JOURNAL OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2023.2196244

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Recognizing Hindu Orientalism

Irfan Ahmad

Department of Sociology, Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul, Turkey

ABSTRACT

This essay proposes Hindu Orientalism as a central category of analysis across disciplines. It begins by demonstrating how the claim to decolonize India is in fact (re/neo)colonial in many ways as it recasts Western Orientalism in the catalogue of Hindu Orientalism to shape India as well as the world. To this end, it critically engages with Hallaq's (2018) *Restating Orientalism*. The first part of the essay identifies three important theses in Hallaq's text. In part two, it examines the third thesis to mark its comparative contraction, namely, the non-treatment of Sheldon Pollock's contention about an indigenous form of Orientalism in the premodern Sanskrit culture. Contra Hallaq, the essay, then, proceeds to propose what it calls Hindu Orientalism – a practice analogous to Hallaq's description of Israeli Orientalism. It takes the cases of Dalits, tribes and Muslims to illustrate the working of Hindu Orientalism. An important aim of the essay is to stress that contemporary Indian religious-cultural politics is predicated on a deep, long knowledge-power configuration the significance of which is not recognized yet. It concludes by highlighting the role of anthropology in decolonizing knowledge – a concern important to Hallaq as well as to Said both of whom, however, often viewed anthropology unfavourably.

Introducing the argument

Outlining India's new education policy in 2017, the Minister of education, Satya Pal Singh, issued a call to '"decolonize" the Indian mind' because 'most academicians unfortunately followed the footsteps of British and Western scholars' and '"deliberately" denigrated Indian culture.'[1] While visiting the headquarters of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Singh later stated that the education policy 'will address RSS concerns.'[2] This statement is significant on two counts. First, the government led by the far right Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) is a front outfit whose ideological parent is RSS, a paramilitary, anti-minorities and assimilationist Hindu organization formed in 1920s. India's current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, as well as many top leaders of his government belong to the same RSS. Notably, RSS, 'modelled on Mussolini's Black Shirts and inspired by the Nazis,'[3] is 'the largest private army' [4] in India and wedded to fully instal an ethnic Hindu state, Muslims being it's primary other.[5] Second, the phrase 'to decolonize' is less Singh's or BJP's and more of RSS, which takes it to mean not so

CONTACT Irfan Ahmad irfan.ahmad@ihu.edu.tr

much undoing the legacy of the Raj or seamy aspects of Western education; instead, for RSS 'decolonizing' means 'liberation' from what it's unelected supremo, Mohan Bhagwat, termed as 'mindset' 'polluted . . . by the values of people . . . that attacked Bharat and ruled over her' 'in the past 1, 200 years.'[6] Bhagwat's description of India under attacks for 1, 200 years clearly shows that, to RSS, colonization began not with the British but with 'the Muslim rule' – a point Modi himself made in the Parliament (see below). As the chief guest in a function in which three books were released espousing the same view he held, Bhagwat traced 'the genesis of Dalits, tribals . . . to Muslim invasion in medieval times.'[7]

Such calls to decolonize India have gone beyond party politics to intellectual field too. For instance, Vikram Sampath, banker-turned-popular-historian and a selected fellow of the UK's Royal Historical Society,[8] argues that it is the colonial mindset, which 'underplays bloody Islamic conquests' of India and denies its 'civilizational greatness.' To him, rulers of India with Muslim names, including Tipu Sultan (d.1799), were all 'barbarians.'[9] Deepak, another popular historian, offers a 'decolonial' view of India different from postcolonial one. Recognizing the latter's criticism of European colonialism, he faults it for its 'inconsistent position' vis-à-vis 'colonization of Bharat [India] by imperialists professing Islam—'"Middle Eastern colonialism."'[10] With such a (mis)framing, it is logical for Deepak to regard Islam as an object rather than an agent of decolonization; he takes Islam as colonial and substitutes 'Indic/Dharmic' with Hinduism (Buddhism or Jainism being no more than its mere branch).[11]

This very notion of 'Indic' also permeates *Decolonizing Indian Studies*, a volume edited by Arvind Sharma, a scholar of Hinduism. It neither engages with writings on decolonization or Orientalism (which appears twice in text but not in index), nor does Sharma explain in the Introduction what decolonizing Indian studies means. The volume's aim, as he puts it, is to 'determine' if 'Western presentation of Indic civilization' 'confirm[s] to the civilization's own understanding.' Of its nine chapters, none deals with Muslims/Islam. This seems less an editorial choice and more a result of the academic field, Indology, which, practicing exclusion of Muslims and others, equated India with Hinduism (see below). The erasure of Muslims from the volume, then, is due precisely to its objective to examine 'Western Indology.' In Preface, Sharma favourably quotes VS Naipaul to say that India is the only country whose history foreigners wrote.[12] That Naipaul's work, to cite literary scholar Haidar Eid, is a 'toxic cocktail of . . . racial ideology mixed with sexism, Islamophobia and Orientalism' remains effaced.[13]

What is at stake here, then, is not only the misuse of decolonial vocabulary[14] by India's Minister, popular historians, academics or others – which scholars with theoretical aims and contexts (dis)similar from mine see as 'recolonial' and 'neocolonial'[15] – but equally the operation of a pervasive practice, which remains un-recognized: namely, Hindu Orientalism. Critically engaging with Wael Hallaq's *Restating Orientalism*, a text at once indebted to and critical of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, and drawing on the case studies of Adivasis (India's indigenous population), Dalits[16] and Muslims, this essay proposes Hindu Orientalism as a key category of analysis. It does so by bringing Hallaq in conversation, among others, with Sheldon Pollock's exposition on premodern indigenous Orientalism in India.[17] At the core of Hallaq's text are three theses. First, its exposition constitutes a critique, not only criticism, of Orientalism. Second, it presents a reformulated theory of the author to address a limit in Said's analysis: his inadequate treatment of Orientalists who did not fit his framework. Taking this as a tension in Said,

Hallaq reads Foucault's observations on authorship differently than Said did. He connects his reading of Foucault to his notion of paradigm adapted from Carl Schmitt. Third, unlike both Foucault and Said, Hallaq comparatively studies the knowledge-power matrix in premodern Islam. He thus juxtaposes the *differentia specifica* of West as a paradigm with that of Islam. Contra Said, for whom there was no true Orient or Islam, only its (mis)representation, Hallaq outlines what he identifies as the ethos of Islam as a paradigm. Because of these three theses, Hallaq's exposition, contra Said's mostly aspectual *criticism*, constitutes a *critique* (on which, more below) of Orientalism as a discipline as well as a supra-discipline practice. Hallaq's theses gain added significance for he is trained in the very discipline of Orientalism and has written 'in it' for four decades (ix, 25).[18] In itself, this is not novel. Before Hallaq, Dutch anthropologist Peter van der Veer, trained in Indology, too criticized Orientalism.[19] However, Hallaq's intervention is theoretically far reaching.

Organized into two parts, in part one of this essay I critically situate Hallaq's theses. In part two, I critique his third thesis to make my own argument. My contention is that Hallaq's theses falter due to their comparative contraction by which I mean effacement of Orientalism as practiced in Indology, a branch of Orientalism. My point about this effacement is theoretical in that it shows working of knowledge-power dynamic different from the one in Hallaq's text. My argument is that if Orientalism is no longer a Euro-American enterprise as Hallq himself argues by presenting the case of Israeli Orientalism, then, we ought to recognize the working of what I call Hindu Orientalism. Recognizing Hindu Orientalism serves as a critique of Hallaq's rupture-driven account. Unlike Said, he takes Orientalism as an offspring of modernity, colonialism and the Enlightenment. To say, as he does, that it had no precedence anywhere, however, seems untenable. Before I may get misunderstood, let me clarify that I am no votary of perennialism to strip Orientalism – or any phenomenon – of its historical demarcation. My serious disagreement pertains to the comparative reach (or its lack) in Hallaq's formulation. I am aware, moreover, that an argument about the hitherto unrecognized Hindu Orientalism, which I differently enunciated first elsewhere,[20] entails a more elaborate treatment of diverse writings bearing on my argument than it is possible here. My engagement with them is thus summative in some places, suggestive in others and anticipatory in yet others. Notably, my argument about Hindu Orientalism differs markedly from Hallaq's who, without evidence, instead writes frequently about China and India as voices counter to the regnant Orientalism (more on this, ahead).

