

On Orientalism and Orientalism-in-Reverse Among Muslims

Some Aspects of Edward Said's Contributions and Its Misappropriation

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“How does one represent other cultures? What is another culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulation (when one discourses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the ‘other’)?”

– Edward Said¹

INTRODUCTION

Edward Said is probably one of the most influential public intellectual and scholar-activist in postcolonial era.²

The following essay is a reflection on his lasting contribution to the issue of Orientalism in the Muslim world. In a world marked by polarization and continuing modes of imperialisms or ‘neo-imperialisms’,³ Said's insights cannot be ignored, particularly by those who seek to establish a more equitable and dignified interhuman and intercivilizational relationship. More importantly, we ought to realize that Orientalism still exists and pose a danger to society in its cultivation of a false consciousness in people. Despite gaining independence, as Said argued, much of the Third World today is still beholden to the their former colonialist ways due to the perpetuation of Orientalist structures and thought-system.

ORIENTALISM REVISTED⁴

Arguably, Said's lasting contribution to the scholarship world is his most widely-read book, *Orientalism*. Ironically, it is also one of the most misunderstood and misapplied works. Translated into over 22 different languages, *Orientalism* exerts considerable influence in postcolonial studies and generated much debate in both the academic and non-academic world. It is considered as one of the most sustained deconstruction and criticism of Western imperialism, past and present. So much so that, according to Muhsin Mahdi, Muslims who choose to ignore it, will be doing so at their own peril.⁵

The Orientalist Constructions of the 'Other'

In the eyes of the Orientalists, the 'Orient' signifies a set of inherent characteristics. It is (1) monolithic, (2) static and stagnant, or changeless, (3) inferior, simple and irrational, and (4) primitive, exotic and mysterious. These ideas (or dogmas) are the underlying assumptions of Orientalists' approach towards understanding the Arabs, Islam, or any other 'Oriental' cultures and people. It is thus "a style of thought or perception by which Westerners came to understand, perceive and define the Orient"⁶. This style of thought permeates throughout Western scholarship on non-Western cultures and was institutionalized in Western academia and state policies. By creating a distinction between the Occident ("West") and the Oriental ("East"), Orientalists attempt to define itself by creating further set of assumptions, mainly, the superiority of the West vis-à-vis the inferiority of the Oriental world. Since the Oriental is ontologically inferior, they cannot be represented. Thus, only the West can "objectively" study and define the Oriental, and tell them who they are, what they are and why they are the way they are. These assumptions by the Orientalists had been aligned towards justifying the continued presence of the imperialists and perpetuated continuing colonization of the Orient.

Two Tendencies in Orientalists' Discourse

In the study of Oriental cultures, two major tendencies came to the front. Firstly, Said observed the continuous stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims. In observing the lack of progress amongst the Arabs, several Orientalists point to the doctrine of predestination as found in the Muslim creed. The charge made is that Islam is a fatalistic religion and thus Muslims are not impelled to strive and work hard. This view is, of course, a gross generalization of the Arabs. It is similar to the charge that Malays are lazy by nature, which we shall discuss later below. Such generalizations reveal the prejudices and biasness in analyzing factors that impede the growth of the Arabs, Malays or any other Oriental cultures. It is an essentialist-reductionist approach to the study of the 'Other', which Said condemned as unscientific and constitute a prejudice on the Orientalists' side.

Secondly, Orientalists tend to ignore the fact that all societies change. When studying the Orient, the Orientalists adopted an *ahistorical* approach by positing that a particular culture, including its customs and religion, remains static and thus conveniently ignore the sociohistorical factors that had and will continue to shape them. For example, the Orientalists came to define "Malayness" (or in Frank Swettenhem's word, "The *Real Malay*"⁷), as someone who wears certain kinds of (exotic) dressing, thinks in a certain ("irrational", "superstitious") manner, and does certain ("peculiar") acts like "*meng-amok*" (psycho-pathological violent outbursts) and *latah* (a psychological disorder induced by shock and characterized by sudden imitativeness, often accompanied by vulgar language).⁸ Thus, Malays who do not subscribe to this essentialist view will cease to be Malay (at least in the Orientalists' mind). In reality, he has been stripped of his *exoticness* and *peculiarities* that the Orientalists need in order to define their own identity. In other words, such prejudicial views continue to fit into the assumption that the indigenous people should not change because change will upset their identity as the perpetual mysterious and unique "Other".

