devastating occurrences as famine, ethnic cleansing, and great power machinations. . . . Exiles, émigrés, refugees, and expatriates uprooted from their lands must make do in their new surroundings, and the creativity as well as the sadness that can be seen in what they do is one of the experiences that has still to find its chroniclers . . . . (*Reflections* xiv)

The process of exile is an essentially painful one, and so too is its recollection. The language used to describe it sears by the experience. Said harshly condemns the modes of literature study which have degenerated into a "professionalized and technologized jargon" juggling with the "postmodern" and "lacking in engagement with world," with an "ostrichlike . . . unreflective pseudo-healthiness" paraded as "traditional scholarship" (*Reflections* xxxi-xxxii). The historical experience of dislocation and exile can open up to these approaches an "invigorating presence of a banished or forgotten reality," and it is this particular experience that Said tries to "reclaim, understand, and situate" (*Reflections* xxxii).

Exile is accompanied by a sense of dissonance and disorientation, caused by all the dispersion and distancing. The effort at restoration, reiteration, and affirmation sometimes leads to a "counter-conversion," which Said defines as "the wish to find a new system, territory, or allegiance to replace the lost one, to think in terms of panaceas and new, more complete visions that simply do away with complexity, difference and contradiction" (*Reflections* xxxiii). Yet there are "alternative communities" that do still preserve their memory and private subjectivity, as evidenced by Jean Mohr's photographs of Palestine. Said believes this interchange between politics and aesthetics to be "highly productive and endlessly recurring" (*Reflections* xxxiv). Said adds that "it is what one remembers of the past and how one remembers it that determine how one sees the future" (*Reflections* xxxv).

Commenting critically on the non-interference and rigid specialization of the academy, and the humanities in particular, Said warns of the vested interests of "highly mobilized business elites" lurking beneath (*Reflections* 144). Literary criticism, which tries to mind "its own business," lands up with no community responsibility whatsoever, proliferating "private critical languages with an absurdist bent" (*Reflections* 145). The onslaught of market forces reduces jobs for the young graduates, proving the "marginality of scholarship that is premised on its own harmless social obsolescence" (*Reflections* 145). This is accompanied by a sheer increase of critical journals promoting indiscriminate publication. Such strict professionalism is "deliberately oblivious of the complicity between the academy, the

government, and the corporations, decorously silent on the large questions of social, economic, and foreign policy" (*Reflections* 145). He, therefore, believes that it is not a stance of passive non-interference that is to be taken but that of "*interference*, a crossing of borders and obstacles," crossing from the realms deemed to be subjective and powerless, like literature for example, to the realms which are objective and powerful, as covered by journalism (*Reflections* 145).

Continuing his reflections on exile, Said describes it as a condition "compelling to think about but terrible to experience, . . . an unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place" (*Reflections* 173). Though its story may contain occasional heroic episodes of triumph and glory, its persistent strain is that of estrangement and sadness. It always mourns "the loss of something left behind forever" (*Reflections* 173). This motif of terminal loss has permeated modern culture so pervasively that the age itself seems to be one of anxiety, alienation and orphaning. Said points out George Steiner's observation that "a whole genre of twentieth century Western literature is 'extraterritorial,' a literature by and about exiles, symbolizing the age of the refugee" (*Reflections* 174). In a civilization which has made so many homeless, art has been created by those very same unhoused wanderers. For example, the act of reciting poems in Beirut by Faiz Ahmad Faiz—the poet exiled from Zia's Pakistan—in the company of Eqbal Ahmad, a Pakistani friend and fellow exile, is termed by Said as nothing less than the "enactment of a homecoming expressed through defiance and loss" (*Reflections* 175).

Nationalism and exile are inextricably connected. Nationalism tries to assert a sense of belonging and heritage, by creating a community of language, culture, and customs, thereby fending off exile (*Reflections* 176). Said feels that the interplay between nationalism and exile is like "Hegel's dialectic of servant and master, opposites informing and constituting each other" (*Reflections* 176). The early phase of all nationalisms contains seeds of estrangement, which later solidify into a *habitus*, "the coherent amalgam of practices linking habit with inhabitance," as Pierre Bourdieu terms it (*Reflections* 176).

"Exile" belongs to the perilous territory of "not-belonging," beyond the frontier, between "us" and the "outsiders" (*Reflections* 177). This was the space to which, in primitive era, people were banished, and in modern times, as Said points out, huge "aggregates of humanity loiter as refugees and displaced persons" (*Reflections* 177). But when the threat of a massacre looms large, an exilic exodus maybe better than staying behind. In exile there is no security; it forces one to draw lines around, fostering "an exaggerated sense of group solidarity and a passionate hostility to outsiders" (*Reflections* 178).

The standoff between the Zionist Jews and Arab Palestinians shows how one people have been turned into exile by the "proverbial people of exile" (*Reflections* 178). Said is of the opinion that it was the exile milieu that nurtured the fierce nature of Palestinian national identity, "where the slightest deviation from the accepted group line is an act of the rankest treachery and

disloyalty" (*Reflections* 178). In exile, the solidity and satisfaction of the earth is lost; homecoming turns into a mirage.