For my argument about Hindu Orientalism to be plausible, some readers may expect its definition at the outset. While apt, this expectation stems from a specific tradition of inquiry. To begin with, in human sciences there rarely exists consensus among scholars on definitions. Consider Said himself! His definition of Orientalism was marked by indeterminacy, slippage and fuzziness. From page one where Orientalism is rendered too generically 'as a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience,' on the next page he switched to its typology: academic and general Orientalism being the two main types. On page forty-one, it is described too expansively as 'knowledge of the Orient.' Said's chronology of Orientalism was also imprecise, even confusing. While in one place, he traced its origin to 'the centuries-long period' (27) of European domination, in another he tracked it as far back as to the ancient Greece. Elsewhere, he marked its beginning in 1312 when the

Church Council of Vienna instituted chairs in Arabic, Greece, Hebrew and Syriac.[21] Such a definitional imbroglio was not peculiar to Said. Noting that in *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, Thomas Kuhn used paradigm in at least 'twenty-two senses,' Margaret Masterman, the British linguist-philosopher, asked: 'Is there anything in common between all these senses?'[22] (see note 24).

Rooted in the Aristotelian tradition and discussed recently by Agamben, my approach is paradigmatic, not definitional.[23] Neutralizing the polarizing dyad of induction – deduction, particular – general, part – whole, which definition ultimately relates to, the concept of paradigm opens a third arena where the movement is from the particular to the particular. However, this should not be taken as disengaged from the universal. The analytic of particularity presupposes knowing the whole, which reveals itself in the paradigmatic particular. In Agamben's reading, Foucault's, as also Kuhn's,[24] inquiry was paradigmatic, concerned with 'the concrete.' The Greek etymology of paradigm means to show 'beside itself.' By showing as an example, paradigm as a distinct 'form of knowledge,' then, deactivates its own specificity to beckon to the general. In so doing, it makes things or phenomena other than itself intelligible.[25] And this intelligibility is achieved at the end of an inquiry, not at the outset.[26] When readers finish this essay, they will hopefully have a reasonable sense of what Hindu Orientalism is and its efficacy as an analytical category. Here, it is apt to intimate readers that this essay is written by an anthropologist-sociologist. Notably, and contra Hallaq and Said, it underlines anthropology's import in de-colonizing knowledge, a goal that is central to Hallaq's text.

Criticism and critique

Given the vast literature on this topic, even a gigantic volume cannot treat every dimension of the debate Said's book generated.[27] Here, I focus on three of Hallaq's theses I find pertinent to my proposal for Hindu orientalism. First, unlike Said's, Hallaq's is a *critique*, not mere *criticism* of Orientalism. Criticism relates to minor objections to or complaints about a thesis, without interrogating its very (un)viability. In contrast, a critique faces a thesis in its entirety and frontally.[28] Due to its sustained nature and broad scope, a critique also outlines an alternative, or at least offers signposts thereof, to the thesis under discussion. Thus viewed, criticism and critique pertain, as teased out below, respectively, to the roles of the dissenting and subversive author. To illustrate this heuristic difference between critique and criticism,[29] consider the works by Bryan Turner and Irfan Habib. While Turner is a sociologist who has widely published on Max Weber, Islam and Orientalism, Habib is the doyen of Marxist historiography of Mughal India. Turner faults Said for neglecting 'Islamic fundamentalism' as a challenge to 'secularization.'[30] Let us leave aside the politicized category of 'Islamic fundamentalism' Turner uncritically adopts and his mimicking of the Orientalist-Christian view that Islam was founded in the 7th century.[31] He also faults Said for effacing positive Western views of Islam such as Nietzsche's 'who praised Islam in *The Anti-Christ*.' [32] In both instances, he does not state, as does Varisco too while noting 'historical error' in Said, how these neglects derail Said's thesis.[33] Another example of criticism is the article revealingly titled 'In Defense of Orientalism' by Habib. He finds Said's criticism of Orientalist view of Islam as 'Mohammedenism' trivial. Taking Mohammedenism as an 'innocent designation,' Habib counters Said by saying that Muslims too use '*shari'at-i Muhammadi*

(Muhammedan law).'[34] The frailty of this argument is clear. As many Muslims or others use colonial terms, Mohammedenism being one of them, is their usage enough to judge their truth? Surprisingly, Habib shies away from addressing the ground of Said's objection: the belief of 'Christian thinkers' that 'Muhammad was to Islam as Christ was to Christianity.'[35] In a rush to defend Orientalism, Habib also does not tell readers that the term *shari'at-i Muhammadi* (on which, he cites no source) is part of a theology, in which, contra Orientalists and Turner, Muhammad was not the founder of Islam but its final prophet who brought, as did Moses, Jesus and others earlier, the same message called Islam.[36] Like Turner who glosses it as 'Holy Law,' Habib follows Orientalists to render sharia as 'law.'[37]

Having explicated the difference between criticism and critique and the issue of translation as more than a linguistic matter, the stage is set to lay out how Hallaq's is a critique of Orientalism, including Said's rendition of it. If for Said, Orientalism was the cause to be overcome through correct representation of the Islamic Orient, for Hallaq it is only a 'symptom' (vii). The root cause of misrepresentation instead is the very 'modern knowledge' bequeathed by European modernity and the Enlightenment. Neither Said nor his critics or supporters, Hallaq avers, thus identified the true problematic,[38] leading thereby to 'scapegoating Orientalism' (6). This emanated from as well as led to dismissing 'the archaeological depth of the epistemology on which Orientalism and most other academic disciplines were founded' (30). That Said isolated Orientalism from the whole it is a part of, observes Hallaq, was only logical in order not to open his faith in 'the Enlightenment notions of secular humanism and anthropocentrism' (230) to a scrutiny. He also reads Said's faith in secularism as approximating 'divination' (70). As a 'victim . . . of theology of the progress' (105) and a 'secularist liberal,' Said, Hallaq continues, disregarded the intellectual traditions of Islam as signs of 'the traditional' (142; see note 123 below). In fact, Said went on to say that 'a real or true Orient (Islam, Arab or whatever)'does not even exist.[39] What does is only its (mis)representation.

To Hallaq, Orientalism is not only a matter of misrepresentation or of Western imperial politics. Instead, it is reflection of Western epistemic structure derived from modernity and the Enlightenment; ergo, its pervasiveness beyond academia into economy, technology, institutions of the nation-state and more. At the centre of Western epistemology is the surgical separation between fact and value, is and ought – all stripped of any morality (145 ff.). Hallaq terms profit-driven capitalism and the Enlightenment as central to modernity as a paradigm (12). He elucidates this point by developing a theory of paradigm (see below), which in turn he connects with the reformulated (by Hallaq) theory of the author by Foucault. This connection between the theories of the paradigm and the author forms Hallaq's second thesis.

Like Turner, Said's many critics faulted him for disregarding the positive depiction of Islam by individual Orientalists. For Hallaq, this is not a mere fault; rather, it springs from Said's failure to have a theory of the author. Contra Foucault for whom 'the individual text or author counts for very little,' Said stood for their 'determining imprint' on Orientalism as a discursive formation.[40] Yet, he found no author free from its rules or prejudice, let alone leave his imprint on it. Hallaq resolves this contradiction by adapting the theory of paradigm from Schmitt. A paradigm comprises relationships between central and subsidiary domains, the former being its pivot. It also contains competing discourses, however. A paradigm thus has voices antithetical but marginal to the central

domain. By accounting for both hegemonic and marginal voices within a paradigm, Hallaq better explains the dominance of Western hostility to Islam as well as its positive portrayal by marginal authors. He expands this theory by adding dissenting and subversive to Foucault's categories of docile and discursive authors. Whereas docile authors are conscripts to power, discursive ones like Marx and Freud institute the central domain of a paradigm. While loyal to the discursive universe within which they work, dissenting authors only contest tenets of the doxa of their docile counterparts. In contrast, subversive authors interrogate the very episteme on which a paradigm rests. Furthermore, as dissenting authors aim for correction, the power elites bestow them with prestige and recognition. As drafters of an alternate paradigm – Hallaq's usage of it is closer to Kuhn's in its first sense (see note 24) — the establishment often boycotts subversive authors. To Hallaq, while Said was a dissenting author, French Orientalist René Guénon (1886–1951), a scholar of Hinduism who later embraced Islam, was subversive. He reads Guénon as representing a paradigm alternative to the one furnished by modernity-Enlightenment-colonialism (169–75).

Hallaq's engagement with Foucault continues in the exploration of knowledge-power dynamic in a premodern, non-Western tradition that Foucault never undertook (15). This is the third thesis, an important one for few have asked if this dynamic prevailed everywhere and before modernity too. Here, Hallaq presents the case study from diverse premodern Muslim social formations where *ʿulema* (scholars) held considerable autonomy from power such that knowledge was not at the service of domination. Anchored in a distinct metaphysics, this autonomy of rational knowledge unamenable to 'interests' (at the base of modern knowledge) stemmed, *inter alia*, form the ubiquity of autonomous public endowments and charitable trusts which built libraries, colleges (madrasas), hospitals, caravanserai, soup kitchens, Sufi lodges and other enterprises to enact the public good. Before Europe colonized Muslim societies, around 50% of their real property were *vaqf*, endowments (115). The worldview in Muslim societies left little scope for either the conquest of nature or worship of mammon, both of which spread as a result of colonizing modernity.

