

South Asian Orient: Colonial Epistemological Inquiry and its Modern Connections

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Abstract

As analysts assume that the South Asian regional political environment is difficult to comprehend due to its ethnic divisions and lingual bifurcations as the region hosts more than one and half billion inhabitants divided into India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. Geographic diversity makes this region unique from all other regions in the world as it is bordered off the Persian Gulf and Arab world through the Indian ocean and opened up from Central Asia to the northern hemisphere. Such a racial, geographic, cultural, lingual and religious diversification had undergone epistemological inquiry during the colonial period in order to devise a central administrative system of regulating Raj's affairs for the upcoming global world. Therefore, there emerged a unique sense of exploring the unfathomability and multiplicity of the scattering communalities. Through employing Edward W. Said's critical framework, the present study exposes main theoretical Orientalist formulations by deconstructing major Western theories on South Asian cultures, geography and societies along with its connectivity to the overlapping of global power interests in the present world.

Keywords: Colonialism, Orient, Orientalism, South Asia, Global world

Background

Edward W. Said on Orientalism

Edward W. Said informs the Western scholars engaged in studying East or 'Orient' that their intellectual contributions are based on imperial arrogance and partiality. He argues that knowledge produced in the modern West is believed as apolitical in theory, however, in practice, it lacks a procedure in which Western scholars could stand apart from the worldly circumstances of their lives. So for them, the process of coming up to the Orient was a process of coming to terms as a European first, as

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a human being second. Even scholars from social and humanistic studies do reproduce such inclinations based on race and imperialism and they somehow fall victim to pride and prejudice during their academic endeavour. Proposing to redefine the practice to deal with Orient impartially for the sake of maintaining originality and neutrality of their theoretical generalizations, Said advised contemporary researchers to keep themselves pure from the ‘distortion and inaccuracy’ produced by ‘dogmatic views’. He concluded that biased with this ‘imaginative orientation of reality’ is almost all Western scholarship on the East.¹ Therefore, he urged that it is obligatory to reconsider the integral relation between any scholarly contribution and its standpoint based on the ideological and political liabilities. For Said, out of such European discovery was established *Orientalism*, which is a mode of approaching the Orient according to the Orient’s unique position in Western understanding. So the Orient has been the ‘greatest, richest and oldest’ place of colonialism by the European races: Portuguese, Dutch, French or British, etc. However American ascendancy has emerged significant in the post-colonial period.² For Said, Orientalism prevails through different levels: academically, imaginatively, and authoritatively.³ Among the academicians, scholars from social sciences can be included in this category of Orientalists and what they overall often do is Orientalism. Imaginative or intellectual Orientalism covers political, social or economic theory and colonial management including poetry and novel writing. In all these areas, an essential differentiation between East and West can be observed that ultimately leads the Orient to disparity. In terms of ontological and epistemological distinction, the zones represent to differ a lot, even on extreme binary opposition. The third and more refined meaning of Orientalism deals with ‘dealing with the Orient’. By production of statements about the Orient or through illustration, training, coaching, situating or ruling over Orient: this field as a method takes over, reorganizes and authorizes over it.⁴

Owing to be qualified through the dynamic exchange of various meanings of Orientalism and to be identified by Michel Foucault’s impression of discourse, Said’s central argument is that ‘without

¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 1978), 8-14.

² Ibid., 1-4.

³ Ibid, 12.

⁴ Jam Bilal Ahmad, ‘Scope of Orientalism in Context of Colonization in South Asia’ (2014), Unpublished MPhil thesis, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.

examining the Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively'.⁵ Thus, he accumulated different roles of Orientalism to apply his arguments in the following way: 'in brief, because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action'.⁶

Sociocultural and geographical transformation during the Colonial Rule

K. M. Panikkar argued that long-held European presence in the Asian continent was on the basis of racial superiority, colonial mindedness, and compound hegemony.⁷ The period of European expansion (1498-1750), the conquest (1750-1858), and the empire (1858-1947) in the Asian continent 'covers an epoch of the highest significance to human development ... have effected a transformation which touches practically every aspect of life in these countries'.⁸ Similarly, Lala Lajpat Rai, concluded that Orient is being managed and reproduced. Lala called it was a 'process of imperial hypnotism and of sophisticated, well-organized propaganda'.⁹

Eric Wolf has rightly argued that regional classifications and territorial nomenclature are as dilemmatic and controversial as the combined understanding of the history of the world. The British Empire required to reframe the 'bundle of relationship' human social world was engaged in. The scholastic formation of nation, cultures and societies was purposefully disingenuous, and overall the imperial strategy was based on odd syllogistic activity, historians and anthropologists established the circumscribed entities in the colonial era.¹⁰ However, the tradition of fixing, essentializing and stereotyping in South Asian history and geography offered a persistent obsession with the vocabulary of nationalism, as a precursor of independence.

⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 2-3.

⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁷ K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), 312, 332.

⁸ Ibid., 313.

⁹ Lala Lajpat Rai, *Unhappy India* (Second Edition, New York: AMS Press 1972, reprinted from the edition of 1928, Calcutta), xvii.

¹⁰ Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982, second edn.), 3.

The freedom movement in British India deviated from the original and genuine unity of the disparate communal anti-British movement especially the joint struggle of Hindu-Muslim unity in the 1857 War of Independence. Tony Ballantyne objects to the continuation of the scholarly established tradition of documenting nationalistic histories as the starting point of South Asian historical analysis. He cites Mathew H. Edney, that how the configuration of Arya theory endured the 'colonial state and its interest in constructing a coherent image of the boundaries and past of India as a nation. The Aryan 'invasion' provided the key starting point for this national narrative'.¹¹ The nationalistic and Arya Samajis' extremist interpretation of the Indo-Aryan history sowed the seeds of 'Arya superiority, reclaimed national self-esteem and posited potential Indian unity'.

It's very interesting to note that these notions have been historically surpassed from Indian nationalism to Hindu fundamentalism equating India and Hinduism ascribing a narrower vision of the nation. The role of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has become prominent in the 2014 and 2019 elections in India and 'within South Asian context at least, the story of Aryanism continues, as it remains a central discursive formation in post-colonial politics' exposing that 'Aryan idea was inserted into various forms of colonial nationalism, indigenous social reform and anti-colonial prophetic movements.' The author concluded that the British India was a kind of imperial head quarter for transmitting Aryanism to other corners of world, for creating connectivity among regions, for transforming worldviews and finally for 'constructing a truly global picture of geography'.¹²

Keeping in view the sources of aspiration to comprehend practically such regional complexities, the British realized the global significance of South Asia in bulging its authority towards Russia in the nineteenth and towards Sino-Soviet in the twentieth century. The British claim that they offered India a gift of political unity which was in a way an extension in understanding for prolongation and continuation of keeping control. British regional superiority over core geo-political aspects marked India as a combined unit of geo-historical analysis on the basis of further Orientalist interpretations. Metcalf maintained the connection between knowledge and power saying that, 'without knowing, authority could not be effectively exercised'. He rather highlighted Viceroy Warren Hasting's construction of 'Hindus' and of

¹¹ Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 49.

¹² Ibid., 181-95.

‘Muslim’ as distinct legal communities within India in order to schematize the Indian diversity.¹³

Post-independence period of South Asia witnessed British handing over its regional understanding to Western world after the liquidation of Empire. Armed intensity of region, security paradigm complex, and development economics are the typical examples of neo-colonialism. Due to its lying on the great strategic location on the map among the super powers, the global powers are still obsessed with South Asian political environment, its physical geography, and its geo-historical trends. American ascendancy on political matters of the South Asian states in post-colonial periods was realized after leaning on British advice and support. After all, the West was able to launch modernity instead of communism to be placed as an ideology. Whereas the Soviet counterpart was less familiar to South-Asia, as was the case in 18th century onwards, when British were eventually successful in the aftermath of Anglo-French rivalry on larger Oriental market. Both these European powers staged a competition for South Asian geographical and spatial strengths in order to utilize their own respective real presence. The House of Lords of UK had a realization that the prodigy of East must be the only foundation and obligatory paraphernalia upon which Britain could become able to maintain the imminence in the East.

