

ORIENTALISM AND PAKISTAN*

Abstract

The assumptions and practices associated with Orientalism were essential elements in the domination of colonial and post-colonial societies. Despite the long history of struggles against such oppression, no one else provided as thorough a critique of Orientalism as Edward Said. The purpose of this paper is to explore the major aspects of that critique and to apply the relevant parts of them to Pakistan.

Orientalism consisted of cultural deployment to fulfill its purposes. That consisted of clear differentiation between the West and the Orient (i.e., the others) through a valorization regime as well as modes of representation. The understanding of the Orient that emerged reflected the unequal relationship between the observers and the observed. Orientalism also accomplished its purpose through the development of a discourse, which shaped the observers' understanding of reality. From the contributions of many Orientalists some dogmas emerged. The accumulated strength of the Orientalist archive influenced even as incisive a thinker as Karl Marx. It has considerable power in contemporary setting, as the two case studies of Orientalism in action in Pakistan reveal.

The paper concludes by providing further clarification of Said's views, identifying his critics, and spelling out the kind of changes that might be appropriate in Pakistan if Said's views were really taken seriously.

Introduction

An issue that gets frequent attention in Pakistan in a variety of settings – seminars, artistic exhibitions, books and journals, musical performances, op-ed pieces in the newspapers, and conferences – is the role of culture. Among the hotly contested issues are, how much has it changed and in what direction. Furthermore, strongly-held opinions are expressed about the speed, desirability, and consequences of these changes. Often Samuel Huntington's (1998) views on the clash of civilizations are pressed into service on one side or another; Islam's significance invariably surfaces; Indian influence is noted; and so is that of Saudi Arabia.

What is remarkably puzzling about the cacophony of voices heard on such occasions, however, is a prolonged and strange silence. The seminal figure of our times who has, I believe, addressed this issue, and done so from *our* perspective, is rarely included in a thoughtful, compelling, or meaningful fashion. I have Edward Said in mind, whose name sometimes does surface but his critique of Orientalism is rarely, if ever, considered seriously on these occasions. His views on the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict are widely read and discussed, but not (or on rare occasions) his works on Orientalism (Said 1978, 1981, 1994). Furthermore, one has to search long and hard to find courses offered on Orientalism or its critique in the curriculum of any public or private college or university in Pakistan. In most serious conversations, op-ed pieces in newspapers, and even scholarly publications on Pakistan, it gets little or no attention.

The purpose of this paper is to break that silence. Specifically, the purpose of the paper is, first, to introduce Said's understanding of Orientalism and his critique of it, and, second, to indicate the relevance of that critique for Pakistan. Third, the paper helps identify ways in which Orientalism shapes our identities, on the one hand, and cripples our energies and imaginations, on the other. Fourth, it identifies the attacks on Said's work, on the one hand, and the changes that will be necessary in Pakistan if Said's views were really taken seriously.

Role of Power

The exercise of power is as good a place to enter Said's understanding of Orientalism as any other. The kind of power he concentrated on came in the form of a vast colonial enterprise that straddled most of the globe but had its origins in Europe five centuries ago. It rested on a three-legged stool.¹

The first of these consisted of reliance, on varying degrees, on such coercive techniques as guns, bullets, chains, hangings, jails, rapes, and torture. As it relates to colonial subjects like us, the British *raj* allowed, in addition to the use of these coercive means, starvation to claim an estimated 12 to 32 *million* of our lives in India. (See table below)

It requires extended and concentrated attention to start to bring into our consciousness the full dimensions of the exercise of force in this form and on such a scale. And it probably takes even longer to let the full significance of it to sink in. The fact that it was not a single event, that it was repeated not once but twice, should have shaken the foundations of many cherished human possibilities and begun even perhaps to raise questions about the prospects of human redemption. It should have, more specifically, set aside any British claims to civilization, and forfeited any pretensions on their part of setting norms for it or exporting them abroad. The fact that they did not is a testimony to the strength of the third leg of the colonial stool.

Famine Mortality in India

Year	Estimated deaths	Source
1876 – 1879	10.3 million	Digby
	8.2 million	Maharam
	6.1 million	Seavoy
1896 – 1902	19.0 million	<i>The Lancet</i>
	8.4 million	Maharama/Seavoy
	6.1 million	Cambridge
Total	12.2 - 29.3 million	

Note: (1) Source: Davis (2002 :7)

(2) Not included here is another famine that occurred during the British rule. That was in 1943-44, and the number of Indians allowed to die through starvation was very large. The estimates of total deaths vary, but most of these are above three million.

For India, this was horror of unprecedented proportions. And yet, surprisingly, it is the Nazi holocaust and European tragedies that get most of the attention. Referring to mass killings at the hands of the Nazis and the Soviets, Timothy Snyder (2009: 14) felt the need to state that “Historians must, as best as we can, cast light into these shadows and account for these people. This we have not done.” While the shelves of libraries bulging with the literature devoted to the suffering of the Europeans is not considered enough, our starved millions go virtually unnoticed, their deaths mostly forgotten.

Beyond such bone-chilling holocausts, coercion manifested itself on a more regular and frequent basis with the deployment of military forces, and they remained the ultimate basis and source of colonial power. Their mere presence was enough to discourage violent resistance in some cases.

The second leg that supported colonialism was the civil administration. It represented the physical and material aspects of the relationship with the native populations – native bodies (subdued through violence, but also desired), exploitation of colonial resources (crops grown, resources extracted, trade regulated, revenue collected), and administrative means that normalized these practices. Considerable amount of revenue had to be collected, which paid for the military, police, and intelligence services, to support the first leg of the stool, as well as a large bureaucratic establishment that organized the transportation and judicial systems, urban public services, and a variety of other public agencies. British colonial government in India, it is not widely known, was entirely financed by taxes collected from its colonial subjects living within its boundaries (Ferguson 2004).

Paying for our own oppression was only partially reflected in the revenues forcibly collected from us. The trade policies of the colonial government in India were

designed and implemented to initially destroy Indian handicrafts, and later facilitate British textiles' export to India's "open" markets. Granting to only British shipping companies the monopoly over all goods transported abroad is another example, as was Britain's monopoly over opium trade to China, which that country was forced to import. The normalization and pacification functions of the civilian administration in India were pivotal for the transfer of resources and other substantial material benefits that flowed from India's labour and land to Britain's economy.

The colonial enterprise is sometimes justified in the name of imposing order in the midst of the chaos among us, the natives. But such beliefs are either inconsistent with others or ignore the social forces that colonialism unleashed. Another claim made on behalf of colonialism is that it brought progress – often described as economic dynamism (i.e., capitalism) and political democracy – in addition to stability. But such progress, if it occurred, must have been disruptive to the lives of the colonized people, as it was in all other parts of the world, whether colonized or not. *Order and progress are inconsistent claims.* That notwithstanding, both are made simultaneously.

Furthermore, colonialism reflected foreign control, and that, in turn, led to resistance. The need for the heavy investment by the colonialists in coercive methods and the hiring of a large number of European and native employees for that purpose was not an irrational use of colonial resources. It was the intrusion of colonial rule in daily life that produced tensions that periodically proved to be combustible. We did not have to be educated, or even literate, to sabotage, when we did not eventually eliminate, colonial relationship based on racist behavior and economical ruin. Resistance in some way, shape or form was, consequently, frequent, even when it did not fully succeed in eliminating foreign rule. Explosions of various kinds were common and the colonial archive provides rich and vivid record of them.

Colonial powers, like all dominant groups, did not want to incur the heavy cost of dealing with such resistance. How to make the natives less restive? While this is, in one sense, an age-old problem of the rulers seeking to reduce the cost of compliance through expansion of regime legitimacy, some additional problems had to be confronted by the colonial power because it was racially distinguishable from the native population, on the one hand, and it pursued clearly foreign interests through its policies, on the other. These characteristics called for measures that went beyond the usual advice given to legitimacy-seeking rulers.

In other words, propping up a colonial regime on only the two-legged stool of coercive techniques and civilian bureaucracy was obviously prohibitively costly and unlikely to produce optimum results. To stabilize colonial rule permanently – and when that proved to be impossible, to prolong its duration – the third leg acquired heightened significance. It consisted, among other things, of attempts to legitimize the colonial enterprise in the "mother country" as well as the colonies; they were crucial and they were grounded primarily in culture. Said called the variety of such practices Orientalism. That is what Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2002: 23) appears to be speaking of when she mentions the "reach of imperialism into 'our heads.'"

How was that accomplished? A short answer is, by the colonial powers making a cultural investment, one from which they are continuing to reap very rich rewards. Such an investment often both preceded the deployment of coercive action and followed it, since both processes had to be legitimated. Said (1978: 39) wrote, “To say simply that Orientalism was a rationalization of colonial rule is to ignore the extent to which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact.”

In order to clarify the meaning of that third leg, Said specifically addressed us, readers in the Third World: cultural significance of the Western influence and the potential danger of our collaboration in it. That is what Pakistanis – and people in all the Third World countries – unfortunately are not always aware of, and consequently become enthusiastic collaborators in their own oppression.

[F]or readers in the so-called Third World, this study proposes itself as a step towards an understanding not so much of Western politics and of the non-Western world in those politics as of the *strength* of Western cultural discourse, a strength too often mistaken as purely decorative or “superstructural.” My hope is to illustrate the formidable structure of cultural domination and, specifically for formerly colonized peoples, the dangers and temptations of employing this structure upon themselves or upon others. (Said, 1978: 25; emphasis in original)

Paulo Friere (1984: 159) speaks, appropriately enough, of “cultural invasion” in the same vein.

Cultural invasion, which serves the ends of conquest and preservation of oppression, always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the world, and the imposition of one world view upon another. It implies the “superiority” of the invader and the “inferiority” of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of the values of the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them.

