

Conclusion

Coalescing Margins in Said's *Oeuvre*

The critical corpus of Said has been an enlightening one in the truest sense, with margins coalescing in it. While this has been the distinguishing feature of Said's critique, it also is the vision with which Said operated, and the vision that he left back for the generations to learn from. The previous chapters have tried to analyze diverse "margins" in Said's critical output, while this chapter tries to conclusively sum them up, drawing forth the coalescing of these margins.

The geographical margins of the East and the West have been the primary impetus behind Said's work, which led him to theorize in *Orientalism* about the binary oppositions, ascribed to the "Oriental" and the "Occidental," which created spaces like "ours," and "theirs." Said was concerned about the "imaginative geography" which drew up these margins, from the land to the mind. These oppositions created dense margins like near/far, known/unknown, visited/unvisited, conquered/unconquered, familiar/novel, watcher/watched and so on, while efforts like building the Suez Canal tried to create a focal point for the coalescing of margins between Africa and Asia, and also between Europe and the East. "Mastering the whole world" was in fact an ambition harboured by the propagators of Orientalism.

Said mentions how humanity was classified into types: American/African/Asiatic etc. and how the latent and manifest versions of

Orientalism made pronouncements about the world around, both consciously and unconsciously. The building up of these margins paved the way for the domination of one group of humanity over another. Drawing up lines and borders, which differentiate and segregate, is in itself an act bearing the seeds of the perpetration of injustice. Said's project cautions against this and advocates the remedy of the coalescing of margins where crossing over to the Other is vital.

Cross-border movements and the intersections of regions and knowledges have immensely benefitted from Said's cultural critique. The world has long been beleaguered by visions of Otherization, and it is only a vision of integration that can redeem it. The vantage points of power have to be redefined by redrawing the margins. Travel should therefore be encouraged, not to create false myths of "other" lands, but to imbibe in the richness of difference.

Discourses which are non-domineering have to be fostered and discovered. There has been no monological and monolithic West, just as there has been no monological and monolithic East. It is the need of the hour to explore those streams where the West does indeed admire, appreciate, and accept the East. A dialogical existence is what Said always wanted, and that has to be nurtured by the world in all walks of life.

In his critique he combines different strains which eventually coalesce. The transgressing of borders gave him immense energy. This methodological crossing over opened up new disciplines of inquiry which navigated between

varied terrains. His borderline politics and poetics valorized the location of the “in-between.” This was a powerful position for negotiation which helped in re-inscribing the “interstices of disciplinary knowledge” by a “writing back” to the centre from the margins.

Said’s boundary crossings were thus a subversive violation of borders with the aim of bridging the wide gaps. He ushered in a theoretical turn which demolished all “disciplinary etiquette.” He had bridged the chasm between the “public” and the “academe” and showed the way for active involvement in struggles for the dignity of life. The coalescing of margins was of paramount importance to him. Frontiers and interstices had to be crossed over. The hardening of identities across the borders was a dangerous tendency, which he was always vigilant about and cautioned against.

Institutions of culture, politics, religion, and nationalism, all stage a theatrical battleground where the margins and the centre are played against each other. Said invested the margins with meaning and empowered them to talk back, making their voices heard as counterpoint. No longer could the melody of the dominant-centre discourses be considered as the sole narrative of truth; alternative truths and stories had to be listened to. “Marginality” thus became a position of strength too, disturbing and unsettling the centre. The story of colonial enterprises had to draw down their curtains, when indigenous resistances raised their voices. A redrawing of boundaries alone was not its aftermath, but a redesigning and redefining of the centre-margin axis was also done.

Said points out that the truth of existence is the essential mixing and hybrid nature of all cultures and that no one is completely pure and unmixed. The task for all would be to connect across, rather than segregate. Looking into one's self or one's own culture, or race, or religion, or nation, one could find a lot of alterities and cross influences. An investigation in this direction would make one more accommodating and humble, tolerant and pacifist.

Said's project of deciphering overlapping territories and intertwined histories was thus a massive one with a great ideal in front. At a time when dreams and visions rarely motivate us, Said stands as a lodestar. Interdependence rather than mere independence was what he professed. Just as he unravelled the ubiquitous presence of Empire in the novel, he also reminded that the metropolitan centres of those empires were possible only because of the colonized margins.