Catherine Mayo was an American journalist. With the help of British authorities she stayed in India for few months in 1926 and on her return, she got her book published with the name of *Mother India*. In her book, she portrayed Indian society too ignorant and stagnant to deal issue like self-government. In her book, she blamed and slammed the local people. Her orientalist mentality towards Indians and their cultures was the genius of her book. Certain theoretical formulations foregrounded the justification for incapacity of the home rule or self-government to adopt advanced models of civilized missions as the Indian social groups lacked individual freedom owing to their traditional makeup. Like other Orientalists, in her book representation of indigenous people and generalizations about local peoples were misleading and deceptive.¹⁴ The moral, scientific and intellectual qualification which India was thought short of, was declared as the character of their civilization, as was the contemporary trend that other European scholars were portraying India as an ailing part of the modern world. The drama of modernity was the byproduct of the pseudo evolution and social theories. Oriental

¹³ Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connection* (New Delhi: Paul Press, 2007), 46.

¹⁴ Rai, *Unhappy India*.

despotism stood in the roots as a source of Oriental social decay, therefore, foreign subjection was reigned as a moral essence before idealizing a permanent stay or constant presence in the East as a whole. More or less, it was the beginning of theorizing on the social and cultural aspects with broader geographical parameters. European thinkers were critical of the concentration of powers enjoyed by Mughal rulers and their arbitrary decision-making. They suggested South Asian authoritarian political institutions needed to be reformed with the vital structures of Western arrangements.

European thinkers on ‘Oriental Despotism’ and ‘Asiatic Mode of Production’

Certain theoretical formulations justified the idea that Indians have no capacity for home rule or self-government as they lacked individual freedom owing to their traditional makeup. Therefore, they had to adopt advanced models of English thought and laws. The qualification which East was thought short of was the essential character of their civilization that was generally discussed by European scholars as an ailing part of the modern world. The drama of modernity was the byproduct of the pseudo evolution and social theories. Oriental despotism stood in the roots as a source of Oriental social decay, therefore foreign domination or intervention was needed as a moral essence so that British could have a lasting stay or constant presence in the East as a whole. More or less, it was the beginning of theorizing on the social and cultural aspects with broader geographical parameters. European thinkers were critical of the concentration of powers enjoyed by Mughal rulers and their arbitrary decision-making. They proposed South Asian authoritarian political intuitions needed to be replaced with the vital structures of Western arrangements.

Famous political philosopher of Enlightenment, Montesquieu had stressed that eastern societies were stagnant due to the use of excessive power by Oriental regimes, therefore, the idea of separation of power in the European constitutional and political systems was suggested as a necessity by him.¹⁵ Similarly, modern conservatism philosopher, Edmund Burke urged the colonial ‘rule to introduce modern law and regulation.’ Even the views of Karl Marx were not different on Oriental mode of production as he argued that the arbitrary and capricious nature of state intervention is responsible for social and economic stagnation in

¹⁵ Michael Curtis, *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 305-6.

the East. Similarly, social philosopher, Max Weber criticized the insignificance of Indian monarchy as to its role in social welfare programs or community reforms. He viewed absence of 'legally abstract justice', liberal values and individual ethos as outcomes of the presence of strong hereditary monarchy and religious fatalism. Max Weber also criticized caste system as one reason for Oriental decay, but he like Marx, stressed that 'King' was the sole authority and there was no room for judge or *qazi* in traditional make-up of Eastern cultures, therefore, the eastern societies as a whole could not evolve to their next stage.¹⁶

Michael Curtis further goes on to highlight orientalist notions reflected through the ideas of other European thinkers. James Mill and John Stuart Mill advocated for new social reforms in India, in order to mitigate the rigidity of caste system in India. Michael Curtis noticed the comprehensive exchange of dialogues on estimating cost-benefits analysis of colony-holding between imperialists and non-imperialists during proceedings of the British parliament in 1776. During parliamentary discussion, Adam Smith debated that colonies were a hefty load on the British Taxpayers amplifying the likelihood of war on one hand, however contributing no revenue and military force. Jeremy Bentham also admitted that to possess a colony meant that the chances for war are increased though once he advocated for reforms in Indian legal systems. His disciple, James Mill was also convinced that possession of India was multiplying the causes and pretext of war with other European powers. Too early British Empire had a realization that the possession of India should be no longer under direct British control as it was not cost-effective. There was much uproar on the larger expenditure, domestic corruption, and allocation of more funds. In contrast, John Stuart Mill, however, advocated financing colonization for the showy role of colonial strength, international free trade and foreign investment as a strategy to raise job employment chances and wages increment at home markets through reducing population. Use of Indian markets for British capital and as suppliers of cheap agricultural products was also suggested. His argument was that the colonies enlarged the stature of Britain. On the political level, the French viewpoints and British arguments on possession of colonies were almost similar. J. S. Mill in India and Tocqueville in Algeria offered the notion of prestige as the strategy of occupation.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., 306-7

¹⁷ Ibid.