Against the typical view of colonialism's end with formal decolonialization in the 1940s or thereafter, with a focus on epistemic connections amongst colonialism, genocide and Orientalism, the penultimate chapter proffers how Israel as a Zionist project is a distinct case of 'Israeli Orientalism (*Mizrahanut*)' that is 'densely derivative of their Euro-American parent.' (224–225). Hallaq discusses Israeli Orientalism – in league with academia, military and more – historically as well as contemporaneously. Practicing racial-religious segregation, Israel has separate education systems for Palestinian-Israelis and for Jewish Israelis.[41] Its textbooks portray 'Palestinian resistance to colonialism and Zionism as illegitimate acts of terror' (n109, 335). Analyzing 1700 textbooks for Israeli children printed after 1967, Adri Cohen documents how they depict Palestinians/Arabs as 'dirty,' 'vicious animal,' 'bloodthirsty'[42] and so on (225). Part two of this essay documents a similar depiction of Islam/Muslims as 'fanatic' in Indian social-political-police imaginary, derivative as it is from British and Western colonial knowledge apparatus. Importantly, the notion of Palestinians and the Arabs as 'anti-modern,' 'primitive' was also applied, if differently, to 'Oriental Jews' such as Yemenis engaged in settler nationalism. Themselves Orientalized in and by Europe, especially in Germany, the Askhenazi Jews took to civilize and modernize 'Oriental Jews.'[43] The banner of this Zionist Orientalism was modernization theory,

sociologist SN Eisenstadt being its advocate.[44] In India, sociologist Gopal Krishna articulated a similar position about Muslims. He began by faithfully quoting orientalist Bernard Lewis as follows: 'Islam, not only chronologically, is in its 14th century.'[45] Its full-blown formulation later appeared in the works of sociologists Yogendra Singh and Imtiaz Ahmad.[46] This sociological position was not original, though; Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, had voiced it as early as 1946. Unlike Eisenstadt's 1951 dyad of 'tradition/modernity,'[47] Nehru's was 'feudal-orthodox/modern.' To Nehru, what to speak of ordinary Muslims or *'ulema*, even Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a British trained barrister-turned-politician and his rival (who was more fluent in English than in his mother or any Indian tongue) 'was hardly aware of modern political thought or development.'[48]

Since Hallaq's enunciation of Israeli Orientalism is critical to my own argument, elucidating the former's major mechanism and its prefatory comparison with the latter is in order. Hallaq documents two options Zionist settler nationalism gave to Palestinians: 'accept Zionism and its lordship and sovereignty or leave the country' (218). Both options, as he subsequently elaborates, rest on threats packed with violence, the goal of which is elimination either through assimilation or expulsion. Word limit constrains me from describing analogous practices in India in detail here. Suffice to note that as for the lordship by Hindus over Muslims and other communities defined as 'foreigners,' in total emulation of the Nazi Germany, an influential RSS ideologue, MS Golwalkar, wrote as early as in 1939 that 'the foreign races in Hindusthan [India] must either adopt the Hindu culture and language . . . and must lose their separate existence to merge with the Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing . . . not even citizen's rights.'[49] This option coexists with the continual threat of expulsion manifest, *inter alia*, in violent slogans routinely chanted during anti-Muslim violence: 'Muslims have only two places, Pakistan or graveyard.'[50] Giriraj Singh, a member of Modi's cabinet, has no qualms in saying that "Muslims should have been sent to Pakistan in 1947.'[51] It is clear that a 'good, acceptable' Muslim is only s/he who is either subordinated to the Hindu nation-state, expelled or already dead or killed, i.e. in graveyard. The near chronic addiction of post-1947 India polity to what is popularly but wrongly called 'Hindu-Muslim riot'[52] but which indeed is pogrom[53] is better explained when this dual strategy of subordination and expulsion is accounted for.

Given this ideological ground shared between Israeli and Hindu Orientalism, it is hardly surprising that the former army chief and a minister in Modi's cabinet quizzingly desires: 'Why Doesn't India Become Israel?'[54] Before some readers may take it as a view from the top alone, it is important to note that such opinions exist at the bottom too. During his fieldwork in India, many Hindus told German anthropologist Emmerich that vis-à-vis the Kashmir issue India should do the same which has been 'successfully done by Israel to control Palestine.'[55] I say about Israeli Orientalism more later. We must come back to Hallaq's important comparative thesis about knowledge/power matrix in a premodern formation.

Knowledge-power matrix in India over *longue durée*

From the discussion in the preceding section, one crucial point relevant to my argument is this: Does knowledge-power dynamic at the core of Orientalism obtain in every culture? To Said, it does. Without engaging with the literature on non/premodern

cultures, Said maintained that 'domestications of the exotic … take place between all cultures,' a view he reiterated differently in his 1995 Afterword.[56] To examine this Saidian premise, Hallaq studies premodern Muslim societies to show how a different knowledge-power dynamic flourished there – one that was non-subservient to domination. As anthropology takes culture/society as its subject and values comparison,[57] as an anthropologist I find Hallaq's comparative approach productive.

Due precisely to this methodological move, it is puzzling to find no treatment by Hallaq of Pollock, who is crucial to my argument, as also to Hallaq's, mostly as a challenge to the latter. It does not mean, however, that there is no ground shared between Hallaq and Pollock. There is. For instance, both see Orientalism and genocide as connected.[58] From Pollock's multi-faceted thesis,[59]an element of which relates to my argument is his elaboration of the knowledge-power matrix in premodern Hindu cultures, which, contra Hallaq's examination of premodern Muslim cultures, bears the signature of domination. Pollock's intervention as a noted Sanskritist and a leading critical scholar of Indology was in response to a hegemonic position voiced by anthropologists, historians and others that British colonialism/Orientalism invented caste or 'traditionalized' Indian/Hindu society. Differentiating soft formulation – that colonial rule impacted precolonial practices – of this position from its stronger version (the hegemonic one), Pollock rejects the latter according to which 'colonialism in South Asia produced certain forms of domination *tout court*.' He finds it ironical that scholars uphold this position without inquiring into 'the history of precolonial domination.' [60] To this end, he conducts an archival-historical examination of Sanskrit texts of many genres, including digests of religious codes of conduct (*nibandhas*), produced between the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[61] He also discusses ancient religious texts. He finds an organic relation between knowledge and domination in premodern Hindu cultures to the extent that he describes it as an 'indigenous "orientalism"' characterized by 'a "pre-form of racism" in early India.' Pollock sees Sanskrit as 'the principal discursive instrument of domination in premodern India."[62] At the heart of this domination is the monopolization of knowledge and literacy by the twice-born *varnas*/castes[63] and their outright denial to the *shudras*, formerly known as untouchables and (dis)placed at the bottom of ritualized hierarchy. Importantly, Pollock notes how this simultaneous monopolization and denial is informed by biogenetics, notion of purity as much as by the Vedas and other textual sources.[64] The binaries like Aryan/non-Aryan and Aryan/*mlecchas*[65] operate within this larger knowledge power-dynamic. Outside academia, B. R. Ambedkar, the foremost Dalit leader and an architect of modern India, strongly criticized this knowledge-power matrix as follows:

> [I]t must be recognized that the Hindus observe Caste not because they are inhuman or wrongheaded. They observe Caste because they are deeply religious . . . . In my view, what is wrong is their religion, which has inculcated this notion of Caste. If this is correct, then obviously the enemy, you must grapple with, is not the people who observe Caste, but the Shastras which teach them this religion of Caste.[66]

This comparative case study of a different knowledge-power nexus in premodern high Sanskrit Hindu culture as illustrative of what Pollock calls an 'indigenous' Orientalism serves as a critique of Hallaq for whom Orientalism is uniquely Western and modern. Though his own case study of Israeli Orientalism suggests that Orientalism is no longer

Euro-American, his text is blind to an analogous practice in India, which this essay names as Hindu Orientalism. In fact, Hallaq proceeds in a reverse direction to repeatedly present India, along with China, as counter voices to Orientalism (e.g. 68, 233, 244). As stated earlier, he gives no detail about the contour, location and force of these counter voices. To complete my argument, and contra Hallaq, the rest of the essay elaborates what Hindu Orientalism is. Here my focus is on modern India. Along with Dalits and aboriginal tribal population, Adivasis, I take Islam and Muslims – a subject left untreated by Pollock – as case studies to illustrate the premises and working of Hindu Orientalism and its relations with nationalism, 'the avatar of orientalism in the late colonial and postcolonial period."[67] Here, I focus on two prominent elements of the mainstream Hindu/Indian nationalism's nexus with Orientalism: Muslims as outsider to India and the equation between Islam and violence. My analysis disavows the usual distinction made between the putative 'secular' Indian National Congress party and non-secular BJP contemporaneously and between 'modernist' and 'traditionalists' historically. What interests me is not the clichéd party politics but the very ideology of nationalism that informs all parties.[68] This line of inquiry is additionally attentive to Engels' relatable observation that 'the names of political parties are never entirely right.'[69]