THE ORIENTALIZED MIND

As noted earlier, Said's *Orientalism* was one of the most widely-read yet misunderstood and misappropriated works on postcolonial studies. One aspect of such misappropriations is on the reversal of role in gazing other cultures. Said was careful enough not to commit the same mistake as the Orientalists did. While *Orientalism* accepted uncritically a set of assumptions that are reductionist and essentialist in its view of the Other, Said reiterated at the end of his book that "the answer to Orientalism is not Occidentalism"⁹. Unfortunately, in the Arab world, Said's depiction of Orientalism was taken as depiction of the West as a whole. As Said himself pointed out:

"Since this is so, the argument continues, therefore the entire West is an enemy of the Arab and Islamic or for that matter the Iranian, Chinese, Indian, and many other non-European peoples who suffered Western colonialism and prejudice."¹⁰

Such misrepresentations of Said's work could be due to the attitude towards what Said himself termed as "predatory West" and "violations towards Arabs and Islam". When this attitude exists, an opportunity arise to seize Orientalism and argue for the exact opposite – "that Islam is perfect; that it is the only solution" and other such statements that are suited for the promotion of certain ideological goals. In other words, to criticize Orientalism "is in effect to be a supporter of Islamism or Muslim fundamentalism"¹¹. (We shall see examples of this attitude in the Azharites' response to Orientalism below.)

Yet, in criticizing the Orientalists (or more generally lumped as "the West"), the Islamists adopt the very same style of thinking as the Orientalists. This is acknowledged by Said and he termed it as "*Orientalized Orientals*" – that is, the former colonized people who parroted and adopted the same style of thinking and assumptions about their own race or religion.¹² Perhaps it will be useful in our further discussion below to appropriate the term *Orientalism-in-Reverse* as coined by a Syrian scholar and thinker, Sadiq Jalal al-ʿAzm.¹³

Orientalism-in-Reverse

The First Sphere

Orientalism-in-Reverse can be observed in two spheres. Firstly, it refers to indigenous own assessments of their culture using assumptions dictated earlier by the Orientalists. One example is on the notion of the indolence of the Malays. If Orientalists like Frank Swettenhem, R. O. Windstedt and John Crawford had called the Malays as inherently lazy by nature, we observed the same idea being reproduced and articulated by some Malay elites themselves. Examples of this can be found in the books *The Malay Dilemma* and *Revolusi Mental* [Mental Revolution], produced by members of the Malaysian ruling class,¹⁴ and much later works, *The Malay Ideals* and *Malays Par Excellence...Warts and All* written by Malay intelligentsia, particularly corporate leaders and bureaucrats.¹⁵ The idea of the indolence of the Malays is definitely a gross misrepresentation and constitutes an essentialist mode of thought. Further to this, the laziness of the Malays is further reduced to a single factor – Islam, with its fatalistic teachings. It will be interesting here to quote the writings of a famous contemporary Orientalist, Raphael Patai, on this issue:

“In general the Arab mind, dominated by Islam, has been bent more on preserving than innovating, on maintaining than improving, on continuing than imitating. In this atmosphere, whatever individual spirit of research and inquiry existed in the great age of medieval Arab culture became gradually stifled; by the fifteenth century, Arab intellectual curiosity was fast asleep. ***It was to remain inert until awakened four centuries later by an importunate West knocking on its doors.***”¹⁶ [Emphasis added]

In short, “it is inevitable that people who rely on providence should themselves not be provident.” Fatalism then constitutes the “character trait” of the Arabs, as much as it is to be found in the Malays. And this fatalistic attitude is reduced to a simplistic, single factor – “Islam”. Thus, in a manner typical of Orientalist ethnocentric assertions of superiority, Patai declared that:

“There can be no doubt that the impact of the West has not only brought about profound changes in many aspects of life in the Arab countries, but also forced the Arabs to take an entirely new look at the world, at life, and, in particular, at the relationships between men.”¹⁷

Without the West, Muslims can never provide “mass benefits” to society in terms of education, literacy, nutritional standards, health and hygienic services, social security and democratic processes.¹⁸

In a rather unfortunate way, examples of such biased views can be found in Muslim writings. In *The Malay Dilemma*, the author attributed the lack of progress amongst the Malays to genetic factor, which in turn, was conditioned by geographical settings of their homeland:

“Rice cultivation, in which the majority of the Malays were occupied, is a seasonal occupation. Actual work takes up only two months, but the yield is sufficient for the whole year... The hot, humid climate of the land was not conducive to either vigorous work or even to mental activity. Thus, except for a few, people were content to spend their unlimited leisure in merely resting or in extensive conversation with neighbours and friends.”¹⁹

Thus, just like the Orientalist Raphael Patai, it was only through contact and inter-marriage with the Chinese and Indians, who incidentally possessed stronger genes, could the Malays become “sophisticated, educated and open-minded”.²⁰ One cannot help noticing that the author of *The Malay Dilemma* had in fact echoed the very words of John Crawfurd, a British Resident at the Court of the Sultan of Java:

“Such a feebleness of intellect [of the Malays] is the result of such a state of society, and such a climate, that we may usually reckon that *the greatest powers of the native mind will hardly bear a comparison, in point of strength and resources, to the ordinary standard of the human understanding in the highest stages of civilization*, though they may

necessarily be better suited for distinction in the peculiar circumstances in which they are called into action.”²¹ [Emphasis added]

It is clear here that the process of de-colonization had not led to the de-colonization of the indigenous mind.²² As put forth by Ashis Nandy, an Indian psychologist and critic, Orientalism is everywhere, “in structures and in minds”, permeating institutions and intellectual systems of former colonized lands.²³ Edward Said aptly puts it as such:

“And yet despite its failures, its lamentable jargon, its scarcely concealed racism, its paper-thin intellectual apparatus, Orientalism flourishes today in the forms I have tried to describe. Indeed, there is some reason for alarm in the fact that their influence has spread to the “Orient” itself: the pages of books and journals in Arabic (and doubtless in Japanese, various Indian dialects, and other Oriental languages) are filled with second-order analyses by Arabs of the “Arab mind”, “Islam”, and other myths.”²⁴

In other words, the perpetuation of Orientalism and its internalization within the formerly colonized people is attributable to what Syed Hussein Alatas would termed as “the captive mind”.²⁵

The Second Sphere

Orientalism-in-Reverse can also be observed in some Muslims’ assessment of their former colonial masters. If Orientalism had developed itself into Western ethnocentrism, we observed that the former colonized people had now developed a reversed form – that of asserting their own culture and traditions as inherently superior to the West, or what Said termed as *nativism*. This tendency is indeed a result of an intellectual alienation that was cultivated by the former colonial rulers. As put forth by Frantz Fanon, an African intellectual and psychiatrist:

“He [i.e. the Negro] has no culture, no civilization, no ‘long historical past.’ This may be the reason for the strivings of contemporary Negroes: to prove the existence of a black civilization to the white world at all costs.”²⁶

Similarly, we observed the same tendency amongst Muslims who seek to romanticize the past glories of Muslim civilization. Facing Western superiority politically, scientifically, economically and technologically, several Muslim thinkers wrote extensively on how the West “borrowed” their science and learning from the Muslim world. The Muslim world was once superior to the West and had produced some of the pioneering scientists like Ibn Sina (Avicenna), al-Haytham and al-Razi. Several of these writings had even purported that the flourishing of scientific thoughts and learning in the time of the Abbasid, was the “Golden Age” of Muslim civilization. It does not matter much to them that it was during this period that the *Mihna* (Inquisitions, in 827 and 833 CE) occurred and those who did not accept the caliphate’s doctrine of the createdness of the Qur’an were persecuted – only to be reversed three caliphs later and those who purported the createdness of the Qur’an were severely punished.²⁷