Said gives a very interesting example to show how life on the two sides of the border can be entirely different, while discussing nineteenth century Cairo's "native" and "colonial" cities. The magnitude of these differences is astounding. Margins do affect lives profoundly. The ideology behind them has therefore to be intensely scrutinized and trenchantly analyzed to ensure that a just world order prevails. This is the task that Said undertook passionately.

Said's methodology of the "voyage in" was a deliberate attempt to mix the suppressed histories with the ruling ones, and thereby transform them. He believed that the coalescing of margins would thus be transformative.

Borrowings across impenetrable borders would be a revolutionary act. In fact when commercial geography abetted imperialism, it had set the stage for drawing up and renaming boundaries of land, language, climates, peoples, diseases, eco-zones, etc. Said was highly critical of all “border wars” which promoted essentializations and he believed that an experience of exile could sometimes be empowering as it defied “canonical enclosures.”

An interesting observation that emerges out of Said’s critique is the unique power of “mixed forms” for narrative or art, which compels one to cross borders in order to facilitate the coalescing of margins. These forms have now become widely prevalent and are the order of the day. Said’s was a decentring consciousness, which tried to forge connections between things. He was always making out the connections—both seen and unseen—between seemingly disparate events and ideas.

One has been greatly enriched by Said’s masterful contrapuntal readings of the Western canonical texts in *Culture and Imperialism*. In fact recent criticism has even started to consider Jane Austen as “an exile in her own country” (Fraiman 19, 20). *Culture and Imperialism* is a “border book” which exemplifies Said’s notions of margins and their complex crisscrossing. In a world scarred by divisions of all sorts, Said’s critical agency resisted classification into compartments and undertook the task of acknowledging overlaps and traversing frontiers. His critical corpus thus stands against the solidification of identities across the fringes of existence. Cultural margins are

not to be guarded fiercely and safely, but opened up for intermingling and interpenetration. Notions of purity have to be thus rethought and interrogated.

Said found great inspiration from the life and works of Joseph Conrad who, like him, experienced the perils of an exilic existence. The wanderings of this sailor-writer made Said's doctoral dissertation possible. Though Chinua Achebe calls Conrad a "thoroughgoing racist," Said tries to discover in Conrad spaces unsubmitted to imperial domination. Geography becomes a prime concern to Said through Conrad.

The figure of the wanderer looms large in Said's *Beginnings* too—one who moves from place to place but remains "essentially between homes" (*Beginnings* 8). Being on the move prevents one from "gathering moss." Margins thus keep constantly changing, or one does make home around novel margins. The stubborn attachment to permanent margins could be touted as a fanatic act, which spews venom in and around itself. Said preferred the act of bridge-building by transgressing fixed frontiers.

Said always tried to resist and expose the media fabrications which paraded nonsense as sense. For example, he vehemently opposed the imaginary borders drawn between Islam and the rest of the world. The stereotyping and the ensuing hatred and violence only results in creating a hostile world. Said fought tooth and nail against such "politics of representations" which created nothing but demonic monsters.

Said's role model seems to be Eric Auerbach, for whom an exile from all of Western civilization itself enabled him to produce his magisterial work *Mimesis*. This problematic of margins turned out to be extremely fruitful in the case of Auerbach. The notion of culture which Said articulates is based essentially on the notion of a boundary which creates the categories of extrinsic and intrinsic (*The World, the Text, and the Critic* 8-9). But he advocates a criticism which breaks the crusts of seclusion and opens up cultural spaces for contestation. The network, in fact the rhizomatic cross-connections, is privileged over the lone, solitary genius.

Said's major concern throughout his life, writings, and career was the Palestinian cause, existing on the margins of history. He tried to rescue it from those margins and place it in the centre stage of world politics, and he was quite successful too. At the heart of this problem he deciphered a form of Orientalism working, and he tried to dismantle its impervious structures. The Palestinian crisis is a crisis of margins—drawn up by the Balfour Declaration, creating the new entity of Israel and relegating the Palestinians. The “absentee property” laws push back the Palestinians to the fringes of existence.