Anglo-French rivalry over South Asia

Anglo-French competition over colonies' holding was as significant as it is in the industrial democracies today. The only difference is that in the past control was physical, however, systematic economic exploitation is the new mode of neo-colonialism. Though Oriental despotism was brought as an antithesis to Western liberalism by all leading Orientalists, however, both British and French were caught up in ineluctable necessity of colony's possessions as a mark of relative strength and supremacy among major European colonial races despite the warnings and cautiousness the anti-imperialists insisted on the method of colonial rule. In addition to this, above mentioned theories also reflected boundary notions: west to be supposed to have taken advanced geographic zone whereas India was imagined as a backward part on the map. Furthermore, penetrative nature of Orientalist theories have had deeper impact on European thought and public culture as early in the nineteenth-century as the theses of 'Oriental backwardness, degeneracy, and inequality' were taken as the 'biological bases of racial inequality'.¹⁸ Said argued that the Anglo-French theories supported 'Second-ordered Darwinism' essentially reflecting white race as superior and advanced one and non-white as a mark of inferiority and backwardness. This social or cultural backwardness worked as an idea that regions of the South Asia or India be designated as uncivilized, therefore, they could be penetrable or commandeered or extra-territoriality could be justified in India by the foreign powers.

Thus, employing the Saidian framework, we can argue that the whole of South Asia was regarded in an agenda fabricated around 'biological determinism and moral-political admonishment', or the region was demarcated around definite authoritative verdict and an unspoken package of accomplishment. Through a cumulative process of subcontinental understating, the West was ultimately able to translate its documented and pensive nature of studies into legal, administrative, commercial, and martial levels. However, comparing British and French presence in India, Said argued that the British in India were really present whereas French penetrability in region was almost subjective. Both Lord Cromer and Lord Curzon felt proud on British spatial and geographical apprehension of India, while French's involvement in the region was regarded as subjective and seductive. Therefore, British imperialism was considered more preferable for the Indians as compared to Frenchmen. On the more radical steps, Lord Curzon emphasized on the establishment of Oriental studies, 'imperial lingua franca' and

¹⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 206.

geography as fundamental requisites for the sustenance and even existence of the Empire itself. England's anxiety was due to the emerging influences of other European nations especially French and Russia into the South Asia.¹⁹

For Lord Cromer, the geographical apprehension was also mandatory for further nationalistic interpretation, citizenship or public man of South Asia. This epistemological appetite was not luxurious, but the geographical exploration was meant for commercial expansion as well. The cornerstone of whole of the empire was the British philosophy of utilitarianism, liberalism and evangelicalism combined with complicated British regulatory authority. The living social and traditional conditions of local population were studied through the angle of commercial societies. And, of course, French were lagging behind the British in India for a number of reasons: mainly the absence of substantial colonial holdings as well their military and commercial weakness in the wars. Therefore, it can be assumed that the 18th and 19th century is marked with ideological competition between British and French as they both desired to apply their respective steel frame on to the Oriental world.

Quite accurately indicated in the title of classic Herbert Adams Gibbon's book, *The New Map of Asia* is the idea that the South Asian Orient, its histories, configuration of power and culture were understood through British considerations of the safety of the Empire in India. British diplomacy and journalism circled around French, German or Russian or Soviet positions in the region. He referred to the British foreign policy's complexity with reference to the mastery of Indian lands and seas. One would see that every developed approach principally qualifies thoughtfulness and pensiveness. 'In the first two decades of the twentieth century, momentous decisions were taken to make effective and conclusive the work of a hundred years.'²⁰

He critically examines the British necessities during the centuries' long experience of domesticating the knowledge-power relationship with India. These included holding permanently the route to India by the Suez Canal, barring other powers the land route to India and sources of strengths and hegemony over rivals to be determined by resources in India. He maintains that as a result of holding South Asia (India) in the 19th and 20th centuries, the British invited a series of wars with other major powers. It was for India that the British fought

¹⁹ Ibid., 201-11.

