

Orientalism Revisited: A Critique of Western Discourses of Non-Western Development through the Postcolonial, Subaltern and Marxist Frames

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Abstract

This paper offers a critical examination of the intersection between Edward Said's concept of Orientalism and Western perceptions of development in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa (MENA). Through a qualitative textual analysis of key literature in Orientalism and development studies, this research deconstructs the prevailing discourses that sustain Western-centric views of development in these regions. Drawing on Said's foundational work, *Orientalism* (1978), this study identifies and interrogates the power dynamics, stereotypes, and cultural essentialisms that inform Western representations of development in Asia and the MENA region. Employing a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach, the research scrutinizes a corpus of texts—including academic articles, policy documents, and literary works—to address the central arguments and key assumptions of Orientalism. The analysis focuses on narratives that reinforce Orientalist tropes, marginalize indigenous perspectives, and legitimize Western dominance in development discourse. By juxtaposing Western development narratives with counter-narratives, this study reveals the epistemological tensions and power asymmetries that shape development policies and perceptions. The findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between Orientalism and Western perceptions of development, underscoring the need for decolonial and inclusive approaches.

Keywords: *Orientalism, Marxism, subaltern perspectives, postcolonialism, development studies, critical discourse analysis.*

Introduction

It is common to divide the Near East from the Far East. The Far East is shown as a location with a high level of civilizational advancement. This Western-based contextualization holds that ancient literary, religious, and cultural achievements were concentrated in the Far East (Hao, 2019; Han, 2022). Along with developing their own writing systems and intellectual framework, they also produced intricate forms of popular culture and classical literature. This is similar to the Near East, where the split is the subject of the research. In this area near the East, the name "Orient" is usually used. In many literary works, it is often contrasted with the Occident, which represents Europe's historical and cultural progress. In contemporary descriptions, the Islamic world versus the Western world—or European Christendom—has been included in the oriental versus occidental divide. Along with highlighting ethnic and cultural differences, the separation also draws attention to the conflict in worldviews (Altarriba & Basnight-Brown, 2022; McKenzie et al., 2023). (Wahid, 2025) (Mohamed, 2023) shows that, beginning in the 19th century, the West began to exert influence over a sizable portion of the Islamic world (the Orient). For instance, the Islamic world was exposed to European modernity and westernization through Christian occupiers and European trade.

The Ottoman Empire's fall in the early 1900s exacerbated the significant power shift that followed. Christian Europe began to question its own morals and social mores as it gained political authority over a larger segment of the Islamic world. Because they felt that Western lifestyles were superior to their own indigenous inventions, many people consequently accepted and adapted to them. While some armed themselves against European intrusion, others chose to follow Islamic modernism (Ali, 2022). Instead of condemning Western inroads into the Middle East and other Islamic territories, Islamic modernism was predicated on the belief that the Islamic world should become more dynamic and embark on a path of positive evolution. While acknowledging the role of Western imperialism in the decline of the Islamic world, Islamic modernism firmly supported progressive expansion within the Islamic world, outside the Western model. To compensate for the centuries-long backwardness the

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Islamic world experienced due to Western persecution, there were improvements in science, law, and education, as well as a kind of Islamic renaissance. The primary objective of this study is to review the body of literature on the analytical framework of Orientalism.

The primary objective of the study is to draw logical conclusions about the significant distinctions between Eastern and Western viewpoints on growth over several centuries. The key question here is whether or not to accept Edward Said's thesis of Orientalism. Admitting that Western depictions of the East (the Arab World, Middle East, and North Africa) as primitive are primarily emotional and untrue is a necessary step in accepting Edward Said's Orientalism. Disproving Said's thesis would mean acknowledging that Easterners are, in fact, less evolved than Westerners and that Western narratives about the Middle East are not biased but rather reflect the plain facts. This paper critically examines the intersection of Edward Said's Orientalism and Western perceptions of development in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa (MENA).

Methodology

This research is qualitative research with a literature study or systematic review approach. This approach was chosen because the main objective is to analyze and critique existing literature, not to collect new empirical data.

Data Analysis Techniques:

The data analysis in this study will be interpretive and critical. The steps include:

Conceptual analysis: Outlining and comparing definitions and understandings of Orientalism, postcolonialism, subalternity, and Marxism as explained in the literature reviewed.