Before turning to this task, readers will appreciate the explication of assumptions that inform my analysis and argument. Though what I have been calling Hindu Orientalism approximates Pollock's notion of 'indigenous "Orientalism,"' unlike Pollock, I take it primarily as a modern practice that is neither exclusively indigenous nor purely Western or British but an outcome of interactions between the two over *longue durée*.[70] Cognizant of the knowledge-domination matrix in premodern Hindu culture, to describe this matrix – or any such premodern dynamic – as Orientalism is too expansive to yield conceptual precision and demarcation. At the same time, we must not ignore the ramification of Pollock's identification of that dynamic in the modern era. In contemporary India, author Manu Pillai has named Pollock's key concern as 'Hindu Dharmocracy.' [71] Pillai uses Hindu Dharmocracy to mean the supremacy of Brahmans and Brahmanical ideas to subordinate the non-twice born and minorities, especially Muslims and Christians, to an ethnic idea of Hindu nation. He focuses on the thoughts of M.S. Golwalkar, an RSS ideologue I discussed earlier. Shashi Tharoor discusses another figure of Hindu Dharmocracy, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, who extended Golwalkar's framework and who figures 'in every Modi speech' and in whose name many government schemes have been launched.[72]

One specificity of Hindu Orientalism is worth noting here. In Orientalism broached by Said, Muslims were surely a significant Other but not many Muslims lived in the societies European Orientalists themselves came from. The Other lived elsewhere. In Hindu Orientalism, Muslims become the Other while sharing space, time and lives with Hindus and peoples of other faiths. That is, Othering operates amidst coevalness, not due to what Johannes Fabian calls denial of coevalness.[73] The consequence of all these in contemporary India, as also earlier, and unlike Said who Hallaq criticizes for skewing Orientalism to the realm of (mis)representation, are monumental to the extent that they decide the very questions of life and death, or make the living as if already dead. The institutionalized system of 'riots' and pogroms[74] and contemporary lynching of Muslims on the flimsy ground of smuggling 'holy cow' or possessing their meet are only two examples.[75] It is important to note here that the ideological-political climate for the beef-

related myriad cases of lynching goes back to the 19th century colonial-nationalist politics[76] and that contemporaneously it is encouraged with open incitement for violence in the form of billboards in the public squares (see Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Photo by the author, 2014.

A Hindu 'spiritual-religious guru,' Sant Umakant Ji Maharaj, openly calls for violence through a billboard in Patna, capital of Bihar: 'Hang Them – Those Who Kill the Mother Cow.'

The nearly routinized cases of 'riots,' pogroms and lynching of Muslims in the name of 'cow protection' (that eating beef is an issue of dietary freedom in a democracy does not figure in the debate) should not be taken, I stress, either as episodic or as instances of typical othering by fringe elements. Much like the subjects of Dalits and aborigines or Adivasis in the register of Hindu Orientalism, as the pages ahead show, they are paradigmatic and stem from a specific knowledge system and its envisioned social order shaping as well as shaped by power. While a thorough examination of Hindu Orientalism in every disciplinary formation is awaited, evidence of its working in sociology-anthropology, political science (see below) and literary studies[77] do exist.

Let us return to the first element of Hindu Orientalism's relations with nationalism: Muslims as foreigners to India. Its first significant formulation, traceable to 1760, was by the British soldier-writer William Watts, a member of the Calcutta Council who had participated in the 1757 War of Plassey. As is well known, the defeat of the Indian king Siraj-ud-Daulah in it inaugurated the British rule. Watts wrote:

> The *two great nations*, inhabiting this part of the Indies, differ widely from each other in their complexion, languages, manners, disposition, and *religion*. The Moguls who are

> commonly called Moors . . . are a robust, stately, and, in respect to *the original natives*, a fair people . . . they are naturally vain, affect shew and pomp in everything, are much addicted to luxury, *fierce*, *oppressive*, and, for the most part, *very rapacious*. . . . The Gentoows [*sic*], or *native Indians*, are of a swarthy aspect . . . less war-like, but more active and industrious than the Moors . . . a *mild*, *subtle*, *frugal race* of men, exceedingly superstitious, submissive in appearance, but naturally jealous, suspicious, and perfidious; which is principally owing to *that abject slavery they are kept in by the Moors*.[78]

Words I have italicized – for instance, the original natives, native Indians – refer exclusively to Hindus, thereby rendering Muslims as outsiders to India. Watts' act of making Muslims exterior to India was an adaptation of the Christian theological exteriorization of Islam (rather than its recognition as a template within Abrahamic tradition as Muslims maintain) in the context of the subcontinent. This exteriorization was integral to legitimate colonialism. That is, the British manufactured the myth that they were not the first outsiders to rule India; Muslims too were outsiders.[79] Considered as the father of the Indian Renaissance and 'the first Indian liberal,' [80] Rammohun Roy (d.1833) embraced this Orientalist tenet. He was saddened to see Hindustan 'for several centuries subject to Mohammadan Rule, and the civil and religious rights of its *original inhabitants* being constantly trampled upon."[81] Roy's Orientalism led him to support the British rule.[82] Without discussing shades of this Orientalism in the later period,[83] I turn to Modi, who in a speech made on the floor of the Parliament dubbed Muslims as outsiders and the period of rule by them as '1200 years of servitude, *ghulamī*.' [84] Insofar as the Prime Minister had his own agency to make this remark, it is incomprehensible without Watts' eighteenth-century Orientalism or Roy's replaying of it the 19th century. This exteriorization of Islam and Muslims equally operates in Indian political science,[85] anthropology-sociology,[86] including in the latter's books widely used by students who write competitive exams to become top civil servants.[87] The exteriorization of Islam, as also of Christianity, goes hand in hand with a call for violence. A supplementary textbook distributed to 42, 000 schools in Gujarat states: 'It is better to die for one's religion [i.e. indigenous]' and 'an alien religion is source of sorrow.'[88]

Another key element of Orientalism, which permeates Indian nationalism is about Muslims as violent. This too was already present in Watts' quote where he inscribed Muslims as 'fierce, oppressive,' 'very rapacious' and Hindus as 'native Indians, 'who are 'mild, subtle, frugal race of men.' This contrast between mild, subtle Hindus on one hand and fierce, oppressive Muslims on the other, as representing 'the two great nations,' was due to many factors like 'their complexion, languages, manners, disposition.' But, to Watts, 'religion' no less than race arguably was a fundamental one to crisscross all others. By no means limited to the British, this social imaginary[89] also figured in the German Enlightenment. While the character of Hindus for Kant was '*pusillanimity*'; 'Mohammedinism [sic] is distinguished by its *pride*, because it finds confirmation of its faith in victories and in subjugation of many peoples rather than in miracles, and because its devotional practices are all of a fierce kind."[90] Subsequent to Watts, W.W. Hunter, a British colonial officer, offered perhaps the most ferocious version of Islam's equation with violence. Hunter's favourite term was fanaticism,[91] which inundates his 1871 book the title of which tellingly reads: *The Indian Musalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen*? Shortly after 9/11, Indian publisher Rupa reprinted Hunter's book. With no explanation, it deleted the book's subtitle. The deletion was perhaps due to

India's eagerness to participate in the global war on terror, which, like the Western states, it viewed as religious/Islamic. In a televised debate soon after the horrific attack on the twin towers in New York, Modi, then a prominent BJP leader, argued that terrorism was innate to Islam. In his view, the 'whole world' had witnessed terrorism 'for 1,400 years' (since Prophet Muhammad's time). With this framing to echo international politics, Modi proudly claimed to 'have succeeded in dividing the country into two camps: those who are against terrorism and those who are in support of terrorism.'[92] Such an equation amongst Islam, violence and terrorism proliferates in the Bollywood films too.[93] It also does in the police department. According to the 2019 joint report by Common Cause and Lokniti – Centre for the Study Developing Societies, every second police officer thinks that Muslims are 'naturally prone towards committing crime.' [94]