Commenting on artists in exile, Said notes that their vision bears an unpleasant stubbornness, missing composure and serenity. He points out that Dante, who was banished from Florence, uses eternity as a place for settling old scores, in his *The Divine Comedy* (*Reflections* 182). On the other hand, James Joyce was a writer who voluntarily chose exile to give more force to his artistic talent (*Reflections* 182).

Creating a nation out of exile requires "constructing a national history, reviving an ancient language, founding national institutions like libraries and universities" (*Reflections* 184). The intellectual mission of an exile, as identified by Adorno—who was himself an/in exile—is to refuse the commodification of all aspects of life, resist its prefabrications, and ruthlessly oppose an "administered" world (*Reflections* 184). Said comments: "The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience" (*Reflections* 185).

Said has an interesting essay titled "Jungle Calling" in which he tries to analyze the character Tarzan, pointing out that Tarzan has not been studied seriously by critics (*Reflections* 327-336). He points out that the original Tarzan of the novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs is a "cultivated hero," whose

real identity is John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, whereas the movie Tarzan played by Johnny Weismuller "is a barely human creature, monosyllabic, primitive, simple" (*Reflections* 328). Said opines that Weismuller's Tarzan was born out of "Burroughs's Anglophilic and racist fantasy" (*Reflections* 328). Though several actresses have played Jane, Said prefers Maureen O' Sullivan's portrayal of Jane. Sullivan incidentally was Irish, with a British accent, despite Burroughs's Jane Porter hailing from Wisconsin (*Reflections* 328).

Said observes that in the course of the several Tarzan films, an "embourgeoisement of the Tarzan family" took place wherein the basic loincloth costumes progressed from "tiny fig leaves" to "flappy dowager beach costumes," the sexual motif was reduced, and the tree house grew more elaborate (*Reflections* 329). The baby son of Tarzan and Jane, who was known as "Boy," was incidentally adopted "so as not to clutter their sexual paradise with the digressive rituals of childbearing," for pregnancy would have hampered Jane's wearing of costume or going for a swim (*Reflections* 329). To Said, Tarzan is an "infantilized 'lord of the jungle,'" "an overgrown child running around in a bathing suit, escaping grown-up responsibility," an "embodiment of unresolved . . . Oedipal tension" (*Reflections* 335). He is an "immigrant," and an "orphan without upward mobility or social advancement," a "forlorn survivor" in "permanent exile" (*Reflections* 335-336).

Aime Cesaire's poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939), translated as "Notebook of a Return to the Native Land," states a vision of integration which Said always found inspiring: "no race possesses the monopoly of beauty, of intelligence, of force, and there is a place for all at the rendez-vous of victory" (qtd. in *Reflections* 379). Without this integrative vision of a "place for all" at the victory stand, Said believes that "one is condemned to an impoverishing politics of knowledge" which recognizes only the assertion and reassertion of identity; if one is weak then the affirmation adds to nothing more than superficial attention, akin to that given to "an individual in a crowded room at a roll call" (*Reflections* 379). This has proved disastrous to the postcolonials who have been forced to exist as "marginals" outside the conduits of power. Said asserts that "marginality" and "homelessness" are not "to be gloried in; they are to be brought to an end, so that more, and not fewer, people can enjoy the benefits of what has for centuries been denied the victims of race, class, or gender" (*Reflections* 385).

Said always enjoyed the academic space he inhabited, while being its severe critic too. He draws two images to represent this space: one is that of the king and potentate, who holds reign and sway, surveying everything in front, with detachment and mastery, having legitimacy as domain. The other is that of the traveller "who depends not on power but on motion, on a willingness to go into different worlds," and always in search of "new rhythms and rituals" (*Reflections* 404). The traveller, unlike the potentate, does not guard just one place but "*crosses over*, traverses territory, and abandon fixed

positions, all the time" (*Reflections* 404). This was what Said believed academic freedom to be, and what a constant traveller he turned out to be, in the ceaseless quest for knowledge.

Freud and the Non-European (2003) is the lecture delivered by Said at the London Freud Museum in 2001, which was initially cancelled by the Freud Institute and Museum, Vienna, under the guise of the volatile "political situation in Middle East" (*From Oslo* 55). The lecture was thus an exilic act performed by Said. While introducing Said, Christopher Bollas conveys that "In many respects, Said's writings not only constitute a literary resistance to the 'intellectual genocide' that takes place in too many Western narratives about the Palestinian, but simultaneously function as a resistance to a schizophrenogenic imposition" (*Freud and the Non-European* 6).

The lecture is Said's sustained interrogation of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*. Freud has been a "marginal" interest in Said's writings. David Herman notes that "For Said there are several different Freuds. In *Beginnings,* in 1975, there was the French Freud of literary theory, imported via Lacan, Althusser and Derrida. There is no trace of that here. What we get instead, at least in the beginning, is a post-colonialist critique of Freud the Eurocentric" (Rev. of *Freud and the Non-European*). Said is deeply interested in Freud's "problems of the Other," and "what stands outside the limits of Reason" (*Freud* 14). Freud views Moses as a Semitic hero, a non-European outsider. To Freud, Semites "were most certainly not European . . . and, at the same time, were somehow assimilable to its culture as former outsiders" as against

the Orientalists' theories about them, which underlined the "foreignness and excludability of Jews—as well as Arabs" (*Freud* 16). Said finds Freud's view of "Moses as both insider and outsider" interesting and challenging (*Freud* 16).