It is in this kind of domination, when it becomes sufficiently reinforced, that can be found some of the explanation for our blocking the memory of the pain and suffering of the past. For our more than 30 million ancestors who were starved to death, for example, no museums have been built, no monuments constructed, and no holidays named. And Orientalized perceptions enable us to evaluate each other’s social standing on the basis of British standards of taste, manners, and refinement.

Cultural Deployment

It is primarily to Said that we owe a serious and contemporary exploration of the role of culture, and particularly knowledge, in our continuous subjugation. There is no better guide, I believe, than him to help us understand how that knowledge about us was, and is, constructed and the purposes it often serves. What we *can* know of ourselves is available for the educated primarily through knowledge, and

that, in turn, came into existence through certain processes, incentives, conventions, previous findings, and the prevailing trends and norms.

While his ideas are of general relevance to the Global South, they are particularly relevant to some areas. According to him, "...it was in the Near Orient..., where Islam was supposed to define the cultural and racial characteristics, that the British and French encountered each other and the 'Orient' with the greatest intensity, familiarity, and complexity" (:41). He reinforced this view later on. Unlike European dominance elsewhere

only the Arab and Islamic Orient presented Europe with an unresolved challenge on the political, intellectual, and for a time, economic levels. For much of its history, then, Orientalism carries within it the stamp of a problematic European attitude towards Islam, and it is this acutely sensitive aspect of Orientalism around which my interest in this study turns (:73-74).

Consequently, a new category was identified by Said to describe what he called Islamic Orientalism.

Central to the construction of images, identity, and consciousness of Europe was its elaborate and expansive network of understandings of itself in relationship to the Oriental "other," a relationship based on multiple and complex levels in which power figures prominently. Said needs to be quoted at length to gain a fuller understanding of the ways through which Western power is exercised.

...Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious 'Western' imperialist plot to hold down the 'Oriental' world. It is rather a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of 'interests' which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it *is*, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what 'we' do and what 'they' cannot do or understand as 'we' do). Indeed, my real argument is

that Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with ‘our’ world. (:12; emphases in original)

He challenged the dominant Western cannon in such a profound way that reverberations from his writings have crossed the borders from the United States to Europe, collectively often called the North, and from there to the Orient, now increasingly called the South, on the one hand, and from one field of study to several others, on the other. *Orientalism* (along with other works) shook the core assumptions and methods in such areas as archaeology, cultural studies, literature, political science (specially comparative politics), history, and Middle-Eastern politics and Islamic studies. Whether any serious scholar in these areas agrees with him or not, she or he *has* to take him into account.²

Conceptual Tools

There is no simple definition of Orientalism; Said’s several books are dedicated to understanding it, tracing its gradual development first in Europe and then in the United States and teasing out the variety of its implications for our contemporary world. (There really is no substitute for reading Said in original. I have read *Orientalism* several times, and each time I have been rewarded by newer or deeper comprehension of the forces that constructed the world we live in and the purposes they continue to serve.)

What Said called Orientalism was, in one sense, simply an academic area of interest in the Orient (whether expressed through research and/or teaching). Among other things, it was also a codified “system of European or Western knowledge about the Orient,” and it became “synonymous with European domination of the Orient” (p: 197). It had not been as thoroughly examined and scrutinized until Said appeared on the scene, and attributed to Orientalism several other meanings as well.

What Said brought to our attention was something less visible but far more important. It was a specific world-view, a sense of reality, and a consciousness of the imperialists that facilitated their remaking the world in their image. In other words, the construction of certain images and knowledge of the Orient of a particular kind was an essential element in the imperial project. Some Saidian concepts may help in introducing his broader ideas.

First, to say that the Orient was represented in a certain way in itself was not objectionable. Reality, for him, was not external to those observing it.

...the real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they *are* representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer. If the latter alternative is the correct one (as I believe it is), then we must be prepared to accept the fact a representation is *eo ipso* [by that very fact] implicated,

intertwined, embedded, interwoven with a great many other things besides the “truth,” which is itself a representation. (p: 272)

Second, the relevant question to ask, then, was not whether a representation – found in a travel guide, work of art, anthropological study, investigation of the religious practices of another people – reflected reality accurately but how narrow, prejudiced, self-serving it was of the period in which it appeared.

My whole point about this system is not that it is a misrepresentation of some Oriental essence – in which I do not for a moment believe – but that it operates as representations usually do, for a purpose, according to a tendency, in a specific historical, intellectual, and even economic setting...(p: 273)

Third, Orientalism provided a method for the Occident to sharply distinguish itself from the Orient. Steven Seidman (2008: 254) writes

Said argued that before there could be an era of European colonization there had to be an idea of “Europe” or the notion that there is a social and geographical space called the “West” in contrast to the “East.” In his view, the ideas of the West and East are not natural and geographical-civilizational complexes. The different people that make up the so-called Orient are diverse in language, culture, history, and politics. ...[W]hile the notions of West/East, Occident/Orient were present as far back as the ancient Greeks, Said argues that it is only in the modern period (eighteenth to twentieth centuries) in Europe that there developed a network of ideas and beliefs [called Orientalism] that were institutionalized in universities, institutes, governments, and popular culture that made a sharp division between the Occident and Orient.

That broad claim on Said’s part has sometimes been misunderstood. It needs to be clarified. Said was not overlooking or minimizing the significance of difference; he was being critical of a particular form it took.

My aim...was not so much to dissipate difference itself...but to challenge the notion that difference implies hostility, a frozen reified set of opposed essences and a whole adversarial knowledge built out of those things. What I called for in *Orientalism* was a new way of conceiving the separations and conflicts that had stimulated generations of hostility, war, and imperial control. (Said, 1978: 350)

The sharpness of that distinction had as its purpose the formation of a European (and later, Western) identity, and its basis was a separation from, and contrast with, the Orient. The need for a clearer sense of identity, especially when it began to mix with colonial expansion, required hierarchical, moral, racial, and other differentiating characteristics, and they, far more often than not, attributed a superior or higher position to the West. Western scholars and political leaders continue, with some exceptions, to maintain that distinction.

Fourth, Said was not suggesting that Orientalism is a bunch of lies concocted by Western scholars. It was, instead, a cultural investment that produced a certain kind of understanding through which the Western consciousness filtered the Orient's behavior, rituals, practices, and motivations. The "positional superiority" of the Westerners – the fact that they had made the deliberate efforts to be in the Orient, and therefore had the power to observe it, *an ability that since the 18th century had no contemporary Oriental counter-part*, made their accounts the primary (and often the only) sources for information, and were for that reason thought to be reliable. Rajiv Malhotra (2009, p. 211), for example, notes that the "Indians had no representation system of the British in Indian epistemic and mythic terms." In a more active and deliberate sense, then, Orientalism was the process through which the Orient is Orientalized – i.e., "knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense *creates* the Orient, the Oriental, and his world." It is the inequality of power that is critical in accumulating such knowledge. "Orientalism is an exercise of cultural strength" (Said, 1978, p. 401; emphasis in original).

Robert Young (2001: 387) clarifies this further.

[N]o one ever assumed that Said was making the simplistic argument that Orientalism was just an ideological supplement to European colonialism, fabricated consciously in direct service of imperialism. White mythologies rather involve an operation of a will-to-truth in the formations of knowledge themselves. What Said shows is that the will to knowledge, and to produce its truth, is also a will to power.

Similarly, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2000) states that "Said's notion of 'positional superiority' is useful...for conceptualizing the ways in which knowledge and culture were as much part of imperialism as raw materials and military strength." Her thoughtful comments on this issue are worth quoting.

The imaginary line between "East" and "West," drawn in 1493 by a Papal Bull, allowed for a political division of the world and the struggle by competing Western states to establish what Said has referred to as a "flexible positional superiority" over the known, and yet to become known, world. ...These imaginary boundaries were drawn again in Berlin in 1934 when the European powers sat around the table once more to carve up Africa and other parts of "their" empires. They continue to be redrawn. Imperialism and colonialism are the specific formations through which the West came to "see," to "name" and to "know" indigenous communities. The cultural archive with its systems of representation, codes for unlocking systems of classification, and fragmented artefacts of knowledge enabled travelers and observers to make sense of what they saw and to represent their new-found knowledge back to the West through the authorship and authority of their representations. (:58)

Over time, more and more of that kind of knowledge was accumulated, and each layer confirmed and reinforced the thickening crust of its conclusions. It was no

longer viewed as Orientalized or colonial or racialized knowledge; it was accepted as knowledge – reliable, objective, authoritative, and, with time, even scientific. It was proving itself serviceable also; the benefits of colonialism were increasingly visible – to the colonizers, that is, and were thought by them to be equally beneficial for the colonized as well. The dissenting voices were few and muffled. It was on the foundations of that kind of knowledge that were later built the more specialized areas of study of the Southern nations’ people: anthropology, archaeology, comparative politics, history, development, and economics. These fields remain largely intact except on some occasions when the marginal voices like Said’s (and those influenced by him) are raised, represented generally by younger scholars.

Let me interject here that Orientalized knowledge, although it was not called that, was crafted to serve specific purposes and interests. Those who constructed it (scholars, researchers, travelers, literary figures) transmitted it to their readers through teachers, faculty members, journalists, and some citizens. Their audience was expected to be members of their own nationality and race. “None of the Orientalists I write about seems ever to have intended an Oriental as a reader” (Said 1978: 336). Exigencies of time led colonial administrators, in the meantime, to make important decisions in the areas under their control. Being few in number in comparison with the Indian population, they needed our help in colonial administration. Furthermore, as a British colonial administrator, G. W. Leitner (2002), noticed we had strong traditions of seeking knowledge. As the Missionary schools (and schools that emphasized English language) were established in India, and as Indians on their own sought education in them in India and in public universities in Britain, we too acquired the same Orientalized knowledge. With some notable exceptions, we began to accept, or at least not to question, the basic assumptions of that knowledge; we were after all, doing so in an environment drenched in colonial trappings. Standing not too far behind them was the coercive apparatus – the well-equipped military and police. Performing well in a college in India, but particularly doing so in a college “back home,” held out the opportunity of a good job and moving in higher social circles required imitating British mannerisms and making fun of the simple-mindedness of our own people, who were viewed as the Indian “masses.” (It is a practice that continues, ignoring such readily available alternatives as ‘fellow citizens,’ “brothers and sisters,” “ladies and gentlemen” or “friends.”)