In fact Zionism itself has drawn great sustenance from the margins of colonialism. It was fed and nurtured by colonialism proper. The whole idea was to create the new margins of a land, drawing strength from the Biblical fiat. As Israel carved its new borders, there started an interesting phenomenon—that of “ever expanding” borders. In fact the state of Israel

continues with no internationally accepted borders. Palestine became a “nation-in-exile,” wounded by the ravages of historical marginality.

Said’s vision was that the Palestinians and Jews must sit together and carve out a common future, instead of closing themselves off from each other. He advocated that they crossover their respective margins and understand the strength of coalescence. Though this vision is ideal enough, the ground realities are so complex that a peaceful solution has not yet evolved. Bloodshed continues and innocents do keep losing their lives. Though there have been many international declarations in this direction, the Palestinian cause had always been shelved to the margins, as the Oslo one for instance in 1993 where Arafat was treated as the vassal of Israel and America. The cause in fact lost its moral vantage point in an agreement like that. The Palestinians had to concede claim to a large part of historical Palestine. They were not prepared well enough to understand the nuances of the Declaration. It was a virtual surrender by them. Said was thus vehemently critical of this accord.

The land of Palestine exists in a state of eternal peripherality. There are no contiguous borders, and the region is surrounded by multiple cultures and civilizations. The tactic of Israel has been to keep shrinking the borders of Palestine day by day, and pushing them to tinier territory. As they continually squeeze them and choke them, this strangulation is taking its toll on Palestinian lives on a daily basis. Being refugees in their own land is the paradox that stares them right into their faces.

The Palestinian narrative of pain is surrounded by the narrative of the Jewish Holocaust, which makes it a complicated tangle. It is true that both sides have become victims in history. The challenge is thus not to bypass each other's suffering, not to dump into oblivion the pain of the other, but to acknowledge and "connect." This is what Said tried in his attempts. The strange process of the "once-victims" now becoming "persecutors" is what aggravates the Palestinian situation.

The Gaza strip is an essential margin in the landscape of the Middle East. Lives rot in this land. The ghettoization of its people has been rampant, and slums are on the rise in this "hell on earth" (*Peace and its Discontents* 47). Revamping this area is of prime importance to foster peace in the region. Said believes that investments in education, secular community, and a democratic civil society is the only way out (*The End of the Peace Process* 166). Separation into different states seems not to be a viable option, in the Palestinian environment, due to the proximity of several histories which cannot be torn apart easily.

A work like *After the Last Sky*, for instance, exists on the margins of photo and text, documenting the visual plight of the Palestinians. It captures some of the memorable moments of Palestinian daily lives. While contiguity is lost for the Arab settlements, the Jewish ones are continuously built interconnected. There are no straight lines for the Palestinians, be it the roads, or in their lives. They continue uncouncted and undocumented. In fact they live

repetitively. The same routines clutter them. Theirs is a life de-centred, always in transit, with suitcase bundles being an essential part of them.

It is in the midst of all these travails that they retain hope, vigour and vitality for a new dawn. Said's efforts were for that new dawn. He was hopeful, yet down-to-earth in his analyses. The trauma of dispossession marks the Palestinian people, yet they trundle forth with eyes set on the horizon, negotiating the terrifying frontiers. Resisting and being resisted has become a part of their lives, surrounded by walls on all sides. Their lives draw significance from the significant Other too, creating "third spaces" of intertwined memories.

Said tried to create linkages and a sense of sharing, in order to ameliorate the liminality of the Palestinian situation. Resolving the conflict would require breaking barriers and stretching out the handshake of humanity. The Palestinian narrative seems to have no closure or finality. It encompasses a void, an *aporia* that signifies by vital absences. It evokes the space of the "in-between," the threshold to be crossed over. Palestinians in fact have a spectre-like existence—neither dead nor living, neither here nor there. Their topic is the *topos* and Said was always insistent in his critique to be oriented towards its material context.