Said calls Freud not only "an explorer of the mind" but also "an overturner and a re-mapper of accepted or settled geographies and genealogies" (*Freud* 27). *Moses and Monotheism* is a work that Said categorizes as belonging to the "late style" (*Freud* 28). Everything about the work suggests not a tidy resolution but a "willingness to let irreconcilable elements of the work remain as they are: episodic, fragmentary, unfinished" (*Freud* 28). The book refuses closure. It problematizes actual Jewishness which is believed to have been derived from Moses. Freud himself was a Jew and, therefore, his attempt in the work was nothing less than denying a people their father,the roots of its monotheism being traced to that of an Egyptian Pharaoh too. Said points out that Freud grants that the Jews eliminated sun-worship, but argues that circumcision was of Egyptian origin and not Hebraic, and that the Levites were Moses's Egyptian followers (*Freud* 34).

In the context of the unfolding narrative of Zionist settlement in Palestine, Said declares that "Suddenly the world of *Moses and Monotheism* has come alive in this tiny sliver of land in the Eastern Mediterranean" (*Freud* 41). After the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine in 1948, there occurred a re-schematization of races, in a land which was once diverse and multiracial. A quasi-European state was formed, to hold the non-Europeans at

bay, the non-Europeans being embodied in the indigenous Arabs of Palestine, Egyptians, Syrians, Lebanese and Jordanians (*Freud* 41).

Said finds Freud empowering because of his provocative reminder that "Judaism's founder was a non-Jew and that Judaism begins in the realm of Egyptian non-Jewish monotheism" (*Freud* 44). Modern-day Israel would have nothing to do with its non-Jewish antecedents. Freud insisted that Jewish identity "did not begin with itself but, rather, with other identities (Egyptian and Arabian)" (*Freud* 44). It is this non-Jewish, non-European history that has now been erased.

The science of archaeology is made use of uninhibitedly, in order to establish a Jewish identity in consecrating Israel (*Freud* 45-46). A revisionist history and geography, in place of Freud's more complex and decentring efforts, is employed for this purpose. A "visible" and "linguistic" Jewish national home is being built, without exploring any non-Israelite histories. Said draws attention to Nadia Abu el-Haj's argument: "Wherever there is overwhelming and unavoidable evidence of a multiplicity of other histories, as in the massive palimpsest of Jerusalem's Byzantine, Crusader, Hasmonean, Israelite, and Muslim architecture, the rule is to frame and tolerate these as an aspect of Israeli liberal culture" (*Freud* 48).

Palestinian archaeology, on the other hand, as part of the liberation struggle, has started to challenge the exclusivity of a Biblical archaeology. The "enormously rich sedimentations of village history and oral traditions potentially changes the status of objects from dead monuments and artifacts

destined for the museum, and approved historical theme parks, to remainders of an ongoing native life and living Palestinian practices of a sustainable human ecology" (*Freud* 49). Invoking the dissenting tradition of Freud, Said wishes that "a bi-national state in which Israel and Palestine are parts, rather than antagonists of each other's history," can be formed (*Freud* 55). While Israel continues to repress Freud, will the fissures of identity be healed, or will they petrify into greater hate-mongering?

Richard H. Armstrong severely criticizes Said's *Freud and the Non-European* for deploying "Freud's rather patchy historical arguments" seemingly in violation of "his own championing of good historical research as a method of humanistic understanding" (122). Armstrong argues that "the greatest problem with using Freud's Egyptian Moses, as an invitation for Israelis to embrace the Other, is that Said misses the highly negative aspects that monotheism brings with it" (128). Freud had recognized the negative nature of monotheism and its intolerant exclusivity, but had lauded the abstraction of the Hebrews' concept of deity believing it to be an "intellectual form of culture" (Armstrong 128). On the one hand, Freud assumed intellectualization to be more sublime, and on the other, to be more "manly" (Armstrong 129). Armstrong adds that Freud talks of the demise of mother-goddesses, "conjured away in favor of their (superior) male counterparts, and eventually banished by the singular Father God," and that "Moses delivers the dubious gifts of intolerance and patriarchy to the Jewish people" (129).

Humanism and Democratic Criticism (2004) is the last completed book of Said, which grew out of his lectures at Columbia University during January 2000. Akeel Bilgrami, in its Foreword, points out that the book tries to situate Said's legacy in the larger setting of his humanism (*Humanism* ix). Bilgrami points out two strains of humanism: one which tries to set apart the human from everything natural and supernatural, and the other which tries to forge solidarity with everything human (*Humanism* x). Said would always harshly caution against the public lives of intellectuals which were indifferent to the sufferings of people remote from the Western metropolis (*Humanism* x). Bilgrami concludes that criticism on the one hand would mean reception of a tradition, and on the other, a resistance to that tradition (*Humanism* xii-xiii).

Said's notion of humanism is "the secular notion that the historical world is made by men and women, and not by God, and that it can be understood rationally" (*Humanism* 11). In fact, it is human action which creates human history and is accordingly the basis for humanities. Said upholds Vico's principle of *sapienza poetica*—"historical knowledge based on the human being's capacity to make knowledge, as opposed to absorbing it passively, reactively, and dully" (*Humanism* 11).