In contemporary environment, the same Orientalized practices are maintained through different means. Knowledge is now said to be globalized; it is not owned by any one; it is universal. But the power of the Orientalist discourse (see below), largely unchallenged so far, makes these claims sound hollow. To that should be added Pakistani scholars’ limited access to prestigious publishing houses and journals, as well as media channels, except when they are willing to contribute to Islam-bashing. For more than at least two centuries now, authority has been exercised over not only our material resources, states Smith, but also our “knowledges, languages, and cultures. This authority incorporated what Said refers to as alliances between the ideologies, clichés, general beliefs and understandings held about the Orient and the views of ‘science’ and philosophical theories” (Smith 1999/2002: 64).

In Pakistan, we tend either not to raise these questions in a serious manner or we raise them to largely reveal our unflinching faith in the superiority of Western knowledge – its books, journals, newspapers, credentials, and experience-based knowledge. When, on a rare occasion, it is viewed with suspicion, we assert our belief in the open and universal nature of globalized knowledge. These practices and assumptions maintain, as well as strengthen, the class divisions with an additional layer of cultural differentiation.

Institutions of learning, reputable universities, publishing houses, and prestigious journals are rare in Pakistan. Consequently, the students and faculty “want to come and sit at the feet of American Orientalists, and later to repeat to their local audiences the clichés” that Said states he has “been characterizing as Orientalist dogmas” (Said, 1978: 324). These are some of the foundations on which our Orientalized views are built and maintained, allowing both class configurations and knowledge circulation to unite harmoniously in a self-perpetuating motion.

The daily reminders of British influence – in imitating colonial architecture and frequent reliance on the English language, among the upper classes, and sipping tea and being passionate about cricket, among the middle class – reinforce and encourage the acquiring of such knowledge. Most Pakistanis – for that matter, most people in the former colonies – still live with Orientalized assumptions about both the West and themselves. One way that Said summarized them was to identify their dogmas, which are reproduced below. Another way to sum them up is to consider deficiency to be the *defining* characteristic of the people subjugated by the West, and to leave open for endless discussion its nature, variety, and degree.

Sometimes that deficiency is viewed as some form of depravity, lack or perversion; it is always conveniently available as a source of threat, the one excuse that is most frequently deployed by the strong to extend their control over the weak. The Native Americans were a security threat to the settlers at one time, as were the Aborigines in Australia and Maoris in New Zealand. Only genocide on a large scale against these indigenous peoples brought the perception of their “threat” to an end. Now “Islam-ofascism” serves the same purpose. What Orientalist knowledge substantiates is further reinforced by the media. News about the black, brown, yellow, and red people have mostly to do with hunger, disease, earthquakes or other disasters. There is violence, corruption, and mistreatment of women, on the one hand, and their devious minds that conceive of weird and irrational explanations – grievances are rarely mentioned as possible causes – for attacking the West, on the other.

In Said’s words,

At the heart of European culture during the many decades of imperial expansion lay an undeterred and unrelenting Eurocentrism. This accumulated experiences, territories, peoples, histories; it studied them, it classified them, it verified them, and ...above all, it subordinated them by banishing their identities, except as lower order of being... This [European] culture has to be seen as vital, informing, and invigorating counterpoint to

the economic and political machinery at the material center of imperialism.
(Said 1994, quoted in Seidman, 2008: 254).

To the extent that we have become educated which, as far as social sciences and humanities are concerned, means we have probably absorbed a great deal of the Orientalized knowledge that is fed to everyone without any clearly marked label or warning. No wonder our Orientalized identity can only produce pessimistic conclusions about ourselves. The greater our knowledge (and the sophistication that it is expected to provide), the more likely is it to infuse our perceptions with despondency. As someone has said, the way we look at things changes the things we look at. Our sense of deficiency and dependency generally rise in proportion to the knowledge we acquire. Thus we are created by the knowledge about us: deficient, flawed, lesser creatures, and invariably in need of Western help. Western cultural deployment consists in large part of keeping masked the fact that the need for that help is in itself the result of Western observation. And natives verifying such notions are fed information from the same sources, helping to neatly complete and perpetuate a feed back loop. That is how the circularity of this process is masked and the interests that are served either become invisible or benevolent.

Most sophisticated Pakistanis lament, as they emphasize, the fact that we are in important respects different from the Europeans (and North Americans). The fact that Lord Cromer felt exactly the same way is likely to be a source of some comfort to them. Said's reaction to Cromer, however, was quite different: "The crime was that the Oriental was an Oriental, and it is an accurate sign of how commonly accepted such a tautology was that it could be written without even an appeal to European logic or symmetry of mind" (Said 1978: 39). Not willing to forgive Pakistanis for being Pakistanis – or condemning them for not being Europeans or North Americans – is another manifestation of our Orientalized consciousness. Said's *Orientalism* "gave a serious answer back to a West that had never actually listened to or forgiven the Oriental for being an Oriental..." (p. 335). We, too, are often unwilling to forgive ourselves and others for being Pakistanis and unwilling also to question Orientalist assumptions.

Only very recently, after the publication of Said's *Orientalism*, and in large part because of it, have appeared on the academic horizon such fields of inquiry as cultural studies and post-colonial studies which have begun to interrogate the assumptions which facilitate our oppression. Their influence, however, is remarkably limited, and unfortunately has not taken root in Pakistan as well as it has in some other countries. Elsewhere difference is now beginning to be seen through less Eurocentric lens; to be different is no longer equivalent to being lesser or inferior. Orientalist forces, however, continue to put up a fierce cultural fight: since progress for them is linear and Western, difference to them conjures up only frightening images of illiberal practices or unacceptable customs. Since history has now allegedly ended, which means not only that the stages through which the Western history has progressed and the processes through which it has mediated its conflicts are adequate proxies for all human possibilities but also that they signal the absence of viable alternatives (as Francis Fukuyama [1992] claims), taking seriously

the notion of difference is to court disaster. It is along such lines that multiculturalism has also come under heavy attack. The tragedy of 9/11 has been fully exploited to denounce it, as well as the broader notion of diversity.

Discourse of Orientalism

As colonial expansion grew rapidly from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, our identities, as natives, were constructed and remade in an Orientalized framework – that is, we were Orientalized. We did not actively participate in that process initially, except as objects of study, and often as collaborators. We often had no choice except to submit to such scrutiny – of our plants, soil, mountains, bodies, minds, character, personality, psychology, and culture (Cohn 1996). The knowledge then, as knowledge now, reflected largely the motivations and interests of the researchers, not those being researched. However, the researchers were then less likely than some are now to notice the obvious: that they were able to do their work because of a particular environment – colonial government ruling over subject populations – and that research sponsored or facilitated by such governments, it should have come as no surprise, did not generally question those governments' (benign) role.

Said provides a nuanced account of the development of Orientalism. Starting with the late eighteenth century, a pre-modern, Classical Orientalism emerged which remained dominant during the nineteenth century. Within it he noticed at least four different elements: “expansion, historical confrontation, sympathy, classification” (Said 1978: 120).

For long periods in history, the social environment of human life in general and specific ways links power with knowledge in such fundamental and obvious ways that it goes unnoticed. Said is able to identify the precise date when that link can be located in a visible and dramatic manner. For the first time in history, Napoleon in 1798 launched an attack on Egypt with ships that carried not only sailors, soldiers, and weapons but also scholars who were to study the newly acquired colony. With that event also began the period of modern Orientalism, which placed it “on a scientific and rational basis. This entailed not only their [i.e., modern Orientalists'] own exemplary work but also the creation of a vocabulary and ideas that could be used impersonally by anyone who wished to become an Orientalist” (:122). The knowledge constructed in Egypt was obviously going to be for the benefit primarily of the new (French) colonial rulers of Egypt. There were no corresponding studies undertaken, he pointedly remarks, of France by Egyptian scholars.

Furthermore, the study of colonial possessions was soon enough guided by expectations of getting one's research findings published; the prospects of those findings being praised and rewarded reinforced them. The scholars in the field began to communicate through a specialized vocabulary, continued the practice of carrying in their minds the conclusions reached by the reputable scholars of the past – that practice is now called “literature review” – and often reached similar conclusions. One's probability of getting hired and promoted, even completing one's advanced

degree, more or less depended on following those cues, using that vocabulary, not questioning the ontological commitments, and arriving at similar conclusions. In other words, the study of the subject-matter that was broadly defined as the Orient was fairly well regulated. These are the elements of what Said calls the discourse of Orientalism.

Orientalism held “so authoritative a position ... [as a discourse]... that I believe that no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking into account” the burdens that had been imposed on it. Consequently, Said wrote, “because of Orientalism, the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought and action” (Said 1978: 197).

Knowledge is almost never collected in a vacuum. Orientalist knowledge both encouraged and rewarded the seeking out of difference – in the natural phenomena as well as among humans, and Charles Darwin facilitated the view that the two may be merged. This was another way in which chaos could be eliminated and order imposed. In that process, justifications for colonialism and racism readily coalesced. One element that was invariably present was the conclusion that the West in diverse and not fully understood ways was superior when compared with the Orient. Stated endlessly and in a variety of forms, and backed up by the “knowledge” so readily becoming available, this conclusion was repeated until eventually it seemed self-evident, and that, in turn, provided both the justification for undertaking European colonialism and its continuation where it already existed. Such was the power of the discourse of Orientalism. Summarizing Said’s views, Seidman (2008: 255) states

After the eighteenth century, it became conventional wisdom in England, the United States, and across Europe that the West was rational, promoted individual freedom and democracy, and is the vehicle that powers social progress. By contrast, ... the Oriental was imagined as non-White and primitive, and/or associated with stereotypical feminine traits such as passivity, indecision, childlikeness, and the ornamental. Said calls the network of discourses, representations, knowledges, and folk beliefs that constructed this global symbolic division, “Orientalism.”