Maps play an important role in this struggle. They offer a unique point of view. They help grounding in actuality the reality of the situation, instead of harbouring vacuous fancies. Said insisted that Israel/Palestine maps be published in order to aid his story telling. This was an act of salvaging the

politics of his homeland from the fringes of amnesia. There has been a large investment in map making since the colonial period, and the story of Palestine becomes powerfully clear when one sees the gradual diminishing of Palestinian territories represented in these maps, since 1948. Moreover, the story of Palestine has to be continuously told on, so that it does not dissipate and disappear in the vast proliferation of other images in the media all around.

Said himself had occupied a marginal position by being a Palestinian in the American academy. He was constantly besotted with perils, but his location in the West made some critics consider his perspectives on Palestine as Orientalist. He was thus facing a kind of double jeopardy. The discontinuous terrain of Palestine cripples it of access to all natural resources, and creates a veritable ticking time bomb. These margins viciously endanger the lives of the hapless people. It is high time that an “affirmation of unity rather than division” was sought and a peaceful redress was brought about (Makdisi 461).

The way out of this impasse would also consist of forging alternative narratives and affective possibilities, so that the world can think afresh and anew on this. The “logic of elimination” which guides Israel’s attitude to Palestine has to be countered and done away with. Comics like Joe Sacco’s have done a lot to revise the world’s perspectives on Palestine. The losers, instead of superheroes, are portrayed here, in their daily battle.

A devious strategy of segmentation and co-optation is used by Israel to keep the Palestinians under control. This tries to perpetuate separation

eternally. This is where Said's "integrative vision" is of paramount importance. It is the best way out of the vicious circle. He was constantly concerned about justice at the margins, and was loud and vociferous about it. He clamoured for the basic human rights of his people and wanted it to be realized as soon as possible. But he was not ready to denigrate Israel as a "mere villain." He believed in dialogue. An alternative of counterforce would mean the complete extermination of his people. This is a struggle for "home"—but whose home?

Any dominant power bent on defeating its adversary tries to wipe out the traces of memory, culture, and history. Israel is no different in its attempts to obliterate all margins of Palestinian memory. Memory is therefore contested and memorials are either built or decimated as per the demand of the situation. Said's project, therefore, tries to mark time in a culture of amnesia. He incessantly crossed intellectual boundaries to actualize this mission. When one translates Said into another language, one does aid this act of keeping memory alive. Just as theories travel, translations help ideas to cross borders. Translation becomes immensely significant especially when one's own literature is translated into the language of one's adversary, just as when Arabic literature is being translated into Hebrew.

Said's voyages across borders and ideas was a fervent search for a better and just world. He wanted to rescue human rights from the margins, and place it at the centre of all discourse. His humanism was bent in this direction. He was deeply angry whenever that did not happen, when rights were

sidelined and swept to a corner. Instead of fixing roots, he was searching for them by constantly “travelling.” His life was therefore an inimitable “journey.” He was the voice for a people who are forced to be constantly on the roads, perilous borders, and humiliating margins.

For Said, the margins were not just a place which divided territories, or a place where one is pushed to a subaltern status. It was a place which could open up for negotiation and inclusion, rather than exclusion and relegation. The moral courage to do so is what Said demanded from all. To ensure a place “for all” is what he wanted to see accomplished. He dreamt of margins coalescing, and nations coming together, all the way to wiping out tears and alleviating pain.

Said’s critique dealt powerfully with cultural and political margins. In addition to that, he had a special interest in music. Music was a serious pursuit to him, and he did not see it as an idle entertainment. He found it implicated in social and historical context. Said’s work on music too deals with the margins. His writings and his collaborations in the field of music add to his vision of coalescing margins. Music was a vital part of his life till the very end, and he cherished it the utmost.

Besides his mother, the experiences of death and illness too were formative influences on his musical journey. When the margins of life were threatened, he found solace in music. He had once gone and played with Barenboim a few bars of a Schubert rondo, during his days of illness, not for

its pleasure but just to survive. There were similar other instances when music provided succour to his personal life.

Said's music criticism plays various themes against each other. They move beyond treating music as an autonomous apolitical entity. He pits the amateur performer against the virtuoso and derides the narcissism associated with virtuosity. Said also criticizes the phenomenon of "extreme specialization" which separates the composer, performer, and the listener. He was worried about these fragmentations of the musical experience. The gap had to be bridged.