Said notes that anti-humanism had caught the academy in the United States in reaction to the Vietnam War, giving rise to resistance movements which discredited the till-to-date "dry-as-dust academic humanities," which were "unpolitical, unworldly, and oblivious" to the searing present, caught up in always extolling "the virtues of the past," and the "untouchability of the

canon," and thereby replacing them with "women's, ethnic, gay, cultural, and postcolonial studies" which vitiated the core of humanities (*Humanism* 13). Popular culture, insurgent philosophy, politics, linguistics, psychoanalysis, and anthropology all added to this redrawing.

Said makes certain pertinent observations about the "canon." Etymologically, the word "canon" seems to be related to the Arabic word *qanun*, or law, thereby bearing a legalistic, restrictive sense. But it also has a musical meaning: "canon as a contrapuntal form employing numerous voices in usually strict imitation of each other, a form . . . expressing motion, playfulness, discovery, and in the rhetorical sense, invention" (*Humanism* 25). This meaning enables it with a capacity for being open to "changing combinations of sense and signification," with every reading furthering a re-reading, proving that history is "an agonistic process still being made, rather than finished and settled once and for all" (*Humanism* 25). Humanism to Said thus meant questioning and upsetting the commodified packaging of all uncritical certainties, even the classics (*Humanism* 28).

Said tries to draw attention to the Eurocentrism embedded in American humanism, where basic core university courses are restricted to "a small number of translated and dutifully venerated Western masterpieces" totally disregarding "traditions and languages that seem to be outside respectable or approved attention" (*Humanism* 53). He calls for a "radical humanistic critique" to reform this humanism which is sadly being reduced to an

exclusive Western phenomenon, ignoring the contributions of Islamic, Indian, Chinese, African, and Japanese traditions (*Humanism* 54).

During an act of reading, what one reads is as important as why one reads. Though there can be no fixed agreement upon what constitutes a work of art, Said believes that "the aesthetic as a category is, at a very profound level, to be distinguished from the quotidian experiences of existence that we all have" (*Humanism* 63). For instance, reading Tolstoy is essentially different from reading a newspaper, not in that the latter can be read quickly and superficially, but there is, Said points out, as Adorno says, "a fundamental irreconcilability between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic that we must sustain as a necessary condition of our work as humanists" (*Humanism* 63). The aesthetic, while helping to escape from "the leveling pressures of everyday experience," is paradoxically derived from it too (*Humanism* 63).

Said quotes Leo Spitzer to explain the magic of reading:

> I stared blankly, quite similar to one of my beginning students, at a page that would not yield its magic. The only way leading out of this state of unproductivity is to read and re-read, patiently and confidently, in an endeavor to become, as it were, soaked through and through with the atmosphere of the work. And suddenly one word, one line, [or one set of words and lines], stands out, and we realize that, now, a relationship has been established between the poem and us. (*Humanism* 65)

Reading is thus a tautological process that begins and ends with the reader, a very personal act of opening up and interpreting.

Regarding good and bad writing, Said offers the sane advice to avoid jargons which would alienate a wider audience. Noting Judith Butler's observations on Adorno's "difficult syntax and thorny mode of expression," which defeated "the smooth papering-over of injustice and suffering," Said deftly cautions that "not every coiner of rebarbative language is an Adorno" (*Humanism* 72). Said believes that repellent idioms need not be coined to show one's independence and originality, and humanism ultimately should be "a form of disclosure, not of secrecy or religious illumination" (*Humanism* 73). Said also cautions against "short telegraphic forms" which are in vogue amongst the media, and argues for a humanistic resistance culled out of the "longer forms, longer essays, longer periods of reflection" (*Humanism* 73).

The humanist's task is not to just occupy a space, or "belong" somewhere, but to be both simultaneously an "insider" and "outsider" to ideas and values in society that are at contention with each other. A humanist reading on the other hand, is all about creating a perspective, and transitions from one realm to another, being able to practice identities other than those warranted by a flag or war (*Humanism* 76, 80). "Humanism," says Said,

> is a consciousness . . . for oppositional analysis between the space of words and their various origins and deployments in physical and social place, from text to actualized site of either appropriation or resistance, to transmission, to reading and

> interpretation, from private to public, from silence to explication and utterance, and back again, as we encounter our own silence and mortality—all of it occurring in the world, on the ground of daily life and history and hopes, and the search for knowledge and justice, and then perhaps also for liberation. (*Humanism* 83)

Said championed the cause of these ideals of humanism, throughout his walk and talk, till his very last breath.

The Pen and the Sword (1994) contains conversations with Edward Said by David Barsamian. Eqbal Ahmad in his introduction to the 1994 edition of the book states: “Most of Edward Said’s writings are scholarly and analytical. The mind is all there but not the man” (1).The book, therefore, tries to reveal the person behind the name Edward Said. Ahmad delineates the characteristic features of Said as “dedication to universalism in politics, culture, and aesthetics,” as against sectarian options, and as one who entered history with “open arms,” instead of a “tight fist” (Barsamian 12). Said constantly crossed boundaries, pushing “beyond nationalism and postcolonial statehood,” to interpret “the world and text, based on counterpoint—‘many voices producing a history’” (Barsamian 15).