Discourse identification: Analyzing how Western discourses on non-Western development are represented in the literature, focusing on underlying assumptions, stereotypes, and hierarchies of power.

Critique through theoretical frameworks: Applying postcolonial, subaltern, and Marxist theoretical frameworks to critique the development discourse. This involves:

Postcolonial Perspective: Analyzing how the legacies of colonialism continue to influence the representation and development of non-Western countries.

Subaltern Perspective: Considering how the voices and experiences of marginalized groups in the context of development are often ignored or misrepresented by Western discourse.

Marxist Perspective: Analyzing the role of global capitalism and economic power structures in shaping development discourse and its impact on non-Western countries.

Synthesis and Interpretation: Integrating the findings of the analysis to produce a comprehensive understanding of how Orientalism is manifested in development discourse and how the theoretical frameworks used can provide relevant critiques.

Drawing Conclusions: Formulating conclusions based on the analysis conducted, answering the research questions regarding how Orientalism continues to shape development discourse and how postcolonial, subaltern, and Marxist perspectives can provide alternative understandings.

Historical Context of Orientalism

Orientalism, a term coined by Edward Said in his seminal work "Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient" (1978), refers to the Western world's historical and ongoing fascination with and misrepresentation of the Eastern world, particularly the Middle East and Asia. To understand Orientalism's complexities, it is important to examine its historical context. Accordingly, early interactions between East and West date back to ancient civilizations, with cultural exchange and trade flourishing along the Silk Road. However, the foundations of Orientalism were laid during the Middle Ages. During the Crusades (1095-1291), Christian-Muslim conflicts fueled negative stereotypes and misconceptions about Islam and the Orient. During the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, European scholars, such as Dante Alighieri and Voltaire, perpetuated Orientalist tropes, portraying the East as exotic, mysterious, and inferior. During the age of Colonialism and Imperialism (18th-20th centuries), as European powers expanded their empires, Orientalism became a tool of domination, and British colonialism in India and the Middle East established Orientalist attitudes, solidifying Western superiority. However, the weakening of the Ottoman Empire allowed Western powers to intervene, reinforcing Orientalist stereotypes.

From 1830 to 1962, France's conquest of Algeria exemplified Orientalist policies, imposing Western values and institutions. In the post-World War II and Cold War Era, the global landscape shifted, but Orientalism persisted. Newly independent nations faced ongoing Western influence and Orientalist attitudes. The United States and the Soviet Union competed for influence in the Middle East and Asia, reinforcing Orientalist narratives. Despite the end of the Cold War, Orientalism remains embedded in Western discourse. Stereotypes persist in films, literature, and news coverage. In foreign policy, orientalist assumptions inform Western decisions on Middle Eastern and Asian affairs. In view of globalization, economic and cultural exchanges still perpetuate power imbalances. By and large, Orientalism's historical context reveals a complex web of power dynamics, cultural exchange, and misrepresentation.

The Thesis of Edward Said

Edward Said was a Palestinian scholar, activist, and politician. Said's writing focuses on the societal impact of literature. In his essays, Edward Said also addressed topics of liberty, emancipation, and cultural criticism. After becoming a professor of comparative literature at Columbia University in the United States, Edward Said published *Orientalism* (1978), his best-known and most frequently read book. The central claim of Said's writings is that Western narratives and projections of life in the Islamic world, specifically, the Arabian Peninsula, The Middle East and North Africa are based on a deliberate exploration of "otherness". The idea that the Islamic world was less developed than its Western counterparts facilitated Western domination and colonialism of various parts of the non-Western world (Arneil, 2024).

The view that anything outside its territorial enclave is useless has long been advocated by the West, symbolized by the superpowers of Europe and America. This was also a significant issue in discussions of African history for a long time, and it reflected European views of the East. For instance, Hegel said that although Africa is shown on the world map, it has been stagnant for a very long time and was not a Part of the historical world. The chauvinism that accompanies such assertions stems from the widespread perception that people outside Europe are less rational and more archaic, as Lewis (1982) and Lockman (2010, p. 34) note. "On the other hand, the Western world claims they are better than the East, and this belief can be attributed to several views and biases held about affairs in the East"(Storm et al., 2023).