Said also points out that no music is left untouched by the margins of other cultures. To presume so would amount to being foolhardy. It is indeed those very crisscrossings which revitalize music. Said was interested in transgressive music, which travelled across borders. Transgression becomes a significant act in creating a space beyond rigid identities. It is in this context that Said praises, or in a sense saves, Wagner's music by saying that it has the power to transgress and rise above its obvious nationalist ideological message.

While it is true that most of the time melody stands out in music as the authorial signature, Said believed that in serious musical thought the margins of both the musical and the non-musical coalesce. Said's forays into music criticism explored intertextuality "in divergent worlds on several continents" (Merod 143). He preferred playing the role of the "rank outsider," rather than that of the ossified musicologist, for he believed music to be all pervasive, and

not something to be touched and dealt only by the professional theorist. His observations were that of an attendee of music, rather than a reader of music.

Said had a theoretical concept of “lateness” which he was trying to put forward, when death snatched him away. Interestingly “late style” is itself premised on a death-like notion in artists’ last works. Instead of the theme of reconciliation, late style works do not resolve the tension. They hover on the margins of contradiction and irreconcilability, abounding in negativity, rejecting bourgeois novelty, and alienating audiences with repellent technical challenges and distracting continuity.

Said tried to perceive the parallels between disparate disciplines, ideas, topics and cultures, and he found them not defeating, but enabling and ennobling. He was on the lookout for interconnectedness between things, a trait that he derived from music. His ambition in founding the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra is the supreme example of how firmly he believed in border crossing and coalescing margins. Bringing together Israeli and Palestinian youth for the cause of music was not only revolutionary and challenging, but rewarding too.

Said believed that playing in an orchestra would enable one to learn how to live in a democratic society, when to lead and when to follow. His notion of “counterpoint,” which he developed from Glenn Gould, who himself was a performer at the margins—for he had renounced the stage for the recording studio—enabled not only Said’s music criticism but his literary

analyses too. The notion of contrapuntal and polyphonic music, with its non-dominating and intertwined lines, was one which Said was very fond of.

Said extended the contrapuntal method to the analysis of democracy too, allowing different voices to be heard, and not allowing them to be discarded in the din. Thus a polyphonic ensemble of voices would be an ideal society to live in, where there is room for all. The marginal voices do become thematic, important, and powerful. They also play an important role in the construction of harmony, and when heard coalescing together, do produce “new” voices, which are not heard when they are performed/sung/played in isolation.

Music, for Said, contributed to the “elaboration” of a social order and helped in filling out social space, drawing from authority and social hierarchy, and solidifying it. Bach and Beethoven responded to their times and created music. In fact it is only a “late style” that can counter the commodification prevalent in a bourgeois world order, by being “late” to the rewards it offered up. These margins therefore offer a hope. Adorno himself was a “late” figure, who was against the “grain of his own time” and was critical consciousness par excellence.

While discussing feminism and music, Said points out how the roles played by the female musicians have been marginalized throughout a male-dominated music history. He notices that the representation of women in music has to be re-read, and wonders whether there exists a “feminine” musical style. There was thus a constant concern in him regarding these

margins. Being a fierce anti-specialist all along, Said revered the margins and invested them with meaning and power.

Music is not only about sound, but also about silence. It is therefore most affective, expressive, and esoteric. Said preferred a music which exfoliated itself in time, rather than raced against time. He loved to experience music in togetherness, in a spirit of co-operation, rather than in a spirit of competition. He preferred the variations in music, rather than one master-line of melody.

Barenboim has an interesting observation that, “home” is wherever he can play the piano, and “the feeling of being at home” is “a feeling of transition” just as “music is transition too” (*Parallels and Paradoxes* 3, 4). This is in interesting contrast to the general notion of “home” as a fixed point. The man who makes the whole world his home is indeed fortunate. If music allows this luxury, then it should be practised by all.

Said believes that music needs to play an important role in challenging the social order. As music is dependent on the “right” tempo, too much or too little may rupture it. Political praxis also bears a similar fate. The case of Glenn Gould is that of an artist who overstepped the boundaries and crossed the margins. His performances abounded in contrapuntal and variation forms. Similarly Wagner’s music too crossed the borders of his time trying to create new harmonic and dramatic structures.