This is a preliminary account of Hindu Orientalism as it functions vis-à-vis Muslims and Islam. It is worth noting that Hindu Orientalism also operates vis-à-vis Dalits and Adivasis. While there are challenges to Hindu Orientalism from Dalits,[95] there simultaneously are processes of their Hinduisation. Scholars have written about campaigns in Maharashtra to Hinduize Dalit as well as Ambedkar.[96] Similar attempts are underway in north India, especially in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.[97] Notably, the basis of Hinduizing Dalits is the demonization of Islam and Muslims.[98] As for the Adivasis, they have been a key object of Hindu Orientalism as practiced, for instance, in academia, especially in anthropology-sociology. Rejecting the designation of Adivasis as aborigines with a culture their own, G.S. Ghurye, deemed as the father of Indian sociology, termed them as 'backward Hindus.'[99] Ghurye's position only echoed earlier position of twice-born Hindus. One such Hindu told James Drummond Anderson (1852–1920), a British civil servant in Bengal and who later become a teacher of Bengali at the University of Cambridge, that an 'animist is merely a Hindu "in the making."'[100] To return to Ghurye, he stood for their 'complete assimilation'[101] within the Hindu social order. D.N. Majumdar and T.N. Madan, fellow anthropologists, urged the state to adopt the policy 'of controlled (planned) and limited assimilation' of 'tribal cultures.'[102] Nirmal Kumar Bose (d.1972), another influential anthropologist who directed the Anthropological Survey of India, too exemplified what this essay calls Hindu Orientalism. With reference to the literature on 'culture contact,' he prescribed rather than described how Adivasis (who the British did not classify as Hindu[103]), should be assimilated into the Hindu fold. Bose discussed how the culture of tribes and that of Hindus intersected making the tribes 'full-fledged Hindus.' Bose did his fieldwork among the Juang. His aim was to 'draw attention … to … how tribal customs … are … modified in the process of social absorption' to 'reveal the true nature of the foundations underlying the Hindu society.'[104] Like Ghurye, Bose and others, M.N. Srinivas, a prominent anthropologist in post-Independent Indian and well known in Western academy (and a disciple of Ghurye and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, Professor of anthropology at Oxford where Srinivas earned his doctorate), maintained that tribes were/are essentially Hindus. Since the colonial Census counted tribes as non-Hindus, Srinivas termed it as an 'anomaly' and approvingly wrote that the anomaly was corrected in the 1961 census. For both Srinivas and the 'secular' Constitution of India, 'Hindu' includes Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs.[105] The fusion between Srinivas' sociology and Hinduism was striking. 'The Concept of the Unity of India", he wrote, 'is inherent in Hinduism.' Such precisely is the context to understand the hostility American anthropologist Cynthia Mahmood faced from Indian

anthropologists for her reluctance to call tribes Hindus. During a trip to Bihar in the early 1990s, she visited the Sauria Paharia, one of the tribes labelled as 'Hindu' by Indian scholars. Despite Paharias practicing 'no elements of Hinduism,' her Indian colleagues 'insisted that since they [Paharias] venerate nature, and Hindus venerate nature, the Sauria Paharia should be considered Hindus' and that 'since they had not converted to Islam or Christianity, they could be considered Hindus by default.' Mahmood noted 'the vehemence with which my [Indian] colleagues greeted my inquiries as to the appropriateness of the label "Hindu"' for tribes.[106]

Currently, one pivotal tool of Hinduizing Adivasis and attacking their distinct traditions, religions, languages, as noted by a tribal woman scholar, is education.[107] The residential school run by Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) in Odisha where thirty thousand tribal students are enrolled is one such example. Achyuta Samanta, founder of KISS, is a powerful Hindu politician who considers tribal ways of lives as 'primitive.' The funders of KISS include mining corporates such as Vedanta and Adani.[108] One may object to what I describe as Hindu Orientalism as right-wing fringe of India's education policy. But as demonstrated through the cases of Muslims, Dalits and Adivasis in the preceding pages, its existence predates the party-politics and the BJP's rise to power. Likewise, its reach envelops academic knowledge as much as politics, business corporates, the police and popular culture like the Bollywood (see below).

So far, I have not explained why I use Hindu Orientalism,[109] and not Indian Orientalism. The brief answer is that both Western Orientalism and Indian nationalism as derivative thereof, especially in matters religious, view India as essentially Hindu. With its philological approach and continuing preoccupation with 'Sanskrit High Culture,' Indology as a branch of Orientalism is coterminous with Hinduism, the latter as 'the basis of Hindu civilization.'[110] In Indology, Muslims stand emptied out, erased or subsumed within Hinduism. If mentioned, as in nationalist history, Muslims appeared as despicable and cause for the downfall of Hindus.[111] The near invisibilization of Muslims and people of other faiths from Indology hardly changed when it got reconfigured as area studies, South Asian Studies and later under the catchword of globalization.[112] In light of this, the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of Indology as 'the study of Indian history, literature, philosophy, etc.'[113] itself may be construed as Orientalist for it erases exclusion of non-Hindu traditions within to ratify the Indological equivalence between India and Hindus. Such probably is the context for van der Veer's remark that 'students of Indian Islam almost form a separate community … reflecting the separateness of the community they study, almost implicitly acknowledging that Muslims don't "belong" to India.'[114] Another face of this separation in which India and Hindus work as ditto substitutes is the film studies. In it, there is a category called 'Muslim social' to refer to films about Muslims.[115] Its logical correlate, 'Hindu social,' does not exist.

Concluding observations

In proposing Hindu Orientalism as a category of analysis, this essay began with initiatives that purport to decolonize India and Indian studies. Far removed from the decolonial ethos, these initiatives, as demonstrated above, indeed re-enact assumptions of

Orientalism-colonialism. This is evident even in works, which claim that Indians critiqued Orientalism long before Edward Said did. Discussing the writings of B. K. Sarkar (1887—1949), including *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*, sociologist Vineeta Sinha claims that Sarkar 'produced, in effect, "post-Orientalist knowledge of the Orient."'[116] This claim, to say the least, is puzzling. Sinha erases Sarkar's religiously exclusivist, masculine and imperially expansionist ideas. Sarkar proudly wrote of 'this all-round and manly culture that the people of India [Hindus] could organize vast schemes of colonization and conquest' of 'races' outside of India. In early phase of the Christian era, he continued, 'Hindu colonies were firmly established in Burma, Chinese territories … Cambodia' through 'military conquest,' which 'promoted the cultural expansion … of the Hindus.' .[117] Sinha does mention Sarkar's praise for Hitler, but mostly as incidental. In contrast, historian Zacharia situates Sarkar's praise as integral to a wider undemocratic weltanschauung.[118] My point is while Sinha's goal of critiquing Eurocentrism and Orientalism is worthy, to describe Sarkar's ideas as 'post-Orientalist' (and preceding Said) is to misunderstand both Orientalism and Sarkar. In fact, Hindu colonies Sarkar glowingly wrote about was in part indebted to 'Greater India' project informed by French Orientalism.[119]

Beyond demonstrating colonial-Orientalist premises and strategies at work in writings on decolonization and criticism of Orientalism, this essay proposes Hindu Orientalism as an analytical category, which is central to knowledge/power configuration in India. This knowledge/power matrix is neither purely Indian nor exclusively Western; instead, it is an outcome of dynamic interactions between the two. To institute and illustrate my proposition about Hindu Orientalism, I critically engaged with Hallaq's *Restating Orientalism* and his critique of Said's *Orientalism*. To this end, I discussed three of its main theses.

First, as a critique rather than only criticism, it goes past Said to present a comprehensive re-reading and critique of Orientalism. Here I also dwelled on writings by Turner and Habib to illustrate how Hallaq's contribution as critique differs from criticism that Turner and Habib undertook of Said. Second, adding the categories of the dissenting and subversive to Foucault's distinction between docile and discursive authors, Hallaq refines Foucault's theory of the author. He works this out by relating it to the theory of paradigm drawn from Schmitt. Such a reworking allows him to address the simultaneity of negative and positive Western depiction of Islam (and not only the former *a la* Said). Third, *Restating Orientalism*'s significance lies in its comparative pursuit. By studying knowledge-power matrix in premodern Muslim social formations, it shows how its dynamic is radically different from the modern one that Foucault wrote about and which pervades modern societies. My foremost critique of Hallaq, however, is the contractive nature of his comparison, which precludes a theoretical point of considerable significance. That is, he did not engage with Pollock's thesis about an indigenous Orientalism in premodern high Hindu Sanskrit culture where the knowledge-power matrix worked differently from his own case study. This enabled me to argue the case for recognizing Hindu Orientalism as tellingly analogous to Israeli Orientalism, which Hallaq himself enunciates. Contra Pollock's conceptualization of it, if my argument about Hindu Orientalism as a typically modern practice is plausible, so should be the case for Chinese Orientalism, particularly in relation to the ongoing dispossession of the Uyghurs in the name of making them 'Chinese' and fighting 'terrorism.'[120]