All these shows that much of the glorifying and romanticizing of the achievements of Muslim civilization of the past are part of the self-discovery of once colonized Muslims who had to face the bare facts of reality that they are in pale comparison to the present achievements of Western civilization. As observed by Pervez Hoodbhoy:

“Rescued from dry historical books, medieval history becomes the tale of past Muslim glories, and a part of the living imagination today of Muslims throughout the world.”²⁸

Even though it is true that the Muslim world was once producing scientists, philosophers and men of learning, the present assertions of Muslims’ “past superiority”, “that the West will not be what they are today without the Muslims’ contribution” and other similar clichés will only further alienate the Muslims from addressing real and concrete issues. Tremendous intellectual energy and efforts had been channeled towards retrieving the sciences from the West and “Islamizing” them; not to mention the amount of effort and

ingenuity done in tracing scientific discoveries to the Qur'an and thus diverting Muslims from pioneering the scientific fields themselves. Such attitudes, in reflection to Fanon, constitute an effect of colonial suppression of the indigenous culture and history. The once colonized people must now prove themselves, at all cost, that they had a glorious past; that they too are equal (and in fact, superior) to the colonizers.

If the above discussion gave us an insight on Muslims' tendency to self-glorification carried forth by their sense of inferiority complex, then we can understand why several Muslim writers had developed an essentialist and reductionist mode of thinking in their assessment of Western civilization. This form of Orientalism-in-Reverse can be found abundantly in writings of popular Islamist ideologues, such as Syed Qutb, Abul a'la Maududi, Muhammad Asad and Maryam Jameelah.²⁹ If Orientalism had committed the mistake of seeing the Muslims as monolithic, static and inferior, these Muslim ideologues see the West in exactly the same terms. The West [as if "West" is one monolithic bloc] is described as inherently (1) corrupt, (2) atheistic, (3) conspiring, (4) materialistic, (5) immoral, (6) evil, and (7) irreligiously secular. Thus, everything 'Western' has been reduced to one single entity – anti-Islam. Such view is born out of the mistake of seeing the West as a monolithic bloc, stripped off its cultural diversity and unique historical experiences; the danger of which leads to antagonisms and xenophobia, or fear of the 'Other'.

In essentializing the West, Maududi, for example, used metaphysical stunts and epistemological antics to formulate an exclusive definition of *kufr* [disbelieve]:

“Disbelief (kufr) is not a form of ignorance, rather it *is* ignorance, pure and simple...[D]isbelief is also a form of 'tyranny', in fact, the worst of tyrannies. And what is 'tyranny'? It is an act of cruel and unjust use of any force or power...But the person who disobeys God and resorts to *disbelief* perpetrates the greatest of injustices, for he uses all these God-given powers of body and mind to rebel against his natural state and becomes an unwilling instrument in the drama of disobedience...By this he establishes a reign of tyranny...”³⁰

Carrying his thoughts further, he added that “Disbelief is not mere tyranny; it is, at the very least, sheer rebellion, ingratitude and treachery.”³¹ Such hatred sown towards an out-group (in this case, the “West” and the non-Muslims) is commonly borne out of frustration and subjugation.³²

Another example of how essentialism had gripped the Muslim mind can be seen in Maryam Jameelah’s sweeping condemnation of Protestantism:

“Protestant theology regarded salvation as a pure act of faith bestowed on the individual by God, *having no connection whatsoever with either his moral standards or his good works*. Now that ethical values were no longer dependent upon supernatural sanction, Martin Luther’s followers were now *free to live as they saw fit without reference to either God or the hereafter*.”³³ [Emphasis added]

If the Orientalists had essentialized Islam as “violent”, “fatalistic” and “sensual”, Jameelah felt the need to reverse the charges and call Protestantism as *amoral* and Protestants as *immoral* and *hedonistic* beings:

“They [i.e. the Western man] waged a determined fight against all those ethical ideals which have no immediate social value. Man should instead seek as much pleasure and happiness as he can in this life without depriving his fellows of their rightful share. Whatever relations gave pleasure to all concerned could not but be beneficial. Therefore they saw no good in the traditional demands for chastity between the sexes.”³⁴