²⁰ Herbert Adams Gibbons, *The New Map of Asia* (New York: The Century Co., 1919), 3.

Napoleon in the Mediterranean, Egypt and Syria. Claiming any of the approaches to India by any other power including France was a source of anxiety and deep concern for Great Britain. Therefore, the same author continues to explain the regional geopolitical significance as well as the leitmotif for Anglo-French dispute settlement all over the world: 'The principal factor which led Great Britain into the entente cordiale was a desire to get rid of French intrigue in Egypt. This was necessary to hold permanently the route to India by the Suez Canal'.²¹ Under similar concerns regarding the protection and shielding the approaches to India, Great Britain came into agreement with Russia in 1907, when the former found latter's penetration into Persia, her arrival on the borders of Afghanistan, and her intrigues in Tibet. A few years later, in World War with Germany, the approaches to India were susceptible once again. 'But it [war] ended in assuring Great Britain control over all southern Asia from the Mediterranean to the Pacific.'²² The author has a profound chronological understanding of an evolutionary working out of the foreign policy of Great Britain which underlies putting safeguards around India by land and sea routes—the prime strategy in order to bar any other European nation to this region. This was how the geography of South Asia was reconstructed in colonial times and this imaginative process is still continued in the modern world with the new global realities, such as emergence of China.

Partha Sarathi Gupta, has expansively added to the historiography of British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism by deconstructing the process of identity formation and nation-state's building. Gupta goes on to explore how colonial masters preferred to recover South Asia for neo-colonialism by connecting how Hindus, Muslim or Bangalis were at the command of 'well-planned imperial designs'.²³ During 1945-7, between the two conflicting opinions (Ernest Bevin's anti-American Imperial vision vs Hugh Dalton's 'little England' vision), the British government finally decided to 'keep all options open hoping that it would have plenty of room for maneuver for its long-term strategic aims'.²⁴ Gupta further maintained that how the one plan after another (Balkan Plan, Plan Partition, and autonomous Bengal Plan) was tailored by British authorities to have an element of imperial continuity

²¹ Ibid., 4-6

²² Ibid., 6

²³ Partha Sarathi Gupta, *Power, Politics and the People—Studies in British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism* (London: Anthem Press 2002), 240-241.

²⁴ Ibid., 241.

to best use South Asia for global agenda ranging from containment of Soviet Russia for Commonwealth strategic interests. Ideally, it was planned to have control over all parts of the Subcontinent and that it should remain in the commonwealth; however, the 'next best course would be retention of western Pakistan, Travancore, and autonomous Bengal'. Field Marshal Montgomery urged the retention of the western part of the Subcontinent on an urgent basis 'in order to enable Britain to have bases and airfields there'.²⁵ What France had been for Britain in 18th and 19th century, was Soviet Union for United State of America in the 20th century. This rivalry was inherited by USA against Soviet Russia and later Mao's China in 1949.

America inherits British Orientalism

South Asia: Inching towards internal and external transformation

The birth of nation states in the region of South Asian shows the classical example of colonial rivalry proliferation in post-colonial periods. Buzan and Waever have explained it this way:

India and Pakistan were born fighting with each other in 1947 when what had been a societal security problem of religious conflict between the Muslim League and Congress Party was transformed into an interstate, military political one between an Islamic Pakistan and a secular, multicultural, but dominantly Hindu India. Political rivalry based on religion was long running in South Asia and in that sense represented continuity.²⁶

Having endured more than half of the century, conflicts in South Asian region have never been comprehensively analyzed from start to date. However, few studies are available on understanding the patters and parallels within each of the conflict in the region and bringing them together in a coherent whole. Among these few sources is included the authorship of Rob Johnson's *A Region in Turmoil: South Asian Conflicts Since 1947*.²⁷

Transition from colonialism to neo-colonialism

Since independence global political situation of South Asia witnesses a unique shift from colonialism to neo-colonialism. This transition needs

²⁵ Ibid., 262.

²⁶ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: University Press 2003), 101.