The Western perspective on governance and society in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa (MENA) clashes with records of the remarkable progress accomplished in these regions before the arrival of the West. For instance, important advances in science and technology in the Arab world have led to new understandings of human anatomy and physiology. In North Africa, ancient Egyptian writing standards and architectural models were discovered; these were similar to the varied infrastructure and architectural models in the New World (America) and Western European countries (Lanz & Pendlebury, 2022). According to Sabic-El-Rayess (2020), by making up tales about the advancements of the Islamic world, it is presented as though it has not changed and is not Part of the past or the present. Therefore, in contrast to some Western writers' demeaning portrayals of the Islamic world, Edward Said uses *Orientalism* as an eye-opener into the East/West divide.

How tenable is Edward Said's thesis?

In his seminal work (Sabic-El-Rayess, 2020), Edward Said demonstrated the complex mechanics of Western dominance over non-Western civilizations, particularly in the Middle East and Asia. Said emphasizes the harmful impacts of imperialism on international relations, as well as the need to decolonize knowledge production and adopt a range of epistemological stances in response. (Fentahun, 2023), Supports Said's claim that the Islamic world has been devalued by Western dominance in Islamic countries as a result of years of colonization and neo-interventions. This opinion is supported by extensive evidence and facts that are present throughout Said's writing. Sahin (2018) further contended that certain Arab civilizations were prevented from thriving by the Islamic world's experience with Western imperialism and the Crusades. Admitting that the Islamic world is primitive is the same as admitting that its interactions with the hegemonic interventions of the West were a significant contributing element to this primitiveness. Edward Said said that reality changes throughout time. Nonetheless, Lewis mentions the evolving reality of Western power in the Middle East, where the US has continued to meddle in domestic affairs using a mix of peaceful and coercive means. In contrast to the previously cited opinion, Warraq (2007) identifies systematic problems in Edward Said's writing. *Orientalism* is not an empirically solid theory but rather an advocacy of upholding the notion of "otherness", which Edward Said set out to undermine —here, to make the West the other. By depicting

the East as a victim of the West, Edward Said sought to foster a mindset that pitted Easterners against Westerners, a form of counter-otherness (Ruth, 2020). The importance of Said's contribution to knowledge cannot be overstated, but Warraq concluded that his method significantly limits what can be understood.

Edward ignored a structural analysis of both civilizations and instead viewed Eastern and Western cultures as static historical phenomena, as though they were timeless and continuous entities. This contradicts the Foucauldian logic and the Gramscian dialectic that Said discussed in great detail. This study contends that, despite the aforementioned issues raised by Colmekcioglu et al. (2022), the work's intentional limits do not actually hinder understanding of the main idea Edward Said sought to express. Therefore, instead of focusing on what Said has not achieved, it is imperative to evaluate his main point using current research and real-world case studies, while acknowledging his limitations. Orientalism would be strengthened if recent, practical examples backed its claims.

Is there really an essentialism of the West over the East?

Edward contested the idea of essentialism in his writing. The notion of essentialism holds that "among attributes of a thing, some are essential, others are merely accidental." Essentialism has upheld the assumption that the West is superior in language, literature, administration, and technology. Said's contest against essentialism is theoretically grounded in the philosophies of Michael Foucault and Antonio Gramsci. In light of Foucauldian theory, Said's Orientalism follows a discursive framework that purposefully and unintentionally instills knowledge of their superiority through a multitude of channels and societal institutions in an attempt to dominate and exert control.

To answer the question posed in this section's caption, three elements will be examined: the idea of government, economic dominance, and public opinion. In the realm of administration, it is commonly said that because Islamic countries have historically been authoritarian, democracy is necessary for them to enjoy freedom and advancement. Western adversaries saw Islamic nations as being unduly conservative and limiting the rights, liberties, and dignity of their people. While the Islamic world has had periods of despotism throughout its history, Jackson & Peters (2020) argued that the Western world has not always been democratic. Among other aspects, enlightened despotism throughout the European era of empire necessitated European revolutions.