In all fairness to Said, it should, however, be noted that Hallaq's argument for Israeli Orientalism and my enunciation of Hindu Orientalism are not a total departure from Said. As for Israeli Orientalism, Said himself noted that how the Arab 'often represented today' 'is part of the history given him … by the Orientalist tradition, and later, the Zionist tradition."[121] As regards Hindu Orientalism, Said's take on nationalism was quite measured, if not prophetic. He had warned the formerly colonized peoples 'of the dangers and temptations of employing this [Orientalist] structure upon themselves or upon others.' [122] The argument of Hallaq and the one this essay makes, however, differ from Said on two counts. Orientalism is neither simply a textual enterprise nor is it limited to academia. Instead, it informs nearly every domain of life (and death). And since Orientalism is primarily epistemological-structural rooted in the triad of modernity, the Enlightenment and secularism, rather than taking it as sacrosanct – as Said largely did [123] — the triad itself should be critiqued. There is also a marked difference between the approach of Hallaq and that of this essay. Unlike Hallaq's, its approach is anchored in the anthropology of philosophy and ideas – a nascent sub field.[124]

I conclude by emphasizing the role anthropology is suited to play in de-Orientalizing/-colonizing the knowledge system – an objective Hallaq takes seriously. Hallaq is partly right in saying that anthropology is 'close kin to Orientalism' (69). This premise also informs Said's book and his presentation at the American Anthropological Association conference in 1987, where it met with a cold reception.[125] Initial responses to Said from anthropologists were thus circumspect.[126] Without going into this matter any further, I stress that if decolonization means imagining a world other than the 'modern, civilized' one, then, an important stream within anthropology is rich heir to that thinking about the possible rather than merely the real. Works by Marshall Sahlins[127] and Talal Asad,[128] for instance, show the possibility of such an alternative. Lévi-Strauss whose stark Orientalism vis-à-vis Islam in the final two chapters of *Tristes Tropiques*[129] is least discussed by scholars, later beckoned to such a role for anthropology. He later wrote: 'Anthropologists exist to attest that the way we live, the values we believe are not the only ones possible, that other ways of life … have allowed … human communities to find happiness.' [130] Some readers may find Levi-Strauss' Orientalism and this role for anthropology for the future as paradoxical. If so, this paradox is at the heart of Hallaq's *Restating Orientalism*: it aims to dislodge Orientalism by reconfiguring it.

Notes

1. Press Trust of India, 'New Education Policy Soon to Correct Colonial Mindset, Says Union Minister Satya Pal Singh,' *The Hindu*, 23 October (2017).
2. R. Bhagwat, 'The New Education Policy will Address RSS Concerns,' *The Times of India*, 23 March (2018).
3. A. Wilson, 'From Nagpur to Nairobi To Neasden – Tracing Global Hindutva,' *Awaaz: Voices*, 17 (2) (2020) https://www.awaazmagazine.com/volume-17/issue-2-volume-17/cover-story-issue-2-volume-17/from-nagpur-to-nairobi-to-neasden-tracing-global-hindutva; also see, C. Marzia, 'Hindutva's Foreign Tie-up in the 1930s: Archival Evidence," *Economic & Political Weekly* 35(4) (2000): 218–28; J. Banaji (ED.) *Fascism: Essays on Europe and India* (Gurgaon: Three Essays Collective, 2013).
4. G. Navlakha, 'Internal Militarization: Blood on the Tracks,' *Economic & Political Weekly*, 32 (6) (1997), pp. 299–306, p. 304.

5. I. Ahmad, 'Populism: A Political Anthropology Approach,' *Public Anthropologist* 1 (2) (2019), pp. 224–245.
6. *The Organizer*, 'Bharat Has to Provide New Alternative of Education to World – Mohan Bhagwat,' 1 December (2014). *The Organizer* is RSS mouthpiece; also see, 'Editorial: Decolonization: Need for Another National Movement,' *The Organizer*, 74 (13) (2022), p. 5.
7. *India Today*, 'Muslim Invasion Created Dalits and Tribals in India, Says RSS,' 22 September (2014).
8. https://royalhistsoc.org/281-new-fellows-members-elected-to-the-society/.
9. V. Sampath, 'Leftist History Negates India's Civilisational Greatness, Underplays Bloody Islamic Conquests,' *News 18*, 14 October (2021).
10. J. S. Deepak, *India That is Bharat: Coloniality, Civilization, Constitution* (Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2021), p. 191 (E-book). Setting aside the fact that Deepak's formulation of the Mughal rule as colonial shows no understanding of what theoretically constitutes colonialism, he does not find it contradictory to use the phrase 'Middle Eastern colonialism.' The term Middle East is a Western invention popularized by Halford Mackinder, a British liberal imperialist; see, R. Khalidi, 'The Middle East as Area in an Era of Globalization,' in A. Mirsepassi, A. Basu and F. Weaver (EDS.) *Localizing Knowledge in a Globalising World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013), pp. -170–190, p. 170.
11. Deepak, *India That is Bharat, opt. cit.*, p. 18, 23, 188.
12. A. Sharma, 'Introduction,' & 'Preface,' in A. Sharma (ED.) *Decolonizing Indian Studies* (Delhi: D.K. PrintWord, 2015), pp. 1–7; p. v; p. 3, p. 5, p. v.
13. H. Eid, 'The Toxic Legacy of VS Naipaul,' *Middle East Eye*, 16 August (2018).
14. As it is a growing, complex field, space limits me to mention only some works; W. Mignolo and C. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018); A. Allen, *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); also see works discussed by Hallaq.
15. B. Subramaniam, 'Recolonizing India: Troubling the Anticolonial, Decolonial, Postcolonial,' *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience*, 12 (2017). https://doi.org/10.28968/cftt.v3i1.28794; D. Sundaram, 'The Neocolonial Futurism of US Hindutva,' *The Immanent Frame*, 23 November (2022).
16. The word Dalit is of recently recent origin. It means exploited. In colonial India, Dalits were called 'Depressed Castes,' 'Outcastes,' 'Exterior Castes,' 'Untouchables' and so on. See, V. Kumar 'Dalit Studies: Continuities and Change,' in Y. Singh (ED.) *ICSSR Research Surveys and Explorations: Indian Sociology*, volume 3 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 19–52, pp. 20–21.
17. S. Pollock, 'Deep Orientalism: Notes on Sanskrit and Power beyond the Raj,' in C. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer (EDS) *Orientalism and the Post-colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 76–133.
18. All in-text page citation is to W. Hallaq, *Restating Orientalism*: *A Critique of Modern Knowledge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).
19. P. van der Veer, *Gods on Earth*: *The Management of Religious Experience and Identity in a North Indian Pilgrimage Centre* (London: Athlone Press, 1988) and P. van der Veer, 'The Foreign Hand: Orientalist Discourse in Sociology and Communalism,' in C. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer (EDS) *Orientalism and the Post-colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 23–45.
20. I. Ahmad, 'Hindu Orientalism: The Sachar Committee and Over-Representation of Minorities in Jail,' in L. Lumina (ED.) *The Politics of Muslim Identities: South and Southeast Asia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), pp. 115–144.
21. E. Said, *Orientalism*, with a new preface (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 27–28.
22. Cited in A. Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 140.