A dimension of that broad agreement about that knowledge created about us was the expectation that the differences between the Europeans and the rest – the Orientalized “others” – were both clear and important. It also facilitated the erecting of barriers on which were in part based notions of racial superiority, eugenics, “white man’s burden,” markers of rank and status, and so on. Ignored in this reading of history was a long period of interaction – which was sometimes antagonistic, sometimes collaborative, and other times varied between the two depending upon the period and power configurations – between the Occident and the Orient. Furthermore, Muslim rule over Spain for more than six centuries, for example, was a striking example of multi-ethnic cooperation that had no precedent in Europe and was followed by the Inquisition (Menocal 2002). After 9/11, however, such notions were swept aside as the demand for constructing Orientalist knowledge immediately expanded and some Muslim scholars unfortunately took full advantage of it (e.g., Ajami 1999; Warraq 2007).³

Said's notion of "textual attitude" may also be relevant here, since it reinforces this investment in widening difference. He described two situations. The first often arises when we rely on books or texts to help us understand something before we experience it. In the case of travel guides, for example, our satisfaction or disappointment with what we see in the place/s we visit is often dependent upon what the texts had expected us to find. For many of us that guide or text "acquires a greater authority and use than the actuality itself" (Said 1978: 93). And so did the Oriental texts.

Second, if a text notes one characteristic – e.g., crime, terrorism, abuse – of a group (defined by, let us say, race, religion, sex, or national origin), then its readers may start looking for only that characteristic when encountering that group or any member of it, and if we watch them carefully enough we are, indeed, likely to find what we were looking for, and as more books are produced about how to cope with that characteristic, we are also likely to convince ourselves that we notice an *increase* in the frequency of its occurrence, until we are completely certain that it "is what in essence we know or can *only* know about" that group (:94; emphasis in original). That kind of essentialism is also one of the characteristics of Orientalism. It often provides the basis for many arguments for stereotyping and profiling of "others."

The changes in the dominant modes for the exercise of power are recognizable in different periods of time. At one time it was slavery; then it became colonialism, and many believe new forms of it have now replaced it. Contemporary instruments of power are often characterized by mixing older and newer practices, including those that acquire fresh terminology as well as instruments of power. New vocabulary that is emerging often reveals and explains the emerging developments as much as it protects and masks them. For example, the foreign debt of the Global South has been leveraged by powerful interests to promote a particular kind of globalization through the creation or use of such organizations as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. These organizations conduct and publish their own research findings, hire consultants from different countries, and present conclusions that support their actions. These developments make challenging Orientalist knowledge more difficult, policies based on that knowledge easier to implement, and make class interests to an extent more international (Stiglitz 2002; Perkins 2004; Chang 2008).

Orientalists

Orientalism draws its strength from these and several other propositions, while building on some insights of post-modernism. But Said relied primarily on the works of the Orientalists themselves. Only a very brief summary view is presented here.

Common to most of the early modern Orientalists was the study of dead or lost languages. Such study "also meant the reconstructive precision, science, even imagination...[that prepared] the way for what armies, administrations, and bureaucracies would later do on the ground, in the Orient" (Said 1978: 123).

Silvestre de Sacy, “father of Orientalism,” set in place the tradition that others followed after him, of finding Oriental texts and bringing them to the attention of Europeans through selecting, translating, codifying, and commenting on them. This was done at a time when the range of French colonial control was considerable; it was also a time when Sacy was working for the French government. It was in that context that the Orient began to be constructed – i.e., decisions were made about which texts to include, how to classify them, and what comments and introductions to interject – all in the name of making it “knowable” by Europeans who had attained, in Sacy’s words, “a higher degree of civilization.” (quoted on :128).

Similarly, Ernest Renan, who followed Sacy, did not try to hide his racial prejudices, which were most pronounced in relation to the Semitic languages (Arabic and Hebrew) and people (Arabs and Jews). In comparison with the Indo-European languages, “Semitic is a phenomena of arrested development” (Renan quoted in Said: 145), he believed, incapable of regenerating itself. And the “Semitic race appears to be an incomplete race, by virtue of its simplicity,” stated Renan (quoted on: 149).

Others followed: Reinhart Dozy, William Muir, Thomas Carlyle, Karl Marx, Richard Lane, Constantin-Francois de Chassebouef Volney, Francois-Rene Chateaubriand, Gerard de Nerval, Sir Richard Burton. The differences in their perspectives were significant, but they also shared some themes and conclusions. Some beliefs of the philologists overlapped with those of the Orientalists: the learned Western scholar was expected to be “surveying as if from a peculiarly suited vantage point the passive, seminal, feminine, even silent and supine East, then going on to *articulate* the East, making the Orient deliver up its secrets” (:135-136, emphasis in original). European readers relied on the Orientalists’ texts, rather than their own observations or the literature produced by the natives, to understand the Orient’s reality. Sometimes the pendulum swung from acknowledging that the Orient was undervalued, only to be denounced soon afterward for its barbarism and anti-democratic and backward features. Discounting the value of the Orient was the overriding theme, as manifested by noting, among other things, despotic tendencies among the Orientals, denouncing Islam, basing generalizations about Muslims on the evidence provided by one or a few examples, understanding Oriental practices and their physical features only in reference to European experience (and in that context they often came up short except occasionally during the distant past when a glorious moment defied the lowly expectations associated with them).

Contemporary Orientalism

The influence of these writings was enormous, partly because the European readers had no alternative sources of information, and partly because official policy (and the language in which it was wrapped) often reinforced Orientalist views. And so did other events: colonial expansion itself (or the forcible installation of friendly governments); increased opportunities for travel in the “exotic” East; higher yield from foreign investments; reading of ever increasing number of books and maps that celebrated “discovery” of new lands and people; increasing sense of adventure and

excitement that accompanied visits to markets, shows, and fairs where colonial objects and people could be viewed; and observation of “strange” customs. All this was made possible by the safety and affluence that the exercise of power over colonized people yielded, although any reference to the exploitative nature of that relationship would have been considered unnecessary and uncomfortable, if not unpleasant and rude as well. Orientalist discourse masked such dimensions of colonial experience either through silence or by reference to the cruel practices of native cultures and customs. British novels of the 19th and 20th centuries illustrate this remarkably well (Said 1994).

What we now call Islam-bashing was an important element of Orientalist discourse. European empires rose to challenge and supplant the Muslim ones. Initially, it was the Muslims in Spain that “served as a foil for an emerging European consciousness,” states Anouar Majid ((2009: 65). He continues: “the term *Europe* was rarely used before fifteenth century, proving that the impetus for a European identity, traversed as it was by the growing national singularities, was expansionism and colonialism.”⁴

Consider the case of Simon Ockley, author in 1708 of *History of the Saracens*. Said points out that since that work gave Muslims credit for bringing to Europeans what they knew of philosophy, his readers were “shocked painfully.” He felt the need, however, to always make known his belief that Islam was “an outrageous heresy.” But William Whistone, who was Newton’s successor, was expelled from Cambridge for his Islamic enthusiasm a year later (Said 1978, :75-76). Such anti-Muslim and anti-Arab influence has been pervasive in Orientalist discourse, as is evident in such 20th century scholars that Said identified as H.A.R. Gibb, Gustave von Grunebaum, Morroe Berger, and Bernard Lewis. To these we should now add Niall Ferguson, Daniel Pipes (2002), Richard Perle and David Frum (2003), Fouad Ajami (1999), Michael Scheuer (2008), and Martin Amis (2008), among others.

Contemporary Orientalists share several assumptions and conclusions about the Orient, and their views have now been given a sense of heightened importance and urgency because of the security challenge that the “Orient” is now said to pose. Some of them tilt in the direction that Said identified as belonging to the hard school of Orientalist thought while others in the direction of the soft school. Both of the schools, however, held some similar beliefs that he called Orientalist dogmas. Here they are.

[T]he principal dogmas of Orientalism exist in their purest form today in studies of the Arabs and Islam. Let us recapitulate them here: one is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is the rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior. Another dogma is that abstractions about the Orient, particularly those based on texts representing a “classical” Oriental civilization, are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities. A third dogma is that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable and even scientifically “objective.” A fourth dogma is that the Orient is at bottom something either to be feared (the Yellow Peril, the Mongol hordes, the

brown dominions) or to be controlled (by pacification, research and development, outright occupation whenever possible). (Said 1978, :300-301)

The dogmas are not a summative statement of Said's views. He noticed the changes in their development and emphases in different periods in European thought and practice, and identified, as indicated above, Orientalism's hard and soft schools.

Orientalism and Marx

So strong was the grip of Orientalist influences that even a scholar of Karl Marx's stature could not transcend it. That is the case despite the fact that he probed searchingly for historical contexts on which to ground his broad and sweeping conclusions about human potentialities, and, in addition to that, identified unquestionably with the vulnerable. His statements about India, which reveal a historically decontextualized narrative and an evaporation of any sympathy for the weak, are well-known.