Such dichotomizing of “East” and “West” and essentializing the “character” and “psyche” of the Others is dehumanizing and constitute a “human failing” who refuses the “disorientations of direct encounters with the (other) humans”.³⁵ As Said reminded us,

“...any attempt to force cultures and peoples into separate and distinct breeds or essences exposes not only the misrepresentations and

falsifications that ensure, but also the way in which understanding is complicit with the power to produce such things as the ‘Orient’ or the ‘West’.”³⁶

One final example of Orientalism-in-Reverse at work in Muslim writings is on the tendency to reduce a culture or civilization to a single, immutable “*essence*”. If Orientalism feels a need to understand the Orient by tracing it to its immutable origins that will reveal the “*mind*”, “*psyche*” or “*nature*” of the *true* Orient, then we see a similar method adopted by those who are purportedly anti-West. One example can be found in the writings of a Malay scholar and philosopher who hold commendable respect amongst the Malay Islamist circles. He wrote:

“Muslims must realize that Islam is always in the state of perpetual confrontation or face-off with Western culture; and to account for this, it is necessary to expound here the essential reasons [*sebab-sebab asasi*] that creates this confrontation; and to evaluate what are the essence [*sifat-sifat asasi*] of Western culture that we are facing.”³⁷

According to this scholar and philosopher, Western civilization comprises of Western Christianity and Western people and their *essence* is (1) hatred towards Islam, and (2) secular and materialistic tendencies. Since “the West” is *epistemologically* corrupt, the confusion and problems in the Muslim world is the product of “introduction of Western ways of thinking and judging and believing emulated by some Muslim scholars and intellectuals who have been unduly influenced by the West and overawed by its scientific and technological achievements”.³⁸ It is thus not surprising that he and the institute he helped founded proposes the framework of “de-Westernization of knowledge” and “Islamization of knowledge”.

On such flawed methodology, Said reminded us that this tendency “forced vision away from common, as well as plural, human realities like joy, suffering, political organization, forcing attention instead in the downward and backward direction of immutable origin.”³⁹

THE AZHARITES AND ORIENTALISM

Unfortunately, we also observe that the misappropriation of Said's *Orientalism* and the unconscious adoption of Orientalists' flawed methodology are in fact found in writings issued forth from a premier Muslim learning institution, Al Azhar University in Cairo. According to As'ad AbuKhalil,

“The position of Al-Azhar toward Orientalism is quite simple to characterize: it calls for making the study of Islam an exclusive domain for Muslims.”⁴⁰

Within Al-Azhar, there were some general agreements as to their interpretation of Orientalism.⁴¹ Firstly, those who wrote on the subject “treat the production of Orientalism as a solid monolithic inspired by deep-seated religious hatred of Islam.” This is a far cry from Said's careful study of the texts of Orientalism and its nuances and characteristics. Secondly, as a result of the first, these writers attacked interchangeably Orientalism, Westernization and Christian proselytization. Often, Orientalism were traced to the Crusades and the accounts were often “confused, mixing Zionism, communism, and Christian proselytization.” Thirdly, they tend to view Orientalist productions with deep suspicion. Often, Orientalist works were criticized on the basis of them being written by non-Muslims or on the basis of them being non-Arab or rather, “Western”. Thus, these works were judged before being examined. Fourthly, the tone of the Azharite critique is unabashedly conspiratorial. Orientalist literatures are often seen as

“part of an alien Western conspiracy of ‘Westernization’, which aims at the destruction of the Islamic Ummah, the imposition of usury in the economy, the erosion of the family unit, sedition in the nation, the introduction of atheism, the elimination of Arabic as a language, and the deliberate disregard of Arab/Islamic contribution to world civilizations.”⁴²

Sometimes, more specific charges are made. One writer argued that Orientalism should be explained in terms of the Jewish plan to control the affairs of the world, or as a new façade for the Crusaders' wars against Islam.