23. G. Agamben, *The Signature of All Things: On Methods*, trans. Luca di Santo and Kevin Attell (New York, Zone, 2009).
24. On Agamben's view, Kuhn used paradigm in two senses: as a 'set of techniques, models, and values' upheld by a scientific community and in the sense closer to his own (Agamben's); *ibid*., pp. 10 ff.
25. Agamben, *ibid*., p. 2, 4, 31.
26. G. Brayer, 'Classification and Explanation in Aristotle's Theory of Definition,' *Journal of the History of the Philosophy*, 36 (4) (1998), pp. 487–505, p. 500; M. Ferejohn, 'Definition and the Two Stages of Aristotelian Demonstration,' *Review of Metaphysics*, 36 (1982), pp. 375–395.
27. For example, D. Varisco, *Reading Orientalism*: *Said and Unsaid* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007); A. Macfie (ED.), *Orientalism: A Reader* (London: Pearson, 2002).
28. Cf. G. Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. M. Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 6.
29. On the difference between criticism and critique, see I. Ahmad, *Religion as Critique: Islamic Critical Thinking from Mecca to the Marketplace* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), p. xiii, pp. 211–212.
30. B. S. Turner, 'Outline of a Theory of Orientalism,' in B. S. Turner (ED.) *Orientalism: Early Sources*, vol.1 (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 1–31, p. 10.
31. Turner, *ibid*., p. 2; cf. Ahmad, *Religion as Critique*, *opt. cit*. p. 7, 80–81; but see below.
32. Turner, *ibid*., p. 7.
33. D. Varisco, 'Edward Said and Culture behind Orientalism,' *Expositions* 7 (2013), pp. 52–54, p. 52.
34. I. Habib, 'In Defence of Orientalism: Critical Notes on Edward Said,' *Social Scientist* 33(1–2) (2005), pp. 40–46; p.44.
35. Said, *Orientalism*, *opt. cit*., p. 60.
36. S. A. A. Maududi, *Risalaʾ-e-dīnīyat* (Lahore, Daftar Tarjumanul Qur'an, 1939), p. 5.
37. Turner, 'Outline of a Theory of Orientalism,' *opt. cit*., p. 5; cf. W. Hallaq, 'What is Sharia?' *Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law*, 2005–2006 (Brill: Leiden, 2007); on Talal Asad's refusal to translate sharia, see I. Ahmad, 'Talal Asad Interviewed by Irfan Ahmad,' *Public Culture* 27 (2) (2015), pp. 259–279, p. 264ff.
38. As in the French tradition; see, M. Kelly, 'Problematizing the Problematic: Foucault and Althusser,' *Angelaki* 23 (2) (2018), pp. 155–169.
39. Said, *Orientalism*, *opt. cit*., p. 322.
40. Said, *ibid*., p. 23.
41. R. Nasser and I. Nasser, 'Textbooks as a Vehicle for Segregation and Domination: State Efforts to Shape Palestinian Israelis' Identities as Citizens,' *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 40 (5) (2008), pp. 627–650, p. 627.
42. Cited in N. Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba*: *Decolonizing History, Narrating the Subaltern. Reclaiming Memory* (London: Zed, 2012), p. 238.
43. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin 'Orientalism, Jewish Studies and Israeli Society: A Few Comments,' *Philological Encounters* 2(3–4) (2017), pp. 237–269.
44. Gabriel Piterberg, 'Domestic Orientalism: The Representation of "Oriental" Jews in Zionist/ Israeli Historiography,' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 23 (2) (1996), pp. 125–145, p. 137.
45. G. Krishna, 'Piety and Politics in Indian Islam,' *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 6(1) (1972), pp. 142–171, p. 142.
46. Y. Singh, *Modernization of Indian Traditions* (Delhi: Thompson, 1973); I. Ahmad (ED.) *Modernization and Social Change among Muslims in India* (Delhi: Manohar, 1983).
47. Piterberg, 'Domestic Orientalism *opt. cit*., p. 137.
48. J. Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 350, 389.
49. Cited in A. G. Noorani, *The RSS and the BJP: A Division of Labour* (Delhi: LeftWord, 2000), p. 20.
50. Cited in M. Reyaz, 'Hindutva's Outreach to Muslims in 2014 Elections: A Historical Analysis,' in I. Ahmad and P. Kanungo (EDS), *The Algebra of Warfare-Welfare: A Long View of India's 2014 Election* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 245.

51. M. Kumar, 'Muslims Should Have Been Sent To Pakistan In 1947, Says Union Minister,' *NDTV* 21 February (2021).
52. A. Engineer (ED.), *Communal Riots in Post-independence India* (Hyderabad: Sangam, 1984).
53. I. Ahmad, 'Violence after Violence: The Politics of Narratives over the Delhi Pogrom,' in Thomas Blom Hansen and Srirupa Roy (EDS) *Saffron Republic: Hindu Nationalism and State Power in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), pp. 251–274.
54. *Outlook*, 'VK Singh Asks "Why Does not India Become Israel," Targets Govt Critics, Student Leaders, Media,' 6 March (2019).
55. A. Emmerich, *Islamic Movements in India*: *Moderation and Its Discontents* (London: Routledge, 2020), p. 121.
56. Said, *Orientalism*, *opt. cit*., p. 60, 332.
57. P. van der Veer, *The Value of Comparison* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).
58. Pollock, 'Deep Orientalism,' *opt. cit*., p. 96.
59. Of which, the links between German Indology and the Nazi ideology, not the knowledge-power matrix in premodern Hindu culture, unleashed a heated debate; see, V. P. Adluri, 'Pride and Prejudice: Orientalism and German Indology.' *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 15 (3) (2011), 253–292.
60. Pollock, 'Deep Orientalism,' *opt. cit*., p. 97.
61. Pollock, 'Deep Orientalism,' *ibid*., p. 97, 98, 105.
62. Pollock, 'Deep Orientalism,' *ibid*., p. 107, 116.
63. On which, see D. Gupta (ED.) *Social Stratification* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992).
64. Pollock, 'Deep Orientalism,' *opt. cit*., p. 107.
65. On Hindus' view of non-Hindus in colonial India, see D. Killingley, 'Mlecchas, Yavanas and Heathens: Interacting Xenologies in Early 19th Century Calcutta,' in Eli Franco and Karin Presisendanz (EDS) *Beyond Orientalism: The Work of Wilhelm Halbfass and Its Impact on Indian and Cross-Cultural Studies* (Amsterdam: Radopi, 1997), pp. 123–140.
66. B. R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste* in Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, vol 1. (Delhi: Government of India, 1979), p. 68. Invoking Ambedkar here does not assume his thought as un-informed by colonial paradigm. Cognizant of Pollock's argument discussed here, on Ambedkar and Orientalism, see, T. Fitzgerald, 'From Structure to Substance: Ambedkar, Dumont and Orientalism,' *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 30(2) (1996), pp. 273–288; J. Lee, *Deceptive Majority: Dalits, Hinduism, and Underground Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); J. Raj, 'Post-colonial Caste, Ambedkar, and the Politics of Counter-narrative,' *History and Anthropology* (2022) https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2022.2096021; R. S. Vidyarthy, *Dr. Ambedkar avr Islam* (Patna: Iqra, 1994).
67. C. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer, 'Introduction,' in C. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer (EDS) *Orientalism and the Post-colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 1–19, p. 12.
68. Cf., M, Banerjee, 'Neo-nationalism in India: A Comparative Account,' in Andre Gingrich and Marcus Banks (EDS) *Neo-Nationalism in Europe and Beyond* (New York: Berghahn, 2006), pp. 237–247.
69. Cited in C. Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, trans. Guy Oakes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), p. 29.
70. F. Braudel, *On History*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980).
71. M. Pillai, 'Decoding RSS Ideologue: M. S. Golwalkar's Nationalism,' *Live Mint* 15 July (2017).
72. S. Tharoor, *Why I am a Hindu?* (Delhi: Aleph, 2018), p. 157n94, pp. 156–179.
73. In Johannes Fabian's exposition on anthropology's complicity in the making of the Other, time is not independent of space. The 'fundamental contradiction' Fabian explores is the thick interaction ethnographer has with the Other in a given space during the fieldwork and the simultaneous distancing — 'spatial and temporal' — of that Other in the knowledge produced from that interaction. The conjunction of time and space is further evident from Figure 1. 2 that Fabian titled as 'Modern time/space: distancing.' Fabian, *Time and the Other*: *How Anthropology Makes Its Objects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. xi, 27.
74. Ahmad, 'Violence after Violence: The Politics of Narratives over the Delhi Pogrom,' *opt. cit*.