England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan was actuated by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution. (Quoted in Said: 153)

Marx's broad statement has monumental consequences for us, partly because of its rhetorical value, since it is put to use sometimes by individuals who want to silence others, even when they have no commitment to overall goals and values associated with Marx. Several parts of it deserve attention. First, why was India in need of a fundamental revolution in its social state? His perceptions of us reflect an unadulterated Orientalism, and one detects an odious stench of racism as well. Our living spaces, life experiences, and our way of organizing our lives are clearly disgusting to him:

we must not forget that these idyllic village communities [in India], inoffensive though they may appear, had *always* been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they have restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath the traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies... (quoted on :153; emphasis added)

In contemporary language, we would consider such a society as one that is stuck so deeply in cultural quagmire that outside help is the only remedy for it. For Marx, British colonialism was to provide that help, and drag us out of that quagmire. He did not mince words about what Britain had to do: "England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerative – the annihilation of the Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia" (quoted on :154). He captures here a major characteristic of modern Orientalism in a language that goes so far as to prescribe the destruction of a whole society's culture

and replacement of it by another society's far more preferable one. And it is stated in an authoritative voice that is expected to inspire compliance from those to be destroyed because that destruction is, of course, in their own best interest. Since Marx's statements, such words have become less harsh – the vocabulary having gone from development, modernization, globalization, to democracy – but the attempt to remake us in the West's image has only gained momentum with time.

Second, even if the Western linearity of progress is accepted as the only legitimate trajectory, were we really stuck in a quagmire? His representation of India stands in stark contrast with that of other countries. If Marx's attention to Indian history had been as close as it was to Britain's, for example, he would have come to very different conclusions. But then the uneven distribution of attention is, in itself, as appropriate a measure of value as any other. Hence the focus recently on the gaze: its direction, intensity, duration, and intention. Paradoxically, a conservative British historian who believes that colonialism has had a positive impact in the world, concedes that

In 1700 the population of India was twenty times that of the United Kingdom. India's share of total world output at that time has been estimated at 24 per cent – nearly a quarter; Britain's share at 3 per cent. (Ferguson 2004: 22)

That level of world's economic output – almost a quarter of it – does not materialize without a remarkably high level of economic dynamism and productivity. It is unlikely to have been achieved by people mired in superstition, despotism, and tradition, all of which were allegedly depriving us “of all grandeur and historical energies.” But that did not stop one of the most respected (and also critiqued) figures in Europe to authoritatively pronounce severely harsh judgment on people of another continent.

Third, if Marx has turned out to be at least an unreliable a source about the past, what can be said about the projections he made for the future? It was around 1700, it so happens, that the British colonial presence in India, initially embodied in the East India Company, began to be noticed. In the next 200 years, during which Britain consolidated its rule – through military operations, civilian bureaucracy, and cultural investments – it had ample opportunity to bring about a “fundamental revolution in the social state” by being the “unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.” Perhaps unconsciously, but more likely in a deliberate fashion, British colonial rule derived as much benefit as it could from us. The consequences of colonial rule over India for Britain were an increase in British capital accumulation, accelerated skill development, establishment of favourable trading patterns, granting British shipping lines a monopoly over the transportation of cargo, and colonial investments that yielded high rates of return. After a long period of colonial rule, the two successor states, Pakistan and India, found themselves in a state of arrested development. A tiny proportion of workers were employed in industries, education and literacy levels were abysmal, poverty was widespread, and an Orientalized elite that had mentally escaped to Britain exercised considerable power. Perhaps these conditions amounted to a “revolution” of sorts, but it is not the kind that Marx had in mind. Instead of getting us out of a non-existing quagmire, it would be more accurate to state that the British *raj* first created such a quagmire and then pushed us into it.

Orientalism in Pakistan

The notion of Orientalist discourse is so central, I believe, in understanding several dimensions of Pakistani culture that a couple of examples may be useful in further clarifying it. Many a conversation I have had in Pakistan could have served that purpose, but the printed word continues to enjoy its privileges. For that reason, I have selected the analyses offered by Anwar Syed (2006)⁵ of the “insurrection” in Baluchistan and that of Nasir Abbas Mirza (2009) on the Taliban’s move into Swat and Malakand.

Syed’s approach consists of providing his views on the “Baloch political culture” and Baluchistan’s history, particularly the period during which the British ruled that province, and then concluding with some policy recommendations. Mirza follows Syed’s example, paying close attention to a British colonial official’s views on Malakand. The influence of Orientalism’s dogmas on both of them is fairly consistent.

Dogma 1 (sharp distinction between the superior West and inferior Orient): Syed’s tone when writing about the people of Baluchistan is one that assumes that they are underdeveloped in their organizational abilities as well as in their political culture. When they are not indulging in the “wild drama of blood-letting,” he states, they are able to make progress very gradually; furthermore, conflict and plunder among them are frequent. Similarly, Mirza believes that “If ruthlessness is the order of the day, the best choice is the Taliban.” But, he suggests, that, fortunately, countervailing forces that curb such religiosity and ruthlessness are also at work. The “[Western?] world knows better. For them, it is a case of ‘been there, done that’...”

Dogma 2 (old texts preferable to contemporary realities): The political rules of the game – local autonomy granted to the tribal chiefs in return for loyalty to central government – were set by British colonial law of 1901, Syed states, and they still prevail. Another text relied on was completed in 1848 and written by a colonial war lord, Sir Charles Napier. (Here is an example of our understanding of who we are coming directly from a colonial source whose motivations and interests in knowing us – see below – are not hard to identify.) Also quoted is Justice Khuda Buksh Marri’s *Searchlight on Baloches and Balochistan*, published in 1974, and there too Napier surfaces as a sound authority. There is no reference to recent reports by Pakistani journalists’ accounts or any op-ed pieces in newspapers by Baluchi or other Pakistani authors. Syed does note some changes, primarily the emergence of a few educational institutions, but dismisses their impact. Mirza follows suit. He identifies a “second lieutenant of a British cavalry regiment” who “ended up commanding a brigade tasked with subduing tribes in Malakand,” and he turns out to be none other than Winston Churchill, author of *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*. After quoting Churchill’s predictable observations concerning the people he had arrived to subdue, Mirza writes, “One hundred and twelve years later, nothing has changed.” While the views of Napier may not be well-known, there is no question about the unqualified contempt in which Churchill held Indians. Furthermore, neither Syed nor Mirza tell us on what evidence they base their startling conclusion that not much has changed in almost a century in these two areas of Pakistan.

Dogma 3 (the Orient is eternal and changes slowly; Western vocabulary is needed for understanding it): To deepen our understanding of the Baluch political culture, Syed turns to Western anthropological terminology. In Baluchistan, “tribes” – not ethnic, linguistic or provincial groups – are said to exist and they have universal and uniform traits. “It is usual for a tribe, wherever it may be...” writes Syed, to have certain characteristics, and Baluchi tribes are no exception. As tribes, they are clearly differentiated from the rest (presumably, non-tribal Pakistanis and Westerners). The pace of change, whether on account of Baluchi culture or Pakistani government’s neglect, suggests, he indicates, stability and continuity of a traditional order rather than change. It is uncanny how closely Mirza also follows this dogma. “[U]nderstanding [of jihadist and fundamentalist Islam] starts and ends with the study of tribalism. Be it tribes of Afghanistan, Waziristan, Africa or the Bedioun tribes of the Middle East, the nature of the tribe is the same.” Syed and Mirza do not mention the possibility of relating terrorism to any explanation (e.g., foreign occupation, as Pape [2006] suggests); for them, being tribal apparently tells you all there is to know.

Dogma 4 (the Orient is to be feared or controlled): The violent streak that Syed noticed among the Baluchis has already been mentioned. The Baluchi is to be feared additionally, he tells us, because, here Napier’s words are recalled, “To fight and plunder is his vocation. The Baloochee warrior loves his race, his tribe, not the general community which he regards but as a prey and a spoil.” Mirza recalls Churchill’s haunting descriptions of people living in Malakand who are suffering at the hands of the “rapacity and tyranny of numerous priesthoods...and a host of wandering Talib-ul-ilms... More than this, they enjoy a sort ‘*droit du seigneur*,’ and no man’s wife or daughter is safe from them.” These conditions, it will be recalled, Mirza claims have not changed since then. This is an amazing claim. Until the Taliban arrived in Swat and then extended their power over Malakand, these areas were no more under the “rapacity and tyranny of numerous priesthoods” than most other parts of the country. There have been no reports of anything even remotely resembling “*droit du seigneur*.”

It should not come as a surprise, then, that Syed endorses the same plan of action in Baluchistan, with slight modifications, as had been put in place in Sindh by Napier. The fact that Sindh differs markedly from Baluchistan need not detain us for too long, except to note the assumption often made by Westerners, now imitated by natives, that all non-white people are the same or similar. Mirza goes even further. He regrets “the world” has been discouraged from studying the countries that had recently won their freedom as primitive and tribal societies because such countries were offended by it. “So, in order to give politically correct ‘respect’ to the Third World countries, the study of tribes was shunned. The result is that today there is no study available to understand Muslim tribal violence. To understand what is happening in the world today, especially in Pakistan, we need to go back to studies conducted between 1875 and 1950.” Are there too many doubts about what are likely to be the findings of studies of human beings who have been pushed into categories with which primitivism is most frequently associated? And if the Pakistanis that emerge from such studies appear either as exotic or fearful, should we be surprised? Mirza does not identify the authors of studies who “researched” us between 1875 and 1950 the way

he perceives us: tribal people. Such authors were likely to be British administrators or anthropologists. That period, it so happens, was the time when collaboration between anthropology and colonialism was at its peak.

I hasten to add that Syed and Mirza are by no means unique in holding such Orientalist views. Frequently our attention is drawn to our unchanging backward nature, mind-set, character or ideology, on the one hand, and the references are made, by way of contrast, with the positive notions of modernization, Western influences, universal values, and so on, on the other (Qadeer, 2006). The memory of the millions of our ancestors who slowly died through avoidable famines does not disturb our belief that civilized and refined life, as well as notions of justice and equality, can be learned only through British tutelage.