Two of Said’s co-conspirators for justice were Eqbal Ahmad and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod. While Ahmad passed away in Pakistan on 11 May, 1999, Ibrahim passed away two years later in 2001, in Ramallah. Said passed away two years later on 25 September, 2003. Nubar Hovsepian, in the

introduction to the 2010 edition of *The Pen and the Sword*, notes that, “Over a period of six years, we lost rare human beings who together represent the best of what public intellectuals should be” (Barsamian 19). He adds that Said’s funeral saw Daniel Barenboim playing J. S. Bach’s “Prelude in E-flat,” with tears rolling down, making it Barenboim’s first performance which was “met with appropriate silence and not applause” (Barsamian 19).

Hovsepian calls Said a “nuanced and complex man,” one of the few modern thinkers to have “critically interrogated the modernist project” along with “Noam Chomsky, Raymond Williams and Michel Foucault” (Barsamian 21). The Palestinian poet laureate Mahmoud Darwish had remarked that “Edward placed Palestine in the world’s heart, and the world in the heart of Palestine” (Barsamian 25). Hovsepian adds that Said “weaved in and out of interconnected domains—literature, music, politics, and history—insisting that to understand the world we must search for a balance between dissonance, consonance, and discord” (Barsamian 30). Said’s life is not a single coherent whole, but one laced with the world’s multiple differences, which he affirmed and celebrated. He resisted all totalizing notions that herded the world’s complexities under one rubric, and prioritized incompleteness and the process of becoming, firmly believing that the world was a magnificent series of fragments. He was constantly searching for “alternatives to dominant ways of thinking,” and all his words were powerfully animated by this vision (Barsamian 31).

Said points out that, due to its geographical location, Palestine is an intersecting point for major religions and cultures—"Hellenic, Greek, Armenian, Syrian, Levantine . . . and the European, Christian, African, Phoenician" (Barsamian 36). The Palestinian struggle is based "not only on the exclusivity and monopoly of what Palestine means, but rather the intersection of many communities and cultures within Palestine . . . the richness of Palestine" (Barsamian 36).

Said had dreams about the Palestinian state, which he did not want to turn into a national nightmare. His vision of the Palestinian state had three elements: one, that it should not turn out to be a carbon copy of other Arab states, two, it should not be riven with a minority consciousness as Israel is, and three, it should not become a "security state" in which "populations, groups, women, disadvantaged people, etc., would be discriminated against" (Barsamian 43).

To Barsamian's interesting query as to how the Palestinians have propelled themselves as a professional class, Said replies

> There are many engineers, architects, professors, etc. I think that's been a natural consequence of the fact that a lot of us are itinerant. We've had to depend not on the accumulation of goods and capital but on the management of skills and resources like education, technical expertise, and intellectual capital. As a result, we are a wandering group in whose consciousness and awareness there is always the sense of being

> on the peripheries, slightly marginal to any society that one lives in (Barsamian 44-45).

Said categorizes the Palestinian liberation movement as one which turned midway into an independence movement (Barsamian 60). On the one hand, it fought for the liberation of Palestine, and on the other, it “wanted national sovereignty and independence on a part of Palestine” (Barsamian 60). It is a unique liberation movement, unlike others, having no sovereignty of its own. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza keep building houses for the people who dispossess them, but no one has any idea of “what to do with the Palestinians as human beings who are there” (Barsamian 61).

Said was always fond of the Cesaire quote which assured a space for all at the victory stand. He believed that “the whole idea of homogeneity, that if you belong to a group everybody of the group has to be exactly the same, and that only that group has the right, if it’s the majority,” to be a completely flawed one (Barsamian 65). Said notes that the developments which restrict Syria for Syrians, Lebanon for Lebanese, Jordan for Jordanians, and Egypt for Egyptians are of a recent vintage, while in his childhood it was possible to grow up in schools with children of all races, “Armenians, Muslims, Italians, Jews, and Greeks, because that was the Levant” and that was the way they grew up (Barsamian 66).

Said was vehemently critical of a nationalism which was based on an agenda of shafting away all others, while achieving liberation, and calls it a “pitfall of national consciousness,” as Fanon would term it, and he harshly

censures that "when national consciousness becomes an end in itself, an ethnic particularity or a racial particularity or some largely invented national essence of its own, when it becomes the program of a civilization or culture or political party, you know it's the end of human community and you get something else" (Barsamian 66).

Being asked by Barsamian on the role of a teacher, and the subsequent choices to be made in the process of teaching, Said replies that it encourages a "different reading of the classics," not privileging or imposing one reading over the other; on the contrary, provoking students to read in refreshing new ways, "more skeptically, more inquiringly, more searchingly" (Barsamian 82).

Said's criticism was always socially and politically engaged with an "all-too-real world." The shifting spaces of a complex geopolitical, transnational, and multicultural world demands a breed of scholars and critics who are capable of unraveling its intricacies, and making sense of the ways in which this world is comprehended. Said went a step even further, by trying not just to understand this world, but also to make it a better place. Consequently, Robert Tally Jr., in his essay "Introduction: The World, the Text, and the Geocritic," calls Said an "early trailblazer for critics now working in spatial literary studies" and a powerful precursor, who wrote on "a vast range of subjects and *topoi*" which offer tremendous resources for those interested in geocriticism, geoaesthetics, literary cartography, and spatial humanities (1, 3).