Additionally, recent Western, mainly American, attempts to establish democracy in the Middle East have been a complete failure. For instance, Libya's current livelihood problems in its democratic quest are worse than those that existed before the country's democratic campaign. While this does not totally condemn the West, it does illustrate the inadequacy of the Western concept of freedom in a context that lacks a framework for it. Going back to the issue of essentialism, it is important to keep in mind that democracy and other elements of Western-style governance have not consistently been implemented in a fully democratic manner. The use of force in most situations and intimidation through interventions certainly reinforce the superiority Edward Said discusses in his book Orientalism. In the recent disputes concerning Islamic governance versus the imposition of Western-style administration, the subject of growing anti-Americanism versus anti-Islamism concretizes the issue of Orientalism. Anti-Americanism is a broad analytical term used in this study to characterize the way the Arab world is viewed in contrast to the West. A 2018 Pew Research Center survey found that the United States and other Western countries' engagement in Middle Eastern affairs has been one of the primary drivers of anti-Americanism. The US war in Iraq, US economic hegemony in the Arab world, and the alleged strong US support for Zionism have all contributed to the rise in anti-American sentiment. A growing awareness of the growing otherness and the divide between Eastern and Western culture has led to an increase in anti-American sentiment.

The examples of Jordan and Lebanon lend credence to the aforementioned (Lenner & Turner, 2019). Even if Middle Eastern countries have stated their desire for democracy, their citizens are starting to understand that democracy may be developed without US unilateralism on the International scene. US goals are driven more by US agendas than by the wellbeing or universal interests of all democracies. Usually, the US's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict serves as an example of this idea. According to Bakir (2023), nearly 90% of people in Arab and Muslim countries think that the US is against the interests of the Islamic world because it backs Israel. Supporting Israel is thought to be an extension of essentialism, albeit a different one.

The Positionality of Postcolonialism in Orientalism

Postcolonial theoretical frameworks offer a critical lens for examining the enduring impact of colonialism on contemporary development discourse. In development studies, postcolonial theory challenges the dominant Western paradigm, which often positions Western knowledge and expertise as universal and superior. Postcolonial scholars argue that development discourse has been shaped by colonialism, perpetuating unequal power relations and marginalizing indigenous knowledge systems.

Specifically, however, in the context of Orientalism and Western perceptions of development, postcolonial theory provides a nuanced understanding of the power dynamics, cultural essentialisms, and knowledge production that perpetuate Western-centric views of development. The groundwork for postcolonial critiques of Western dominance in knowledge production. Said argued that Orientalism, as a discourse, constructs the "Orient" as a homogenous, essentialized, and inferior entity, reinforcing Western superiority. This discourse has been perpetuated through literature, art, and academia, shaping Western perceptions of the "Orient" and informing development policies. Postcolonial scholars, such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi Bhabha, have expanded on Said's work, highlighting the complexities of colonial power relations and the subaltern's agency. Spivak's concept of "subalternity" emphasizes the need to center marginalized voices and challenge dominant narratives.

Notion of "hybridity" underscores the complex, ambivalent nature of colonial encounters. Postcolonial theory emphasizes the epistemological violence of the West against other parts of the world, characterized by the erasure or marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems. There is also the feature of cultural imperialism, which reflects the imposition of Western cultural values and norms. These issues and problems reflect the complex, ambivalent nature of colonial encounters in the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa and inform critical analyses of Western development narratives and their impact on these regions. By applying postcolonial theoretical frameworks, researchers have been able to expose the power dynamics underlying Western development discourse, challenge dominant narratives and promote counter-narratives, highlight the agency and resistance of marginalized groups, and inform decolonial and inclusive approaches to development (Omodan & Dastile, 2023).

In Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, postcolonial theory challenges Orientalist representations of the "Orient" as backward or inferior, highlights the complexities of colonial and postcolonial experiences, and emphasizes the importance of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural contexts. The submission of postcolonial theorists is that development would only take place in the Orient, with readiness to complete the dismantling of colonial legacies, vis-à-vis the promotion of indigenous knowledge systems. However, it is worth noting some key issues with postcolonial theory and its contribution to Orientalism. Postcolonial theory oversimplifies complex historical and cultural contexts by relying on binary oppositions (e.g., East/West, colonizer/colonized). Ahmad contends that this approach neglects internal contradictions and diversity within colonized societies. Thus, the problems of development in the Orient should not be mainly confined to Western perception; there is a need to understand the internal contradictions that make the developmental metrics of

The Orient is inferior to the West. This is where the lack of adequate awareness and promotion of indigenous knowledge systems comes into play. That postcolonial theory overlooks economic factors in development, placing too much emphasis on cultural and discursive aspects. Easterly advocates for a more nuanced understanding of economic development. Furthermore, Postcolonial theory prioritizes discourse analysis over material conditions and everyday practices. They emphasize the need for ethnographic research and attention to local contexts. That postcolonial theory can reinforce cultural essentialism and nationalism, potentially leading to exclusionary politics and neglect of universal human rights. By and large, some scholars argue that postcolonial theory, despite its critique of Western dominance, remains a Western discourse that neglects non-Western intellectual traditions and universal values. This means it is not a foolproof remedial framework for rescuing Orientalism from Western chauvinism.