75. See, F. Korom, 'Holy Cow!' The Apotheosis of Zebu, or Why the Cow Is Sacred in Hinduism,' *Asian Folklore Studies* 59, (2) (2000), pp. 181–203; B. Sharma, 'From Ku Klux Klan to Cow Vigilantes: A Scholar Explains Why Lynching is Terrorism,' *Huffington Post*, 29 June (2018).
76. G. Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990).
77. See, Ahmad, *Religion as Critique*, *opt. cit*., pp, 64–72.
78. Cited in S. Sen, *Distant Sovereignty*: *National Imperialism and the Origins of British India* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 100; italics author's.
79. S. V. R. Nasr, 'European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States,' in John Esposito (ED.) *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 549–599, p. 581.
80. C. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, *1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 293.
81. Cited in P. N. Dhar 'Bengal Renaissance: A Study in Social Contradictions,' *Social Scientist* 15 (1) (1987), pp. 26–45, p. 30; italics author's.
82. Dhar 'Bengal Renaissance,' *ibid*.
83. On which, see P. Chatterjee, 'History and Nationalization of Hinduism,' *Social Research* 59 (1) (1992), pp. 111–149.
84. Cited in D. Ghose, '1, 200 Years of Servitude: PM Modi Offers Food for Thought,' *First Post* 13 June (2014).
85. See, I. Ahmad, 'Introduction: Democracy and the Algebra of Warfare – Welfare,' in Irfan Ahmad and Pralay Kanungo (EDS) *The Algebra of Warfare – Welfare: A Long View of India's 2014 Election* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 1–54.
86. See, C. Upadhya, 'The Idea of Indian Society: G. S. Ghurye and the Making of Indian Sociology,' in P. Uberoi, N. Sundar and S. Deshpande (EDS.) *Anthropology in the East: Funders of Indian Sociology and Anthropology* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007), pp. 194–255; I. Ahmad, 'Writing Anthropology of India: Notes on Methodological Nationalism,' paper at the colloquium, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Gottingen, Germany (2011).
87. See, I. Ahmad, 'A Critical Tribute to Sociologist Yogendra Singh (1932–2020) — as a Teacher, and His Thoughts as a Scholar,' *First Post* 22 May (2020).
88. Cited in U. Butalia, 'Captive to Their Own Myth,' *New Internationalist* 483 (2015), p. 19.
89. C. Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).
90. I. Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason and Other Writings*, trans. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). 130: 6–125, 177–178: 6–184–185; italics in original.
91. For a deft intellectual history of fanaticism, see A. Toscano, *Fanaticism*: *On the Uses of an Idea*, new edition (London: Verso, 2017).
92. In Ahmad, 'Populism: A Political Anthropology Approach,' *opt. cit*. p. 237.
93. S. Chattopadhyay, 'As Muslim Women Lead India's Battle for Democracy, Bollywood Presents them as Suicide Bombers the Hindu State must Save,' *The Polis Project* 13 June (2020).
94. In B. Tripathy, 'Every Second Indian Cop Thinks Muslims "Naturally Prone" To Crime: Study,' *India Spend* 29 August (2019).
95. K. Ilaiah, *Why I am not a Hindu? A Sudra Critique of Hindutva, Philosophy, Culture, and Political Economy* (Calcutta: Samya, 1996).
96. G. Guru, 'Hinduisation of Ambedkar in Maharashtra,' *Economic & Political Weekly* 26 (7) (1991), pp. 339–341.
97. B. Narayan, *Fascinating Hindutva*: *Saffron Politics and Dalit Mobilization* (Delhi: Sage, 2009).
98. Narayan, *Fascinating Hindutva*, *ibid*.
99. G. S. Ghurye, *The Aborigines – 'So-Called' – and Their Future* (Pune: Gokhale Institute of Economics and Politics, 1943).
100. J. D. Anderson, *The Peoples of India* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1913), p. 83.

101. Cited in D. N. Majumdar and T. N. Madan, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology* (Noida, India: Mayoor, 1985 [1956]), p. 243.
102. Majumdar and Madan, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*, *ibid*., p. 243.
103. The British census described 'religion' of the tribal people as 'animist' and did not count them as 'Hindus.' See, Anderson, *The Peoples of India*, *opt. cit*; A. Bhaviskar, 'Adivasi Encounters with Hindu Nationalism,' *Economic and Political Weekly* 40, (48) (2005), pp. -5105–5113.
104. N. K. Bose, *Culture and Society in India* (London: Asia, 1967), pp. 203–204.
105. M. N. Srinivas, *India: Social Structure* (Delhi: Hindustan, 1991 [1969]), p. 31, 2.
106. C. K. Mahmood, 'Rethinking Indian Communalism: Culture and Counter-Culture,' *Asian Survey* 33, (7) (1993), pp. 722–737, p. 733.
107. See S. Markam, 'The Alienation of Adivasis from Our Identity or How I Unlearned My Hinduisation,' *The Wire* 12 August (2020); M. Koya 'How Adivasi Languages are at Threat by Dominant Cultures and States' Apathy.' *www.adivasiresurgence.com* 9 August (2020).
108. G. M. George, 'A Victory for Adivasis: KISS Won't Host World Anthropology Congress 2023, Says IUAES.' *www.forwardpress.in* 19 August (2020).
109. Cf. A. Xavier and I. Zupanov, *Catholic Orientalism: Portuguese Empire, Indian Knowledge, 16th -18th Centuries* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015).
110. van der Veer, 'Sati and Sanskrit,' The Move from Orientalism to Hinduism,' in, M. Bal and E. Boer (EDS) *The Point of Theory: Practices of Cultural Analysis* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994), pp. 251–259, p. 251. For an overview of Indology, see Pollock, 'Deep Orientalism,' *opt. cit*.; R. N. Dandekar, 'Some Trends in Indological Studies,' *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 58–59 (1978), pp. 525–541; R. Panikkar, 'Indology as a Cross-Cultural Catalysis,' *Numen* 18 (3) (1971), pp. 173–179.
111. Chatterjee, 'History and Nationalization of Hinduism,' *opt. cit*.
112. J. Houben, 'Philosophy and Philology, East and West: Need and Basis for a Global Approach,' *Cracow Indological Studies* 10 (2008), pp. 87–128. On the state of Indology after Modi, see G. Bailey, 'Indology after Hindutva,' *South Asia* 37 (4) (2014), pp. 700–707.
113. *Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 885.
114. Van der Veer, 'Religion, Secularism, and the Nation,' *India Review* 7 (4) (2008), pp. 378–396, p. 385.
115. R. Vasudevan, 'Film Genres, the Muslim Social, and Discourses of Identity, 1935–1945,' *Bioscope* 6 (1) (2015), pp. 27–43.
116. V. Sinha, 'Benoy Kumar Sarkar,' in F. Alattas and V. Sinha (AUTHS) *Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon* (London: Palgrave, 2017), pp. 303–335, p. 309.
117. B. K. Sarkar, *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* (Delhi: Motilal, 1937), p. 8, 386.
118. B. Zachariah, 'At the Fuzzy Edges of Fascism: Framing the Volk in India,' *South Asia* 38(4) (2015), pp. 639–655.
119. S. Bayly, 'Imagining "Greater India": French and Indian Visions of Colonialism in the Indic Mode,' *Modern Asian Studies*, 38, 3 (2004), pp. 703–744.
120. See, The Chinese State, "The Fight against Terrorism and Extremism and Human Rights Protection in Xinjiang' available in English at the Chinese government website. http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2019/03/18/content_281476567813306.htm 2019.
121. Said, *Orientalism*, *opt. cit*., p. 286.
122. Said, *Orientalism*, *ibid*., p. 25.
123. Notably, the Introduction and Conclusion of Said's 1983 book are titled respectively as 'Secular Criticism' and 'Religious Criticism.' Lamenting that the contemporary critics had become 'cleric,' Said invoked the Enlightenment notion of critique to 'become a truly secular enterprise.' E. Said, *The World, The Text and the Critic* (Cambridge, MAS: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 292. In such formulations, critique, far removed from religion, resided solely and in a different realm called the secular. For a critique of Said on this point, see, I. Ahmad, 'Islam and the Enlightenment,' *Marginalia Review of Books*, 15 January (2021).

124. K. Kresse, *Philosophizing in Mombasa*: *Knowledge, Islam and Intellectual Practice on the Swahili Coast* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
125. E. Said, 'Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors,' *Critical Inquiry* 15(2) (1989), pp.202–225.
126. For instance, see N. Dirks, 'Edward Said and Anthropology,' *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, 33(3) (2004), pp. 38–54, p. 38; N. Thomas, 'Anthropology and *Orientalism*,' *Anthropology Today* 7 (2) (1991), pp. 4–7.
127. M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (London: Routledge, 2017 [1972]).
128. T. Asad, 'Thinking about Religion through Wittgenstein,' *Critical Times* 3 (3) (2021), pp. 403–442.
129. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (kindle edition) (New York: Penguin, 2012[1955]).
130. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropology Confronts the Problems of the Modern World* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2013).

Acknowledgments

First of all, I thank the anonymous reviewers for their encouraging comments and constructive criticisms. I am thankful to Talal Asad (CUNY, Graduate Center, New York) and Peter van der Veer (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen) for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this essay. Gil Anidjar (University of Columbia) offered rich critical feedback, much of which I have incorporated. I also thank Divyaraj Amiya, lecturer at the Department of Indology and Comparative Religious Studies, University of Tübingen, for discussing the practices of Indology in Germany and at whose invitation I presented an earlier draft of this essay in a seminar at his department. At the invitation of Adil Hasan Khan (University of Melbourne) and Mohammad Zuhair (Monash University), in 2021, I presented another version of it as the opening talk of the first Australia India Muslim Forum meeting. To the participants in the inaugural meeting of the reading group 'Concepts in Circulation' (pronounced KIK) that Jie Kang and I launched at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, and where we discussed *Restating Orientalism*, I say 'thank you.' Mohammad Reyaz (Aliah University, Kolkata, India) was kind enough to send me readings used in revising this essay; I thank him as well as Mushtaq Ahmad Wani, my research assistant, who provided additional references. Finally, I am grateful to Rizwan Ahmad (Qatar University) for critically reading the revised version and offering pointed suggestions.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.