Tally Jr. notes that Mark Monmonier in *How to Lie with Maps* has shown how "even the mathematical projections used in mapmaking came to

serve ideological purposes often in ways that supported colonial practices" (4). The Mercator projection distorted the represented areas of space "by aggrandizing those located further from the equator" (Tally Jr. 4). Monmonier writes that "The English especially liked the way the Mercator flattered the British Empire with a central meridian through Greenwich and prominent far-flung colonies like Australia, Canada, and South Africa" (cited in Tally Jr. 4). Cartography provided a detached view to the military leader who was poring over the maps, "rather than trudging through the battlefields," and armed him with an abstraction necessarily altered from the underlying reality (Tally Jr. 4). This had catastrophic effects on the actual occupants of those abstractly represented places.

Said's postcolonial interventions unravel these affiliations and try to address the serious issues surrounding spatiality and geography. His multifaceted and enormous corpus provides ground for a geocritical inquiry. In addition, it constantly reminds that beyond the frontier of "us" and "outsiders," there is the perilous territory of "not-belonging" (Tally Jr. 13).

Abdirahman A. Hussein asks, though it can be admitted that Said's methodology thrives on "creative, often strategically selective, eclecticism, is it possible—or even desirable—to demarcate the different, sometimes incompatible tributaries of modern thought that have contributed to forming his ideas?" because Said is at one moment phenomenological, and at the other poststructuralist; one moment Vichian, and at the other Foucauldian (1). In fact, "Said often conjoins in the same sentence or paragraph . . .

epistemological with ethical concerns, materialist constructions with speculative leaps, or existentialist self-definitions with broad socio-political matters, given this lack of respect for traditional boundaries between genres, modes of inquiry, and areas of intellectual combat, what grid or criterion does one use and to what specific interpretive end?" (Hussein 2). The notion of "boundary" or "in-betweenness" thus becomes an important one while analyzing the works of Said.

Paul A. Bove praises Said's work "for embodying three values essential to intellectual responsibility: breadth and depth of knowledge, historical and scholarly rigor, and a profound basis in political morality of a kind that alone makes civilization possible" (1). Said's *oeuvre* bears testimony to an exemplary integrity which tried to "end conflict and further the efforts to build civilizations whose cultures benefit from the coalescence of various peoples and their histories" (Bove 1).

The "coalescing of margins" can thus be identified as a marked feature of Said's opus. It is only the dialogue between equals, the acknowledgement of their shared experiences, and overlapping histories, that can promote a greater understanding between cultures, for the blooming of justice. No monological story can encompass the complex history of "many peoples." All polyphonic voices have to be heard clearly, while mapping the contours of civilizational richness. This act of storytelling, absorbing all crosscurrents, is what Said deftly did and excelled in.

Said's legacy had complex and indefinable contours, and William V. Spanos, the founder of *boundary 2*, points out that both of them had affiliations with Mount Hermon, prep school, Massachusetts, and they had established a long-standing friendship and a sense of kinship with each other (Spanos ix). In an e-mail note to Said, on 19 May, 2002, Spanos points out how David Horowitz, in a C-Span TV channel programme, represented the "university left" as a "fifth column" to be eradicated, specifically pointing to Said as a Palestinian fanatic, and *Orientalism* as a "subversive book" that had resulted in "the destruction of the American academic institutions that heretofore had produced disinterested scholars who produced 'objective research' about the Middle East for the government of the United States" (228). Spanos adds that this despairingly sick and "grotesquely chauvinistic" media representation was utterly blind to a global situation of the life and death of millions of people, "and their tacit silencing of the kind of human and reasonable dissent that has always characterized" Said's work (229). After enquiring about Said's health and treatment, Spanos ends the e-mail note tenderly by saying "We need you. . . " (229). The world would miss him.

Ranjan Ghosh notes that Said is an extraordinary critical genius who inspires us "to 'think' and to make thinking an 'act'" (xxi). He adds that Said's critical consciousness is "anti-systemic" and "does not offer itself as a model or set off a movement" while it is "a close take on a type of consciousness that, in Adorno's view, does not resolve 'objective contradictions in a spurious harmony, but one which expresses the idea of harmony negatively by

embodying the contradictions, pure and uncompromised, in its innermost structure'" (xxii).

W. J. T. Mitchell observes the following qualities in Said: "complexity without mystification, dialectics without the disabling equivocation of ambivalence or deconstructive 'undecidability,' recognition of the baffling limits of human knowledge without obscurantism or quietism; and a recognition of the situatedness and contingency of every utterance without a surrender to relativism and without a sacrifice of abiding principles" (464). Said did simultaneously absorb and resist "the arrival of antihumanism in the form of what is loosely called French theory" and he believed that "it is possible to be critical of humanism in the name of humanism" (Mitchell 462, 463).