The limitations inherent in postcolonialism itself, as well as dissenting voices challenging its remedial narratives, call for a more nuanced understanding of Orientalism and development. It is the submission of this study that attention should be devoted to exploring the complexities of Islamic and Middle Eastern history beyond simplistic Orientalist narratives. There is equally a need to foster a more critical engagement with modernity, integrating Islamic values and local knowledge systems. The mainstream Westernized contextualization of development should be abandoned, and instead, the focus should be on local, progressive, and sustainable alternatives for measuring progress (Ziai, 2025). The development of the Orient would require leveraging historical narratives that transcend Eurocentric

perspectives. It will also address the binary confusion inherent in the assumption of Western superiority and non-Western inferiority, as well as in measuring non-Western societies against Western standards. Instead, there will be a nuanced understanding of cultural relativism, which holds that all cultures have unique values, strengths, and contributions. There will also be a development of multiple modernities, acknowledging diverse paths to modernization.

The Intersection between Orientalist and Subaltern Perspectives

Coined by Antonio Gramsci, "subaltern" describes those social groups relegated to the margins of society, lacking access to power, resources, and representation. The subaltern movement was a scholarly movement that emerged in the 1980s, focusing on recovering marginalized voices, challenging dominant narratives, analyzing power dynamics, and exploring alternative histories. The key features of subaltern perspectives are marginality (the view that subaltern groups exist on the periphery of dominant societies); powerlessness (subalterns lack agency, voice, and influence); resistance (subalterns often engage in subtle, everyday forms of resistance); and alternative perspectives (subalterns offer distinct views on history, culture, and politics). Subaltern perspectives aim to decenter Western dominance, highlight internal critiques and resistances, emphasize agency and self-representation, and complicate notions of cultural authenticity. Thus, there is a worthy synergy between Orientalism and Subaltern perspectives. This is apparent in the shared critique of Western dominance, the emphasis on power dynamics and representation, the interest in marginalized voices and experiences, and the commitment to challenging dominant discourses. Subaltern studies emphasize everyday forms of resistance and challenge dominant narratives. Their perspectives reveal complexities within non-Western societies, moving beyond Orientalism's binary oppositions. By incorporating subaltern perspectives, scholars can refine Orientalism's critique of Western dominance, develop more nuanced understandings of non-Western societies, highlight marginalized voices and resistances, and foster decolonial rather than just postcolonial thought.

Marxist Deconstruction of Orientalism

A Marxist critique of Edward Said's Orientalism argues that, while critical of Western representations of the East, Said's work falls into its own essentialist trap. Warraq (2007) notes that Edward Said's discourse of Orientalism is based on an essentialist view of the West, assuming that Orientalism inherently taints knowledge produced in the West. This perspective overlooks the complexities of Marxist thought, particularly historical materialism, which radically departs from idealist views of history. Karl Marx's early writings on colonialism and colonized nations did exhibit Eurocentric tendencies. However, over time, as Marx and Engels developed a more nuanced understanding of non-European societies, these tendencies diminished. For instance, Marx's critique of British colonialism in India evolved significantly, recognizing its destructive impact on indigenous societies.

A neo-Marxist epistemology can indeed fault Said's Orientalism on several grounds. First, on geographical essentialism, Said assumed that Western knowledge is inherently Orientalist, overlooking the diversity of Western thought. Edward Said could also be faulted for idealist interpretations, where Said's reliance on Foucault and Gramsci leads to an emphasis on discourse and ideology at the expense of the evident bearing of material conditions on the historical dynamics of the Global South. Ultimately, a Marxist critique of Orientalism emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of cultural forms, grounded in historical materialism and sensitive to the complexities of colonialism and imperialism.