²⁷ Rob Johnson, *A Region in Turmoil: South Asian Conflicts Since 1947* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), 7.

to involve orientalism as a discourse to understand not only the implications of the failure of bilateralism in the South Asian subcontinent but also the ways emerging rivalry has been evolved between capitalism and communism. The whole world was divided within the ideological camps between USA and USSR as both pushed forward their influences in all corners of the developing nations in order to fill the political vacuum in Europe, Middle East, Far East, South East and South Asia. The Second World War resulted in vacating vast colonized lands, however, most of the nation states were handed over to the United States as there was a close proximity between the Britain and America.

British Orientalism went hand in hand in transferring rich colonial experience on Oriental landscape. USA inherited the colonial legacy of controlling the affairs of the former colonies. The Allied forces were grouped on the question of mutual exploitation. It was unanimously embraced that the United States would protect the security and trade of the free world. Under the Western flagship, the former colonial world was marshalled against Soviet ambitions after the collapse of Nazi Germany. Anglo-French possessions were tried to hold back unto American influences. The transformation from direct to indirect control stood in the roots of liberal and modern hegemony as a rival to the communist world. Modern resources of communications enabled the Great Powers to command and control the basic survival of individuals all over the world without having to exercise a day-to-day overt control. In this modern lust for ideological and neocolonial supremacy, the Great Powers have entered into an alarming global rivalry in every corner of the world.²⁸

South Asian conflicts cannot be understood in isolation until an overview of the global power politics is scholarly incorporated. South Asia as a region has always reacted in accordance with the superpower's interplay of the Cold War. Mutual antagonism within and between states is due to the fact that global powers are still competing each other. The internal structure of relevant states, domestic foreign policy, and nationalistic ideologies revolve around tendencies of alliances and special relationships with the conflicting superpowers.

The angle from which South Asia (and other regions of the world) is viewed is based on imaginations. Superpowers are continuously engaged in efforts to actualize for greater goals that web

²⁸ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *The Myth of Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), Reproduced in PDF by Sani Panhwar in 2013, available at: www.bhutto.org, 12.

deep into local footings. On varying levels, differences are used for the sake of maneuvering native settings. Rajiv Malhotra and Aravindan argue that a whole network of intellectuals, researchers and academicians is involved in creating conditions for India's territorial disintegration.²⁹

British Orientalism worked on certain principles to preserve hegemony and domination in the future of Asia. In order to regulate the emerging nation-states' affairs as per imaginations based on maintaining specific objectives and goals, the knowledge-power nexus has engulfed the very ideas of independence movements through which the regional boundaries were formatted. The very idea of fixed geographic India was undergone lively communal and cultural differentiation. The formation of post-colonial South Asia was essentially marked with colonial typologies of power relationships. Narrow Europeanism essentialized Indian Subcontinent with neighboring mountains, forests and oceans. Lala Lajpat Rai indicated the geopolitical importance of this region in his *Unhappy India* as: 'Whoever holds India holds the key of world dominance and prosperity, particularly in modern time. Before Great Britain acquired India, she was rather a poor country without any empire. Indian wealth enabled her to bring about the industrial revolution and to amass wealth.'³⁰ He goes on to emphasized further: 'Indian gold and Indian troops enabled her to conquer the world. Almost every bit of territory she holds in Asia and Africa was acquired after she had secured the mastery of India. India has been, and is, the base of the empire in the Orient.'³¹

South Asia holds the key for the peace of the world. A place historically acting as the base of empire building and complex components of consolidated foreign policy. Actual political control and effective military occupation have been the minimum standards for imperialistic policies to manage and reproduce South-Asia. Under the connecting links between the Near East and the Far East, and a clearinghouse for the trade of the world, the Subcontinent acts as a source of post-colonial rivalries among leading powers, a fact that needs gigantic diplomatic understandings on globalization, economy, trade, financial interests, markets, and supply of armaments. The geopolitics of South Asia enables the trade economies to serve as a wheel of international relations and economic welfare or development paradigm

²⁹ Rajiv Malhotra & Aravindan Neelkandan, *Breaking India: Western Interventions in Dravidian and Dalit Faultlines* (Thomson Press India, 2011), xii-5.

³⁰ Rai, *Unhappy India*, 470.