Most upper class Pakistanis are aware of the disdain in which Winston Churchill held India and Indians. Unlike Mirza, they are likely to find his characterizations of Pakistani citizens suspect, if not hostile. Many Pakistanis are also likely to recall Napier's reliance on a pun when sending the one-word message of victory to London after the (in)famous battle of Sindh. It was a Latin word – *peccavi* – which means, "I have sinned." They are probably inclined, as Ardeshir Cowasjee (2000) is, to be grateful to him for moving the capital of Sindh from Hyderabad to Karachi, and for introducing police and military establishments, adequate water supply and sewage system for that small town which has now grown to be Pakistan's largest city. Neither Syed nor Cowasjee mention Napier's duplicity, his anti-Muslim feelings or his unscrupulous behavior.

Napier's personal venom against Muslims, in general, and against the Amirs of Sindh, in particular, was pronounced. Relying on an authority with such prejudices should give anyone – particularly those associated in some way with Pakistan – pause.⁶ Furthermore, Napier's honesty and judgment were questionable. He was praised for his valor and military strategy for the battle of Sindh, and for that he was honored by the British government. He did not make it widely known, however, that his triumph in Sindh had a lot more to do with duplicity than courage. Mirza Ali Akbar, who was originally from Iran, had a strategic position in the Sindh military establishment. Before Napier attacked Sindh, he had bribed Akbar handsomely. Akbar betrayed his employer, the Amir of Sindh, and persuaded his Sindhi soldiers to either fire high or to desert on the day of the Battle of Sindh. The slaughter of more than 4,000 Muslim soldiers that day and the defeat of the Sindhi army had a lot more to do with his treachery than Napier's personal courage for which he was decorated. In addition to that bribe, becoming a traitor had an additional pay-off for Akbar: he faithfully served as a *munshi* first to Richard Burton and later to Napier himself. And Napier did well for himself, too; he was appointed as governor of Sindh by the East India Company, and had to be formally addressed as His Excellency Lt. General Sir Charles Napier GCB. According to Cowasjee (2003), "Duke of Wellington described Napier's military performance in Sindh as 'One of the most curious and extraordinary of all military feats.'" (Cowasjee, incidentally, takes that statement at face value and waxes eloquent about how much Karachi owes Napier.)

But that is not all that can be said about Napier. He professed liberal, even progressive, ideas on some occasions, but acted, when paid to do so, in an entirely contradictory manner. “We have no right to seize Sind,” he said, “yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful and humane piece of rascality it will be.” For his conquest of Sindh, this mercenary soldier pocketed 60,000 British pounds (worth several hundred million dollars today) from the East India Company. His progressive political beliefs proved to be flexible on another occasion as well. Long before his arrival in India, he was asked to put down a working class movement in Britain called the Chartists. He promptly obliged.

Orientalized knowledge constructed for colonial purposes, and the policies that flowed from it, are the stuff that continue to generate habituated and thoughtless admiration. It is a legacy that should have become, more than half a century after independence, a source of our nightmares. Both the existence of this delusion and the explanation for it are provided by Orientalism. Our admiration for colonialism leads us directly to a trap within a trap: a perverse desire to save Pakistan from Pakistanis, and to trust, paradoxically, those who have revealed, through both deeds and words, their clear intentions to pursue their own interests often through racist methods.

Conclusion

It is unnecessary to try to summarize the above, since what has been provided is already a brief overview of Said’s views. Here I offer (a) some clarifying remarks before turning to (b) critiques of Said, (c) some further reflections on his relevance for Pakistan, and (d) some proposals for change.

Clarifications. It was not Said’s intention to silence or dismiss all negative comment about the Orient in view of the pervasiveness of Orientalist influences. He was a harsh critic of Middle Eastern kings, for example, who were maintained in power by American and European interests.

I believe it should not be difficult to identify a perspective that focuses on, first and foremost, the deficiencies of a society and notices only its defects in every nook and cranny. Such a perspective allows only the misery of an undifferentiated human formation – “the masses” – to be revealed, and that formation is thought to be condemned to live out its unfortunate life, without any potential to be realized or any value to be redeemed. That is what the accumulated investment in Orientalism often produces among the colonialists and the colonized: a corrosive effect that cheapens the value and debases the humanity of the Orientals. It sucks most of the confidence out of the Orientalists’ community. Nir Rosen (2006), for example, asked Cowasjee, a prominent Pakistani columnist, “what did he foresee” for Pakistan. “‘Doom,’ he smiled.”

The return on that cultural investment is steady and, over time, cumulative. Just as financial investments over a long period of time often grow at an accelerated rate, cultural damage (which Orientalism promotes), when inflicted over a long period, gathers speed and momentum. It is now well-established in Pakistan that the value of

a product or a person is perceived to grow in direct proportion to the distance from Pakistan. Considerable prestige is associated with maintaining a smug posture when discussing a variety of issues, particularly in the English newspapers and magazines – from the “dubious” genesis of Pakistan to the many possible ways of “putting it out of its misery.” In such an environment, bad news for Pakistan is good news for most analysts or columnists because they validate their gloomy forecast. Cowasjee is not saddened by the forecast to which he might have been reluctantly driven; he reveals no signs of anguish; instead, he smiles. Orientalism has shaped our identities in ways that cripple our energies and imaginations. It is not the memories of our triumphs of the past and our expectations of overcoming adversities in the future that are deeply satisfying; no, it is evidence of our failures and our hopes that our dismal predictions will come to pass that are highly comforting.

Fortunately, there are other ways of approaching these issues. One of them is to forthrightly acknowledge a variety of legitimate reasons for complaint by citizens, e.g., power shortages, unsafe drinking water, poor roads, corrupt officials, etc. Such a perspective would be broad enough to include many blessings as well: awareness that one’s country posed no threat to, or has not frequently attacked, other countries; one’s country is not in violation of significant number of United Nations directives; older members of the family and community are given respect and attention; there are no significant racial or cast barriers that limit social mobility; against heavy odds, domestically-produced atomic bomb has provided a modicum of national security; and an enterprising spirit among the people is so strong that remarkable success among many individuals has been achieved domestically and in *many* countries abroad. Such a perspective would not filter out the historical forces that gave rise to the present conditions (negative and positive), or their foreign or domestic origins. Here is one example. Why not insist on interrogating the assumption, repeated frequently, that it is the culture of Muslim immigrants in Europe that gets in the way of their integration on that continent, and suggest, instead, an equally plausible proposition that it is the European social barriers that impede their integration?

Critiques. Academic freedom exists, as has often been remarked, as long as it is not put to serious use. It will not come as a surprise that while Said’s challenge to the Western canon has acquired a small following, it has not gone unpunished.

Challenging the dominant cultural paradigm in any society is invariably met with a severe response. And no one gets away with a frontal attack on the reigning canons in a variety of academic disciplines without getting a lot of scholars upset. Many understandably feel the duty to defend the work that they have done most of their lives. There is also the sheer momentum of habit and tradition. And, perhaps the most important of all, there are powerful and well-entrenched interests that are not ready to abandon their power, benefits, and privileges. “Exercise the freedom of expression,” “question the prevailing premises,” “seek what is new,” and “challenge the existing paradigm” are fine slogans, but when they are actually acted upon, the consequences can be harsh.

Said has been attacked ferociously. At least four full-length books (Baruma and Margalit 2004; Irwin 2008; Varisco 2007; and Warraq 2007), and numerous articles,

have provided scathing critiques of his works on Orientalism with varying degrees of venom, thoroughness, and malice. It is obvious, however, that any author that gets that kind of attention must have made a remarkable contribution. Any body of work that provokes that intensity of scrutiny must have some salience. The vitriolic attacks and their frequency, in other words, speak to the significance, perhaps even the validation, of what is being attacked.

I believe that these attacks, and those that will surely follow, will largely fail because Said's analysis, despite minor flaws, is ultimately grounded in representations of the human condition that pull at the heart strings of too many individuals – in the North *and* South. While his language is sometimes dense, some of the building blocks of his analytical framework are so self-evident that they have become clichés: history is written by the victors, might makes right, the powerful try to legitimize their exploitative motives, vulnerable are often offered incentives to become collaborators in their own oppression, dominant ideas of a society are the ideas of the dominant groups. The critique of Orientalism taps into sensitivities that these feelings invoke. With time they will only grow, not because of political correctness or multiculturalism but because humanistic concerns once they start to grow are hard to shrink. Consequently, broad values associated with inclusiveness, for example, are likely to expand while those associated with exclusiveness becomes increasingly more difficult to defend.

Let us, for heuristic purposes, consider the possibility that Said's views are invalid. In that case, the contrary proposition will have to be taken, on the face of it, as equally plausible. But doing so would have to stretch the limits of credibility beyond all reasonable limits. Such a proposition would require us to lend credence to the following historical scenario: at a time when poverty and disease were widespread in Europe – during 17th and 18th centuries, that is – public and private resources on a significant scale began to be mobilized only to bring to people in distant lands order, good government, civilizational norms, and impartial or sympathetic European scholars. Furthermore, in such a historical dreamland the profits from some companies (chartered by the European monarchs) began to flow as an unintended happy coincidence, just as the genocide of natives on a few continents (North America and Australia) occurred either through poor communication or some misunderstandings!

What are the main objections to Said's work and where are they coming from?