H. Aram Veeser notes that "Said's career blended erudition, pride, audacity, eloquence, magic, power, and a good location" (1). Veeser mentions that Said's whole enterprise had the following self divisions: "A prominent, self-declared Western humanist, presenting himself as a raging Jeremiah or a Romantic outsider—the Manfred of Lord Byron, stalking the Higher Alps and spitting poison at Europe; or a Jonathan Swift, gnashing imprecations at Western civilization" (1-2). Said was a charismatic figure, whose stone-throwing image, published worldwide, made Columbia University rush to his defense in the name of academic freedom. Veeser adds that while Columbia was hailed for this act of rare courage, "the university further established its pristine integrity as a utopia of individual freedom," while some insiders saw

the University's Provost Jonathan Cole's public letter "as a throwback to feudal standards of personal loyalty: after all, Cole was Said's squash partner" (6).

Terry Eagleton describes his first meeting with Said in Columbia in 1978. Eagleton's nine-year old son, who had heard that Said was an Arab, had felt very disappointed, after seeing Said not accompanied by a camel, nor wearing a head-dress (254). Eagleton is of the opinion that Said was not primarily a theorist, and he ended up quite hostile to "so-called theory," with a trajectory from Auerbach to Foucault, and back to Auerbach, and also points out that Said, in a letter to him, had once referred to certain strains of post-colonial theory as "gobbledygook" (258). Though Said wrote lucidly and gracefully, Eagleton does not believe that he was a great stylist, and notes that Said had "nothing like the extraordinary flair and imaginative brio of, say, a Jameson, Barthes, or a Foucault" (260).

Eagleton himself believes that culture and politics are two things: "culture is a *longue duree*, politics a matter of the conjuncture" (265). He is not sure whether Said believed both culture and politics to be the same, but just like himself, Said seems to have believed that the aesthetic could not be reduced to either culture or politics (Eagleton 265). He adds:

> Despite all that, however I do not think that Said probably kept his aesthetics rather apart from his politics. Palestrina and Palestine don't mix very easily . . . he was really a traditional humanist forced by a historical crisis into a political stance

> which was partly askew to the cultural traditions he inherited. No doubt he needed his private utopian moments . . . in contrast to the quotidian world of politics, and music seems to have been the chief name for this in his life. (Eagleton 266)

Mina Karavanta and Nina Morgan try to juxtapose the projects of Edward Said and Jacques Derrida and problematize the term "hybrid" in their essay "'Another Insistence': Humanism and the Aporia of Community." They point out that the term "global hybrid" is a "condition of being and living in a global world" which does not describe or identify a specific constituency, "but opens the network of local, global, regional and national flows and brings together a range of themes and a variety of disciplines that articulate and theorize this illimitable phenomena of change and transformation that affect the lives of constituencies and displaced peoples all around the globe" (343-344). It opens up a "site of a politics of theory" and "the various modes of transculturation that resist acculturation and the homogenizing conditions imposed by 'superior cultures' on 'inferior ones'" (344).

Karavanta and Morgan articulate "Said's affirmation of a humanist praxis with Derrida's politics of friendship as a theoretically hybrid praxis that binds the question of the human with the quest of community and sustains the site of a critical analysis as infinitely open and in play" (345). This juxtaposition is powerful in an age where the "question of the human" gains urgency. While a "meticulous and attentive reading of texts" keeps this question alive, the task for teachers, scholars, students, and readers is "to

imagine, reinvent, and remake our communities not in the image that tradition and the myths of homogeneity and national insularity have afforded us, but in communion with a global hybridity that emerges from clashes, transgressions, crossings and encounters that our disparate realities have forged before us" (Karavanta and Morgan 345). This praxis would not only be interdisciplinary and hybrid, but would also transform original positions, methodologies and articulations.

Karavanta and Morgan conclude their essay with the following powerful observations:

> Thus Derrida's affirmation of the inescapability of the metaphysical narrative, of the *text*ure of our existence, and Said's insistence that we become vigilant readers of that text together reveal a promise and a hope for the political nature of criticism itself as an act of humanism; for it is deconstruction, the small rupture of this narrative provoked by a hybrid critical praxis, that will unconceal the repressive and calculative mechanisms of the narrative's construction so that the world(s) of our community may once again be interpreted and imagined as radically heterogeneous and hybrid—as it is *lived*. (346).

Harry Harootunian perceives that Said's death puts an end "to an energetic activity motivated by the necessity of always keeping alive the tense but asymmetrical relationship between culture and politics and the almost impossible task of resisting the temptation, at least for American academics, of

slipping into the former as if it were a more than adequate substitute for the latter" (431). With Said, there was always an "uneven and unstable relationship between his self-acknowledged calling of cultural critique and the desire for concrete political practice" always mediated between "a politics of representation—culture—and a representation of politics," as enabled by Palestinian liberation dreams, and "forming the figure of an arabesque entanglement of history and contingency" (Harootunian 432).

Harootunian argues that the real model for Said was not the "European theorists of high culture," whom he did admire greatly, but Noam Chomsky, who recognized the instrumental connection between the Vietnam War and "the notion of objective scholarship" (434). Said's intellectual itinerary was "founded on the constant watchfulness of the oscillations of politics and culture as they inflected specific historical and contingent conditions comprising the conjunctural rustle he was living through" (Harootunian 434).