It is also interesting to note that the conspiratorial charge extends also to Muslims who disagree with the fundamentalist interpretation of religion. Such “sell-outs”, “traitors” and “secular” Muslims were painted as “agents of Orientalism” and “stooges of the West”.

Overall, AbuKhalil observed that “Rarely do Azhar writers dissect the texts of Orientalism and rarely do they draw important methodological distinctions in their body of works.”⁴³

Thus, it is obvious that Said's own message and conclusions were ignored. Rather, these Azharite writers were “consumed with sectarian and religious advocacy and propaganda.” Indeed, it can be seen that the general consensus amongst them is that “the study of Islam can only be done fairly at the hands of Muslims.” Such maneuver is not surprising; it serves an ideological interest and ensures control over religious discourse. However, such move can only serve to detach Islamic studies from any critical standards of scholarship. This, AbuKhalil noted out, “explains that inferior quality of Islamic studies in most Arab countries.”

Interestingly, one can also trace similar misappropriation of Said's conception of Orientalism in works written by popular Malay-Indonesian writers such as Adian Husaini, Khalif Muammar and Adnin Armas. One can see similar patterns with Azharites' populist use of Orientalism. Lately, it has become fashionable among conservative-fundamentalist circles in Malaysia and Indonesia to attribute all attempts to reinterpret certain religious dogmas in the context of changing times, as akin to adopting “Orientalist ways”. Thus, Muslims who try to engage with orthodox religious views and initiate reform will be condemned as being “stooges of the Orientalists.” It is not uncommon to find the charge of being “Orientalist” labeled on certain progressive thinkers in the Malay-Indonesian world, such as the late Nurcholish Madjid, Harun Nasution and Chandra Muzaffar.

CONCLUSION

Rethinking East-West Relationship

From our discussions above, it is clear that Muslims need to reevaluate their discourse on East-West relationship. If “Islam” in the West (or the media) means a lot of unpleasant things, then the same is true in Muslims’ use of “the West”. On this, Said curtly pointed out:

“How many people who use the labels [be it “Islam” or “the West”] angrily or assertively have a solid grip on all aspects of the Western traditions, or on Islamic jurisprudence, or on the actual languages of the Islamic world? Very few, obviously, but this does not prevent people from confidently characterizing “Islam” and “the West”, or from believing they know exactly what it is they are talking about.”⁴⁴

For Said, understanding other cultures must be rooted in human experience and has ethical consequences:

“Perhaps too we should remember that the study of man in society is based on concrete human history and experience, not on donnish abstractions, obscure laws or arbitrary systems.”⁴⁵

In all, perhaps Muslims’ discourse should emphasize less of racial, ethnic, national and religious distinctions. These distinctions will only subsume the reality of a plural and diverse community even within a particular “imaginative geographical boundaries”. Perhaps, what is more important is to emphasize on a “common enterprise of promoting human community.”⁴⁶

It is for this reason that Edward Said should be remembered and his legacy entrenched in the Muslim world – and not for the wrong reasons as appropriated by some Muslim groups and circles. []

END NOTES

¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), p. 325.

² Born in Jerusalem in 1935, he was an Arab Palestinian who became one of America's foremost spokesperson for the Palestinian cause. Battling leukemia since the 1990s, he passed away on 25th September 2003 at the age of 67. His contribution towards highlighting the oppressive nature of Western scholarship on Islam had won many admirers and critics alike. Edward Said was a Professor of Comparative Literature in Columbia University until his death.

³ Said's writings have rightly been termed as 'literatures of resistance,' together with the likes of Eqbal Ahmad, Rashid Khalidi and Noam Chomsky.

⁴ In making a distinction, I shall refer to Said's book *Orientalism* in italics whereas Orientalism refers to the field thus described.

⁵ Cited in As'ad AbuKhalil, "Orientalism in the Arab Context" in Naseer Aruri and Muhammad A. Shuraydi (eds.), *Revising Culture, Reinventing Peace: The Influence of Edward W. Said*. (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2001), p. 100.

⁶ Azhar Ibrahim Alwee, *Orientalism in Malay Studies*. Unpublished essay, 2002.