First, the supporters of Israel have been ferocious – accusing him of anti-Semitism, fabricating both autobiographical and historical events, etc. (e.g., Pryce-Jones 2008). In view of his role as an activist in the Palestinian struggle and his numerous books and articles on the subject, that is not unexpected. None of their charges have turned out to be substantial or true, except his strongly felt and articulated conviction that Israeli policies in regard to Palestinians' rights, land, water, and displacement were both immoral and illegal. But this objection has less to do with his work on Orientalism than his writings on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Second, a number of scholarly objections premised on theoretical and empirical considerations have been raised (e.g., Young 2001 :389-392). One of them has to do

with Said's views on representations. Several dimensions of it can be identified. (a) He is alleged to have made sweeping statements about representations of Orientalism. How appropriate is it, it is asked, on the basis of "a restricted number of largely literary texts ... [to] ... proceed to make large historical generalizations" (:389)? (b) Closely related to this is the question of whether literary texts can be as authoritative a source of historical knowledge as other, often material, evidence that historians traditionally rely on? The validity of these objections, however, is questionable. The number of sources Said relied on were not only literary texts; and they were not few. In *Culture and Imperialism*, he (Said 1994) reviewed a whole range of prominent literary figures and found their narratives gratuitously containing elements of Orientalist dogmas. Furthermore, he did not rely on literary texts alone, as the very brief account of *Orientalism* above reveals. As for what constitutes historical knowledge, there is no firm consensus. Should oral histories of some groups be ignored, even if they are the only kind of histories they have? Should the works of fiction be excluded even when they were highly popular and their Orientalist values escaped any significant questioning by the critics at the time they were widely read? Incidentally, these kinds of objections are generally not raised when studies of American or British culture include excerpts from poems by T.S. Eliot or Walt Whitman, and novelists like Jane Austen or Ernest Hemingway.

Yet another objection concerning representation has been raised, however, and this one is more serious. It is alleged that since Said promises only representations, not truth, then how can he (or we) "know that anything has been misrepresented" (Young 2001 :391)? There is no doubt about Said's strong commitment to an anti-essentialist position, which requires flexible and variable understanding, in this case, of Orientalism. "West" and "East" are constructions created as much by geography as imagination, he insists. "Nowhere do I argue that Orientalism is evil, or sloppy, or uniformly the same in each Orientalist. But I do say that the guild of Orientalists has a specific history of complicity with imperial power, which it would be Panglossian to call irrelevant" (Said 1978 :341). He elaborates on this further.

As I suggest, European interest in Islam derived not from curiosity but from fear of monotheistic, culturally and militarily formidable competitor to Christianity. The earliest European scholars of Islam...were Medieval polemicists writing to ward off the threat of Muslim hordes and apostasy. In one way or another that combination of fear and hostility has persisted to the present day, both in scholarly and non-scholarly attention to an Orient – counterpoised imaginatively, geographically, and historically *against* Europe and the West. (:342-343; emphasis in original)

So, how do we know when something is being misrepresented? While a formulaic response is impossible, it may be suggested that representations that are, for example, consistently exclusionary, prejudicial, narrow or defamatory in character are likely to be misrepresentations. Similarly, it would seem plausible to state that misrepresentation exists when the influence of Oriental distortions or complicity with imperial powers are at work. Their markers are to be found in the features of Eurocentricism; several characteristics associated with Orientalism; its dogmas;

views of the defenders and apologists of colonialism; and a variety of views that try to legitimize, for a variety of reasons, rule or considerable influence of one country (or group of countries) over another.

Third, another dimension of representation focuses on a slightly different aspect of it. Said was attracted to definitions of Orientalism that were couched in a nuanced, complex, and even open-ended frameworks; that attraction stemmed from his horror of reifying constructed formations and essentializing their features. But they competed in his mind with giving the same discourse some overarching shape, definable contours, and identifiable markers, since without them *Orientalism* has no purpose. Here is an example. During his long and bitter feud with the best-known Orientalist in the United States, Bernard Lewis, Said stated that he (Lewis) revealed “his extraordinary ability of getting everything wrong.” And he continued, without a pause, “Of course these are familiar attributes of the Orientalists’ breed” (:342). Was Said being contradictory – taking an anti-essentialist position most of the time but abandoning it when it was convenient?

Said’s dilemma is understandable. There is no question that he poured a great deal of his energies into defining, documenting, and critiquing Orientalism through several historical and theoretical stages, as well as in identifying its contemporary manifestations. To the extent that something needed so much scrutiny, the existence of that something is undeniable. But that something was a construction maintained by a discourse, he emphasized over and over again. It had been made “real” to serve several purposes and interests. As long as it was doing that, its “reality” could not be avoided; it was, after all, supported by Orientalists (e.g., Lewis) and other cultural means. However, remembering that it was a construction and a discourse – without fixed concreteness, autonomous existence, or material reality – that kept it going gives us a different understanding of it. It makes it possible to undermine Orientalist discourse and imperial practices by unmasking the role of power behind knowledge and culture. It plants in our minds the profound notion that alternative constructions and discourses are possible.

Fourth, it has also been alleged that Said did not sufficiently periodize Orientalism’s development (Ahmad 1992). A close reading of *Orientalism* by most readers, however, would disabuse them of such a view. Said distinguished between the classical Orientalism (which, in turn, had several elements) and the modern one; the period between World War I and the early 1960s, when H.A.R. Gibb and Louis Massignon were the dominant Orientalists; latent and manifest Orientalism, and the hard and soft schools of Orientalism. It appears that this and other critical comments of Ahmad mask his unwillingness, as a dedicated Marxist, to forgive Said for making culture, instead of class, central to his understanding of colonial and post-colonial relationships. Irrespective of the nature of one’s ideological commitment, addressing the cultural divisions, particularly those that are based on colonial experience and class barriers, is crucial. Not doing so, leads not only to such epithets being hurled as “air-conditioned socialists” or “limousine liberals,” but they also leave intact another layer of differentiation (culture), in addition to class, and that makes the challenge for confronting oppression and inequality considerably more difficult.

Fifth, since Said emphasized the role of power, it may appear that he was suspicious about the privileged Western observers' ability to pursue research in a colonial setting. Young (2001 :392) states that Said "insists on the uniformity of the discursive regime of Orientalism...[which] no westerner can ever escape; but this assertion is somewhat undermined by his own analysis of the complexity and range of positions taken up by the writers whom he discusses." Said was actually against exclusionary practices. He felt that everyone had the potential to develop sufficient sensitivity and awareness in order to understand individuals and groups that were different from her or his own. Furthermore, the idea that reality or essence lurks somewhere beyond its various representations is one that he explicitly argued against.

The methodological failures of Orientalism cannot be accounted for either by saying that the *real* Orient is different from Orientalist portraits of it, or by saying that since the Orientalists are Westerners for the most part, they cannot be expected to have an inner sense of what the Orient is all about. Both of these propositions are false. (Said 1978 :322; emphasis in original)

He proceeded then to state, "I certainly do not believe the limited proposition that only a black can write about blacks, a Muslim about Muslims, and so forth" (:322). Specific Western scholars were cited – Clifford Geertz, Jacques Berque, Maxime Rodinson – as examples of those who were "capable of freeing themselves from the old ideological straitjacket" (:326).

Relevance for Pakistan. Several conclusions that flow from Said's reflections on Orientalism for Pakistan have been identified earlier. Some additional ones may be added here. Of these, some can be attributed directly to Said while others can be inferred from his general views.

First, it is unnecessary to invest our cultural resources in Occidentalism, that is, trying to do to the West what it did to us. "Above all, I hope to have shown my reader that the answer to Orientalism is not Occidentalism" (Said, p. 328). Focusing on the West, whether doing so negatively or positively, also has the unfortunate effect of reifying categories that Said shows were constructed for serving imperial purposes.

Occidentalism is undesirable for additional reasons. Our cultural capital is limited and desperately needs to be replenished. Using some of it in this way would provide another way of "escaping Pakistan" and remaining focused on the West, even if it is in a negative light. We need to liberate ourselves from those apron strings. However, Occidentalism is distinguishable from responding to frequent attempts to demonize us, and such endeavors are entirely appropriate and, indeed, necessary.

Second, the reverse of the first is also true: we seem unable to let go of Western influences because of our perceptions of the promise they hold for our future.

Progressive thinkers refuse to step out of Eurocentric terrains because they fear that all social projects of emancipation – poverty eradication, human rights, fight against tyranny, exploitation and hierarchy, and secularism – would lose

the *ally of the oppressed*, namely, science and rationality that are the self-proclaimed virtues of European modernist thought. (Bhattacharya and Basole 2009 :98)

Many, perhaps most, educated Pakistanis contrast the potential the Western ideas hold for progress with the local alternatives with which they are either unfamiliar or have little or no respect for. Their preference for the Eurocentric project is also facilitated and reinforced by their life-style and socialization, on the one hand, and the contempt in which a variety of Pakistani traditions – both religious and secular – are held, on the other. The absence of progressive European practices is associated with European disasters: fascism, communism or war. And when looking beyond Europe, the example most likely to cross the mind is Talibanization, as practiced for a short period in Afghanistan. But Pakistan is not Europe, and its experience is unlikely to replicate European patterns. Given the same (or similar) period of time to flourish as Europe had, Pakistani ideas may produce similar or better results, however difficult such a possibility might be to entertain for Orientalized minds.

The liberal and radical European thought had, let us not forget, a checkered past and a remarkably slow rate of “progress.” All the major liberal thinkers of the 19th century, for example, not only did not hold progressive views, they supported colonialism (Mehta, 1999). Liberal democratic countries failed to extend full voting rights to all of their *own* adult citizens until the 1960s or later. Social and economic rights have yet to be extended to the American citizens. Europeans have yet to elect a person of color as the head of their government. So, is it too much to ask that “political emancipation projects that do not speak in the language of liberal and radical European thought ought not to be *automatically* suspect for that reason alone”(Bhattacharya and Basole 2009 :106)?

Some recent anthropologists are able to detect elements, emotions, community spirit, relationships, modes of thought, and practices in human beings living in even remote parts of the world that have redemptive value and are the sources of vitality and growth. Surely, if the fog of Oriental messages clears up sufficiently, we will detect the same capacity in us to survive and flourish, as all human groups do.