When the Israeli Barenboim performed Wagner's music in 2001, it broke the barriers which had hitherto proscribed this music. Barenboim crossed many lines and violated many taboos to achieve this. It is with this man that the Palestinian Edward Said collaborated on the West-Eastern Divan orchestra. Blind hatred needs to be done away with; those who want to listen to Wagner's music must be able to do so.

The intransigence of irreconcilability present in late style works does remind one that complex social and political processes in the Middle East have no easy reconciliation. On the other hand, amusement itself can sometimes be a form of resistance to a status-quoist dominant regime. Said's forays into music constantly resist a theoretical closure while minimizing the baggage of jargons. His forte was the essay which seems to have gained from his playing of Chopin and Bach, where one plays not for closure but for exposition. Said's writings on music themselves suffered a marginal fate, much of them being unfamiliar to musicologists. The lack of interest in social and cultural context by musicologists is what Said detested. He wanted to throw open the insular islands of music to the winds of politics and ideas. In fact the true soul of Said was that of the musician's, never separating reason from emotion, seeking interconnections and advocating inclusion over exclusion.

The margins of identity and its paradoxes surrounded Said throughout its life. His English name was yoked to an Arabic family name. He existed on these precarious margins, constantly troubled by its consequences.

Interestingly, his birth as a Palestinian was aided by a Jewish midwife, an example of the coalescing of margins.

In his childhood, he would break boundaries of tight regulations and would indulge in imaginative fantasy. His colonial education made him attend schools where he was segregated or punished, or thrown out from clubs for instance, based on his Arab identity. Even the food he had at school was different from that of the American children—margins operating in what you eat too. His mother did not have a U.S. passport while all others in the family did. She was not allowed to enjoy its talismanic protection. This made her existence anomalous and marginal. He was fond of his aunt Nabiha who had made it her mission to take care of the Palestinian refugees. Said had come into direct contact with suffering there.

It was the margins of illness/health in the form of leukemia that prompted Said to pen down his memoir. The record of his life and disease were thus simultaneous. Said's lectures on intellectuals were also an exercise in coalescing margins. The vocation of the intellectual—speaking truth to power—creates a vulnerable vantage point. Consequences have to be disregarded in this pursuit. The intellectual has to endanger himself/herself and be powerless most of the time, all the while warding away lucrative and seductive transgressions.

The nature of exile and exiles is always on the margins. Said believes that sometimes this estrangement from one's homeland is a creative one. The "intellectual-in-exile" is one who continuously inhabits the margins. While it

is a painful experience, it may offer up new angles of vision. The territory of exile is one of “not-belonging,” erecting the binary of insider/outsider. Said equates his own personal condition to that of a metaphorical exile.

Said discovers the privileges of amateurism, which makes connections across lines, without being tied down to one realm, and being restricted by professionalism. The voice of the amateur thus becomes a powerful critique. The academic who exists as an oppositional voice in the margins of the institutions is the true crusader of justice. Said was one who inhabited this space. He propelled his critique from the margins of the university. His critique crisscrosses many terrains and themes, which cannot be separated and studied in isolation. The margins coalesced in many of them, and this was the power of his project. Said always viewed individual events in connection with many other events. He believed in “interference.”

The postcolonial predicament has been that of marginality and homelessness. These conditions have to be ended and dignity has to be restored to those outside the corridors of power. Said’s project tried to cross over margins in order to make this vision possible. He preferred the image of the constant traveller to that of the ruling potentate, for the traveller always goes in search of different worlds, new frontiers, and new experiences. The traveller is fluid and able to abandon rigid positions. The traveller does all the crossing over.

Said’s lecture, which later became the book *Freud and the Non-European*, was itself an exilic act by him. He argues that the non-Jewish roots

of modern-day Israel are cunningly wiped off to perpetrate the myth of “purity.” These margins have to be rediscovered, which is exactly what Palestinian archaeology is trying to do. He was always a champion of the cause of humanism, trying to reinvest with dignity those corridors which were shut out from the boulevards of history. The humanist should essentially be able to create transitions from one realm to another, rather than be embedded with fundamentalist notions of hardened identity markers, and must constantly keep pushing the boundaries.