⁷ Frank Swettenhem was a British Resident in the 19th Century and had written extensively on Malay character. *The Real Malay* is one of his earliest works on the construction of *what* is a Malay.

⁸ See especially Orientalist works by Richard O. Windstedt, Frank Swettenhem and Hugh Clifford.

⁹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, p. 328.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 330-1.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 331.

¹² In fact, Said's observation was preceded by other indigenous thinkers like Syed Hussin Alatas who referred the phenomenon as "the captive mind" and Frantz Fanon who attributed it as a form of "intellectual alienation".

¹³ See Sadik Jalal al-'Azm, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse" in A. L. Macfie, ed., *Orientalism: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 217-238.

¹⁴ Mahathir bin Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma* (Selangor: Federal Publications, 1981); Senu Abdul Rahman, ed., *Revolusi Mental* (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan, 2002; first published by UMNO Malaysia, 1971). For a critique of these two books, see Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (London: Frank Cass, 1977); *Siapa Yang Salah: Sekitar Revolusi Mental dan Peribadi Melayu* (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 1972); and *Intellectuals in Developing Societies* (London: Frank Cass, 1977).

¹⁵ Asrul Zamani, *The Malay Ideas* (Kuala Lumpur: The Golden Books Centre Sdn. Bhd., 2002); Ismail Noor and Muhammad Azaham, *The Malays Par Excellence... Warts and All* (Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, 2000).

¹⁶ Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind*. (New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2002), p. 160.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 306.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Mahathir, *The Malay Dilemma*. p. 21-22.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 26.

²¹ J. Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, Vol. II (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1820), p. 287.

²² It will be useful here to quote the words of Bryan S. Turner: "...the process of de-colonization clearly cannot be separated from the de-colonization of thought." See, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 100.

²³ Ashis Nandy, *Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. xi.

²⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism*. p. 322

²⁵ Syed Hussein Alatas, "The Captive Mind and Creative Development", *International Social Science Journal*, XXVI 4, 1974.

²⁶ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967. p. 34.

²⁷ For a comprehensive study on the ideological stance and struggles of various schools of thoughts, see Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). Such romanticist views of Muslim history also fail to account the fact that many of these thinkers and scientists of the Abbasid era were Mu'tazilites in orientation. In particular, the orthodox thinker, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali had condemned al-Farabi and Ibn Sina as heretics (and therefore, outside the fold of the *Ahlul Sunnah wal Jamaah*) on the account that their beliefs on the eternity of the universe, denial of bodily resurrection and on God's knowledge of the universal and not the particulars, were against the teachings of Islam. See *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, translated by Michael E. Marmura (Utah: Brigham University Press, 1997).

²⁸ Pervez Hoodbhoy, *Islam and Science: Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for Rationality* (Kuala Lumpur: S. Abdul Majeed & Co., 1992), p. 86.

²⁹ My choice of these four key thinkers is deliberate. Their writings are to be found in abundance in the Malay world and arguably, are highly influential in certain circles of the religious elites.

³⁰ Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam* (Lahore: Idara Tarjuman ul-Qur'an, n.d.), p. 5-7.

³¹ Ibid. p. 7.

³² See Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge: Perseus Books, 1979).

³³ Maryam Jameelah, *Islam versus the West* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1962), p. 13.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 18.

³⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism*. p. 93.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 347.

³⁷ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 2001), p. 10. (Translation by author)

³⁸ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993), p. 15.

³⁹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*. p. 233.

⁴⁰ AbuKhalil, *Orientalism in the Arab Context*. p. 112.

⁴¹ Ibid. pp. 100ff. Some of these Azharite writers mentioned are Muhammad al-Ghazzali, Mahmud Zaquq, Anwar Al-Jundi, Muhammad Diya' Ar-Rayyis, Muhammad Al-Bahiyy, Muhammad Ahmad Diyab and Al-Jabri.

⁴² Ibid. p. 113.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Edward Said, *Covering Islam*, p. 9-10.

⁴⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism*. p. 327-8.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 328. Incidentally, Said's comment echoes well with a verse from the Qur'an 49:13 that calls on humanity to "know each another".