Third, if we do have the resources to study what “East/Orient” and “West/Occident” are, or the shape they have been given over time, our efforts should consist of unmasking their artificial and imaginary nature, as well as their origins and motivations in the *Pakistani* context. What is needed is attention to Pakistan. The “modern Orient,” Said noted, “participates in its own Orientalizing” (Said 1978 :325). It will take some effort, but Pakistanis should be able to transcend it.

Fourth, sooner or later – and it is already rather late – the Pakistani educated class must face the responsibility and consequences of having inherited a colonial cultural milieu that firmly established a valorization regime. In elevating a certain kind of life style, cultural productions, and scales of value, that class perpetuates a way of life and a world-view. It allows only certain kinds of representations of Pakistan to dominate. Its leadership role in society and regular participation in Orientalizing Pakistan is not in serious doubt. What can be said in its defence, however, is that similar classes are performing similar roles in other post-colonial settings also. The

perceptions of this class of Pakistanis, their culture, history, food, products, and future are as dismal as the predictable result: personal enrichment coupled with regularly announced concern for the masses. If the erosion of confidence in its leadership is to stop, some changes in its cultural choices will have to be made.

Fifth, Orientalized Pakistanis reveal their deep sense of inferiority by taking extraordinary measures – from using whitening creams to getting rid of Pakistani accents – in their desperate effort to pass for someone else in Pakistan and abroad. While indigenous families in the United States, Canada, and Australia have bitter memories of the forcible taking of their children to be Westernized in boarding schools during a painful stage in their histories, an increasing number of Pakistani families are taking somewhat similar steps voluntarily. Growing number of parents speak to their children only in English and select schools for them where an emphasis on the English language and British or American culture is strong. They frown on cultural productions and material goods originating from Pakistan. However, their commitment to “escaping Pakistan” – mentally migrating, that is – takes its toll. Pakistani elite denounces Pakistan and Pakistanis forcefully and often in an attempt to clearly distinguish itself from the ordinary and patriotic citizens. A mispronounced word, skin color getting too dark in the summer, a culturally inappropriate gesture – anyone of these (and other) actions can immediately undo all the previous efforts to demonstrate one’s comfort and familiarity with the Western culture. Hence the increasing efforts to “pass” are often equalled by the corresponding fear of slipping up. Other strategies that reflect Orientalized assumptions are also employed. All of them require constant vigilance. Unfortunately, they are trying to be something they are not, and they are attempting to do so at a time when their nationality serves as a marker that European and North American official agencies at a variety of checkpoints – some more visible than others – detect with remarkable accuracy. If it wasn’t so sad, it would be the stuff of hilarious comedy. A lot will be gained by Orientalized Pakistanis re-evaluating themselves by getting to accept themselves as they are (*desi*), which is likely to reduce their personal insecurities and dampen the desire to condemn other Pakistanis who cannot (or do not wish to) escape.

Sixth, the construction of Orientalized Pakistanis’ world-view and life style are based on imitation. Among many serious problems with this is the ever-present temptation to abandon those who are imitating the Westerners for the real Westerners when the opportunity presents itself. Why settle for an imitation when the real one becomes, on occasion, available? Such insecurities among the Orientalized Pakistanis are likely to increase as travel and business opportunities for them expand. And, in a negative sense, it displays an unreflexive disdain for all things non-Western, particularly Pakistani – products, service, people, history, culture, geography, government, and so on.

Taking Said Seriously. What, then, is to be done? A lot. If Said’s critique of Orientalism is largely valid, and that is increasingly difficult to deny it, it inevitably leads to a very different kind of re-examination of our lives, histories, and cultures than what is most often produced by many of the prestigious presses and authored by respectable scholars. That critique, when fully understood, leads to fuller awareness of how saturated our daily lives are with Orientalist influences and how frequently we actively participate on a daily basis in perpetuating and even

strengthening them. These influences, particularly for the Pakistani elite (and those who wish to belong to that class), are architectural, linguistic, sartorial, social, and cultural. Taking Said seriously poses a formidable challenge.

Frantz Fanon's (1963) answer to the question – what is to be done? – was based on a Biblical injunction: those that were last shall be first, and those that were first shall be last. My preference is a little different, but follows the same logic. Reverse the existing valorization regime, preferring what is Pakistani and discounting what is not. It is widely believed that value is created through some clearly determined utilitarian standards of performance. In many cases that is true. But in far more cases than we realize, value is created by the culturally encoded preferences we consumers bring to buy a product or pay for a cultural event. Those preferences are influenced only to a limited extent by the sophistication of the marketing techniques or the efficiency of the product; they also stem from cultural attachments to the people, area, country, and culture. Investment in that cultural attachment, instead of in Orientalization, if done well, is expected to be enormously consequential. It is not scientific evidence, but the valorization regime that helps answer the following question for the Pakistani elite: is the value of summer abroad (in North America or Europe) higher than spending that summer in the mountains of Nathiagala? At least millions of dollars of precious foreign exchange are at stake on the way that question is answered every year.

Furthermore, the use of a service by the Orientalized Pakistanis has almost immediate spill-over effects. When that class deserted the public schools and travel by trains, the quality of both deteriorated. Services for the poor become poor services. If at least some could be encouraged to send their children to public schools and travel by trains, not only would the quality of education and train service improve, Pakistan would save foreign exchange in fees sent to Britain for O- and A-level examinations and the expensive oil used to fly the airplanes. And the improvement of service in some schools and trains would have a demonstration effect in other areas as well.

The alternative to Orientalized Pakistan, it should be clear, is not a hermetically sealed country. It does consist, to provide another example, of making a distinction between learning English as a means of communication (in which capacity it will remain important) and as a carrier of culture (wa Thiongo 1986). In Pakistan, the two are either confused or English is eagerly accepted more as a carrier of culture. It also means having to not only accept but celebrate the fact that we are *desis*, not Europeans or North Americans, temporarily stuck in an unfortunate space. If only we could divert the resources directed toward “escaping” (mentally or physically) or “passing” and invest them instead in accepting who we are, many of Pakistan's significant goals would suddenly be within its reach. The reverse is probably just as likely: denouncing the overwhelming majority of Pakistanis can shrink national horizons and fulfill a self-generated prophecy (i.e., the conviction that our deficiencies are so overwhelming they will always defeat our goals).

But can we be sure of who we are? I am aware that identities are not rigid, they are not determined at birth or by nationality, and that we should all have the freedom to transform ourselves with time. Such notions of fluidity, hybridity, and contingency

have often been noted. One issue that such formulations give rise to obviously is, how freely is that freedom structured? A dark-skinned Pakistani is more likely to try to pass for an American – and probably not succeed because the persistent question that will follow her/him will be, where are you *really* from? Also, if what Pakistanis were exercising was really freedom, then the outcomes would have revealed randomly selected choices. Good taste among men would not invariably lead to acquiring Harris Tweed jackets or jeans, and among women it would not so often produce lightening of their hair. And a third issue that it raises is the highly uneven playing-field of freedom in which resources are committed to reward those who put us down. Few can ignore the awards tantalizingly held out for the writers of the Global South who will defy Said's advice and denounce their own people. Prime examples are V.S. Naipaul (Nobel Prize in Literature), whose Indian family settled in the West Indies and who has vicious things to say about India, people of color, and particularly Islam and Muslims; and Salman Rushdie (knighted by the British government), who went to Britain on a Pakistani passport but now claims to be an Indian. After the tragedy of a death threat issued by an Iranian Ayotallah, he has not stopped warning the West of the danger that Islam represents; more recently it has taken the form of the fear that, he states, (Islamic) theocracy poses to the world. In addition to the above, the recent events (9/11 and the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan) and governmental practices (hurriedly-passed legislation that diminishes liberties of citizens) have to a large extent trumped most of the thinking and writing that were poured into challenging the rigidities of categories, binaries, and difference.

The challenge that Said confronts us with is serious. We tend to want to avoid it because it disturbs our lives and questions the assumptions on which they are based. But the price for not confronting that challenge is continuing to mount.

We are left with a painful choice: will inertia and the existing rewards that the Orientalized Pakistan dispenses prevail, or can Said inspire us to go in a different direction?

Notes

¹ I find the metaphor of the three-legged stool helpful although Said did not use it.

² In addition to all that, he was a major academic and political figure in the Palestinian struggle. Homi Babha believes that he shifted the focus from the Left Bank (of Seine) to the West Bank (of Palestine). He is the author of several books on different aspects of the Palestinian struggle (Said 1980, 1986, 1995, 1996, 2001). And his interest in Western classical music was serious enough to lead to the publication of a book on the subject (Said 1991). He clearly cast a large shadow. His death induced in many a feeling of being intellectually orphaned; he was mourned widely and elicited eulogies of remarkable depth and feeling.

³ Ibn Warraq is no ordinary Islam-bashing pundit; his obsessive hatred of Islam is manifested in his other books: *Leaving Islam: Apostates Speak Out* (2003), and *Why I am not a Muslim* (1995). In *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism*, he attributed only to the West three tutelary guiding lights: rationalism, universalism, and the capacity for self-criticism. For a convincing and thorough rebuttal of his claims, see Bala (2009).

⁴ Majid provides ample evidence to support Said's major arguments – by references to slanderous writings on Muslims as well as the brutalities that were visited upon them (:1-85) – but then paradoxically turns around and makes critical comments about him. "Said was too selective and

polemical,” he writes, “to have given us a good sense of the vexed history of East and West” (:8). On the other hand, he praises and quotes Bernard Lewis, who is probably the best known Orientalist now.

⁵ No disrespect is intended toward Dr. Anwar Syed. I have been his student and have benefitted greatly from his scholarship in many significant ways. I hold him in high regard.

⁶ Information for this and the following paragraph is based on Edward Rice, “General Charles Napier and the Conquest of Sindh,” <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/empire/napier.html>

* This is a revised chapter of a book on Pakistan that the author is working on. All rights are reserved by the author.

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