While Said always refused to simplistically dissolve the realm of politics into culture, he embraced "high culture" and engaged it with the "daily struggle" of Palestinian independence (Harootunian 441). Though colonial and postcolonial studies made English departments "the virtual outposts of colonial memory," Said's interventions in the Palestinian anticolonial struggles prevented the "static textualization of culture and is still writing its very different history out of the immediate experience of an everydayness in the now" (Harootunian 442). Harootunian adds that history and culture are sites of "a persisting unevenness" that can "only be grasped in the historical

specificity of political struggle," and "not in the act of awarding subjectivity to the marginalized whose agency derived from an irreducible and fixed ground of cultural authenticity" (442).

Remembering Edward Said's death, Homi Bhabha writes: "His writings were indestructible, his presence memorable, but the fire and fragility of his voice—the ground note of 'the individual particular' from which all human narration begins—would be impossible to preserve for another conversation on literature, music, illness, and common friends" (371). Bhabha points to a "narrative of slowness" in Said's *oeuvre*, which would make a fitting memorial to his life and adds insightfully: "Supposing we considered death neither to be a cessation of life nor an afterlife, but a slowing down, a transformation that eases away from the administrative and executive burdens of life and labor and turns into the meandering ways of memory, the reflective surfaces of writing, the fluid embrace of music?" (380).

Abdul R. JanMohamed categorizes the authorial subject-position implicit in Said's work as that of "the specular border intellectual" (97). A detailed examination of this would be fruitful. JanMohamed distinguishes between the "specular border intellectual" and the "syncretic border intellectual." The syncretic intellectual, situated on cultural borders, is "at home" in both the cultures, and is able to combine elements from both into "new syncretic forms and experiences," while the specular border intellectual, though being equally familiar with two cultures, "finds himself or herself unable or unwilling to be 'at home' in these societies," and scrutinizes

analytically the two cultures from this interstitial cultural space, rather than combining them (97).

JanMohamed identifies four modes of border-crossings, that of the exile, the immigrant, the colonialist, and the scholar (101). While the scholar is best typified by the anthropologist, one might add the tourist and the traveller to it too (101). While the exile has a negative stance toward the new host culture, the immigrant is positive. The exile emphasizes the “absence of home,” and with an attendant nostalgia, while the immigrant has a “voluntary desire to become a full-fledged subject of the new society,” with an “uncritical gregariousness”; both face a rupture and “re-suturing of individual and collective subjectivities” (JanMohamed 101). The colonialist and the anthropologist are not troubled by this problem. They both apprehend the new culture, “not as a field of subjectivity, but rather as an object of and for their gaze” (JanMohamed 102). The gaze of the former is mostly military, administrative, and economic, while that of the latter is epistemological and organizational, both gazes being panoptic and dominating (JanMohamed 102). The border “functions as a mirror, as a site defining the ‘identity’ and ‘homogeneity’ of the group that has constructed it,” and the border intellectual has to constantly guard himself against the “traps of specularity” (JanMohamed 103).

JanMohamed further notes that the border intellectual could “systematically negotiate the twin dangers of essentialism and infinite heterogeneity,” and Said was one of this kind (114-115). There occurs a

rupture in the border intellectual, between the "aspiration or ego-ideal valorized by the dominant culture and the actual social devaluation" which "cuts through the very center of subjectivity" (JanMohamed 115). JanMohamed points out that Foucault identifies the "site of the border-subject" as a mode of "heterotopia"—which has "the curious property of being in relation with all other sites, but in such a way as *to suspect*, *neutralize*, *or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate*, *mirror*, *or reflect*" (JanMohamed 116). The border intellectual is simultaneously a "space," and a "subject," indeed "a subject-as-space" (JanMohamed 116).

JanMohamed compares the border intellectual to Donna Haraway's "Cyborg," with "an intimate experience of boundaries, their constructions and deconstructions" (117). Just as the Cyborg imagery houses a dream "not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia," the border intellectual must affirm "the value of infidelity to cultures, nations, groups, institutions, etc., to the extent that these are defined in monologic, essentialist terms" (JanMohamed 117). It would also be helpful to develop a "border pedagogy," to "scrutinize knowledge from the position of 'border-crossers, as people moving in and out of borders constructed around coordinates of difference and power'" (JanMohamed 117).

Najla Said's "Tribute to My Father" makes a touching read, in which she remembers Said from the time he walked her to nursery school onwards, and the Daddy who became her best friend, when she was 12 years old and was "obsessively, ravenously reading *Jane Eyre*" (21-22). He used to read

every single paper she wrote in college, would pepper them with some of his corrections, and finally declare that it was brilliant. When she had signed up for an English class on "Postmodernism" and had to read Batman comics as a part of it, Said had felt aghast, declaring that she should have been reading Shakespeare and Virgil instead. Najla had retorted, "Daddy! You are so old! The reason the class has comic books is because it's a class on *Postmodernism*. You don't even know what that is." Said's reply was "Know what that is, Najla? I invented the field!" (23).

Najla Said points out that Said "was entirely hopeless when it came to pop culture," and was someone who had asked "what is Eminem?" and who on listening to an audio example, gasped in horror after listening for thirty seconds to the hip-hop beat, and realizing that there were expletives in the lyrics (23). She remembers that "on top of all of the amazing things that 'Edward Said' was, he was also one phenomenal daddy. . . . I hear his voice in my head, saying what seemed to be his two favorite phrases: 'Pull yourself together, Naj; you just have to PRESS ON'" (25). This indeed is the message that Said leaves for all of us too.