Palestine is an area with multiple cultural roots. Denying or trying to wipe off that fact is what the opponents of democracy have been trying to do. Said was bold throughout his life in articulating these multiple interconnections. The Levant was always a place which housed multiple races. The Palestinians themselves have become successful as professionals all around the world during their phases of continuous transit, which has helped them to develop skills suited for their itinerant life.

Said has been a forerunner of investigations into spatial humanities and his critique bears ample testimony to the coalescing of margins. His methodology does not offer scope for a theoretical closure, and his ambivalence is not disabling, but rather an enabling one. Self-divisions do abound in his enterprise. He himself refused the label of a theorist, and bore an antipathy towards arid theories.

Said’s project privileged hybridity in order to resist the acculturation of local cultures by the superior/dominant centre. He articulated the sense of a

new humanism which was always open to critical analysis. In a world where transgressions and crossings have become the lived realities, Said's penchant for coalescing margins gains more significance. His insistence on worldliness during the reading of texts contains an exhortation to don the role of vanguards of the future, thereby preserving the radical heterogeneity of all communities in the world.

In order to keep the asymmetrical relationship between culture and politics alive, Said mediated between the tasks of a cultural critique and political practice. There was always an oscillation in his intellectual itinerary between culture and politics—"a conjunctural rustle." He did not collapse politics into the realm of culture, yet acknowledged the influence of the intermingling. His political interventions prevented a static textualization of culture.

Said's death saw obituaries pouring in from all over the world, depicting the immense love and respect he commanded amongst people. He had a predilection for a music and narrative of "slowness" which luxuriantly and languorously elaborated its variations. He was interested in contrapuntal repetitiveness and its infinite meanderings and fluid reflections too. An unhurried pace, which does not overlook microcosmic details, and keeping in sight the macrocosmic, was what he preferred.

Said was termed a "specular border intellectual" who always was at an agonizing critical distance from the two cultures he inhabited. He resisted the "traps of specularity" of the borders—"essentialism and infinite

heterogeneity”—and was unwilling to be “at home.” Said was a “subject-as-space” at the borders he inhabited, experiencing the attendant “heterotopia” and “heteroglossia,” endowing them with plurisignificant valency.

Said’s role as a father too was exemplary, as fondly reminisced by his daughter. This was a man who loved and cared till the end, and well did his care extend beyond the confines of his immediate family. The picture that Said leaves back is that of a life well-lived, a race well-run. He wanted all to reach the victory stand.

In conclusion, though this thesis is divided into three main chapters dealing with three different areas, namely culture, politics, and music, for the sake of analysis, it has become evident that Said’s critique cannot be divided into neat categories. In fact, this is the very strength of his criticism. It may also be noted that though the thesis bears the broad term “cultural critique” in its title, it takes into account Said’s political positions too which, in Said, cannot be conflated easily under the rubric of culture. The political positioning of Said is, therefore, taken up for a serious engagement, because it is the energizer behind all his pursuits. It is also done in order to discern the oppositional tension that it retains in its relationship with culture, one constantly challenging and informing the other.

The whole idea of coalescing margins should be understood as an effort in “border-crossing/the voyage-in/interference” which Said articulates repeatedly and clearly. His idea of a single state for the solution of Palestine is what “coalescing margins” meant in praxis, when internal borders are

removed and they all become one system or one whole. Said's notion of coalescing margins does not bear the burden of destroying one's identity just for the sake of a uniform and homogeneous unity. It was peaceful coexistence and mutual recognition that he professed instead. Coalescing margins was thus an action plan that Said, the "Jewish-Palestinian," put forward.

In a world where the ideals of truth, peace, compassion, and harmonious justice seem to be led and threatened towards extinction, as the days roll by, Said's vision and method of coalescing margins must essentially offer us hope and respite. It challenges us to go forward, just as the hymn says, holding "hand in hand," "building new bridges," "crossing all barriers," "climbing all stiles," "breaking all fences," and "walking distant miles," eagerly awaiting the break of dawn, and the spread of sunshine.