Colonialism and imperialism imposed severe constraints on the development of the Orient, perpetuating disparities with the West. Key complexities found over time are apparent in economic exploitation, drain of resources (colonial powers extracted natural resources, stifling local industries), unequal trade (imperialism imposed unfavorable trade terms, hindering economic growth), the dependence on Western capital (most nations in the Orient still rely on Western investment, limiting autonomy), cultural suppression, witnessing the erasure of indigenous cultures whilst undermining local identities.

Additionally, there is the problem of linguistic imperialism (Western languages replacing native tongues, limiting expression, and adopting Western norms, stifling originality). Local governance, which predated colonial modernity, was replaced by rigid control systems in states demarcated by artificial borders, dismantling native orderliness within arbitrary boundaries, fueling conflicts. Imperialism entrenched racial hierarchies, perpetuating discrimination, class divisions, economic disparities, and creating elite dependencies. India's textile industry was dismantled by British colonialism, African

nations' agricultural sectors were reshaped for Western export, and Middle Eastern Western powers exploited oil reserves.

Where do we go from here?

In a post-pandemic world, Said's thesis remains remarkably relevant, offering critical insights into global power dynamics, cultural representation, knowledge production, and hybrid imperialism. The pandemic saw a resurgence of Orientalist tropes, with Western media essentializing Asian cultures as "mysterious" or "backward", perpetuating Islamophobic narratives and ignoring non-Western contributions to pandemic responses. Said's critique of Orientalism reminds us that cultural representation shapes global perceptions and that non-Western voices must be centered in global discourse. On its own Part, the pandemic underscored the importance of global knowledge sharing. The pandemic exposed ongoing imperialist dynamics, including vaccine nationalism and unequal access, and economic exploitation of Global South nations.

The Orient has significant development prospects, beginning with the economic dynamics. Asia's economies, particularly those of China and India, are expanding. Countries like South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore have industrialized successfully, and the natural resources across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia are vast. Politically, decolonization has yielded. Independence for many nations. Gradual democratic reforms and regional cooperation through organizations like ASEAN, GCC, and AU promote stability. South-South cooperation among Oriental nations further strengthens solidarity. There are also social and cultural prospects. There is a demographic dividend in many Oriental countries due to the growing population of young, agile, and innovative people. There is increased access to education, the adoption of digital technologies, and the volume of South-South cooperation between Oriental nations and other countries in the Global South. However, there is a need to address with urgency persistent economic, social, and cultural imperialism, social injustice and corruption, as well as the dilemmas of regional tensions, terrorism, refugee crises, climate change, pollution, and resource depletion. To overcome these hurdles, regional economic integration, human capital investments, infrastructure development, technological innovation, and sustainable resource management are crucial. Key strategies for development include import-substitution industrialization, export-oriented growth, human capital development, infrastructure investment, technological transfer, regional cooperation, and sustainable practices. Effective implementation requires collaboration among governments, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has examined the analytical framework of Orientalism through the lens of Edward Said. This study supports Edward Said's central claim that the Western world long regarded itself as the only essential, while the Islamic or Oriental world was viewed as superfluous. This concept, which he refers to as essentialism, was fundamental to Western dominance over Eastern civilizations in most narratives and underpinned many aspects of East-West interaction. Edward Said set out to deconstruct Western narratives about the Islamic world as falsified proof and deliberate bias in order to invalidate anything that is not Western. The arguments put forward by Edward Said demonstrate some validity, particularly when one reflects on the activities of the United States in the Middle East, which are characteristic of dominance and essentialism of Western imperialism that Edward Said grappled with in his orientalist thesis. Conclusively, however, Western essentialism cannot entirely be blamed for the primitivism of other worlds. The positions of postcolonial theorists were also flawed in this paper, especially in their failure to address many aspects of material conditions and internal contradictions in the Global South. The conclusions of this paper emphasize the need to address ongoing imperialism and to embrace decolonial and inclusive approaches to development. Amid the "dark clouds" of Orientalist stereotypes in non-Western regions of the world, this study is convinced of a "silver lining" of prospects. This is realizable with regional economic integration, human capital investments, infrastructure development, technological innovation, and sustainable resource management.

Credit Authorship Contribution Statement

Dhakchani: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Software, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Sathiyarajan: Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Software, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

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