³¹ Ibid. 471.

of the world. Otherwise, the Indian Ocean also determines the future of military struggles, cold wars and conflict zone. These troubled waters invite a holy and unholy combination of world powers, simultaneously igniting regional wars and beginning the complete end of bilateral relations of the bordering countries of South Asia. Owing to lying on the threshold of South Asia and the Indian Ocean, the US along with its global rivals necessitate preserving political and business interests in the region in the modern world.³²

Samuel Huntington thesis about cultural wars and clash of civilizations outdated Francis Fukuyama's thesis of political hegemony that Americans gained after the succession of communism. For Fukuyama, now there is no more significant US rival in real politics. But Huntington stresses on religion as a factor in identity building and hence political determination. He claimed that Muslim oil and Confucius industry, if could be integrated, must prove a menace for the West, advising American administration a militaristic agenda to deal with growing possibility of Pak-China socio-political perspectives.³³ Therefore, in order to promote American political goals, Pentecostalism and conservative Protestantism were merged and brought together as a political necessity during 1970-80.³⁴ Jeffrey Haynes further maintains that this new manifestation of so-called faith movements expanded the 'cultural leadership of Christianity' in various areas of the developing world due to its 'social prestige and ideological persuasiveness' and new converts are in fact, 'victims of manipulation by this latest manifestation of neo-colonialism'.³⁵ He also observes that rise of Hindu fundamentalism has completely changed the political landscape of secular India as Islamic extremism was observed in Pakistan after Afghan war against Soviet Union. Douglas Little has comprehensively narrated US presence in the Middle-East stating how South Asian region was pulled for planning a secret US war in Afghanistan during the Cold War.³⁶

³² Srinath Raghavan, *The Most Dangerous Place: A History of United States in South Asia* (Penguin/Random House India, 2018), 5.

³³ Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms—Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London/New York: Verso, 2003), 298-299.

³⁴ Jeffrey Haynes, *Religious Fundamentalism, Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics* (London/New York: Routledge, 2016), 168-169.

³⁵ Ibid., 169.

³⁶ Douglas Little, *American Orientalism—The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2003), 152.

Conclusion

Imperial metamorphosis of knowledge subdued, transmitted, and reproduced the South Asian entities and social realities. Western Orientalists schematically represented and systematically defined South Asia as a whole under colonialism. The colonial structure of South Asia distorted the subjects into particular representations, for the sake of maintaining its political and economic maneuvering and hence ideological basis. British colonial set-up started on commenting on the ancientness of India as despotic, rigid, and conservative. Therefore, they devised a central system to enlarge their own imperial domain in India by orientalist notions. Although colonial paternal authority pretends to believe on equality and justice, peace and progress but its underlying intentions are still located for direct Western intervention in South Asia. Through launching Orientalist ideas on Orient by appropriating its history, geography and culture by reinstating colonial domination, Orientalism has its outburst into Euro-Atlantic global settings. Orientalism has its future in completing the task of eradicating innate desire of ancientness, indigenusness, historic meaning and identity among the Orientals. Further, it allows no 'Other's' culture to be true to itself, or to be self-confirming or self-propagating. Besides, it acts as a self-denying agent among the Orientals.

British Orientalism circled around the exclusion of other colonial nations and completely sequestering the Sub-continent to go on with their humanizing mission. To be critical of dangerous and politically motivated geopolitical imaginations alive today, involved in contemporary international relations of the USA regarding South Asia, one has to trace the colonial competition and rivalries among European races in the previous two centuries. So is the Edward Said's central argument that Orientalism is not only a historical phenomenon but it has an ongoing political actuality.

This research article brings in focus the neglected areas of conflict that are caused by great global players, because these imperatives of global order are of huge scholarly attention.³⁷ Reviewing antagonism and strategic rivalry in South Asia is both a big academic and a public initiative. A serious and sincere effort is needed to understand the role of international political settings responsible for endless conflicts in South Asia. So the consequently evolved political

³⁷ S.D. Muni, *Conflicts in South Asia: Causes, Consequences, Prospects* (Singapore: Institute of South Asian Studies, University of Singapore, ISAS Working Paper No. 170, 2013).

conditions based on administrative and imaginative orientalist ideas, pave the way conflicts are generated within the region until today. As is indicated by Tariq Ali, that, ‘the most dangerous ‘fundamentalism today—the mother of all fundamentalisms is American imperialism.’³⁸ This paper concludes with the note that a huge amount of research must be focused in this neglected area of political existence of Pakistan as a strong and viable nation.

³⁸ Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*, xi.