



Political Islamism: A Challenge to Muslim Political and Philosophical Thought

Dr Mohammed Shafiq, Lecturer Department of Islamic & Pakistan Studies, KUST.

Amjad Hussain, Lecturer Department of English, NUML. Peshawar

Dr Naqeeb Hussain Shah, Assistant Professor Department of Social Work & Sociology. KUST

Dr Mohammad Ibrar, Assistant Professor Department of Social Work. UoP

Dr Akhtar Munir, Lecturer Department of Criminology. UoP, mshafiq@kust.edu.pk

Dr Khadija Azizi, Assistant Professor Department of Islamiyat Shaheed Benazir Women University Peshawar

Abstract-- The tensions encapsulated in the theme "borders and margins" have a very distinct dimension: Political Islamism. This is the dominant strain exerting pressure on the closed and enclosed "borders and margins" and challenges western political thought to respond to the myriad challenges posed by the existential problematic. That *Political Islamism* is directly available in the structure of "capitalist modernity", and is based on a number of fundamental mistakes that scholars of Islam make *vis-à-vis* postmodernism and Islam, is the main argument in this paper. For instance, Ziauddin Sardar (Middlesex University, London), Akbar S Ahmed (University of Washington) and Tariq Ramadan (Oxford University) are the go-to scholars on the subject of Islam and Postmodernism. They provide Muslim scholarship with wrong premises, premises based in Analytic philosophy which is, read via Critical Theory, the fountainhead of "capitalist modernity"; and maintain a clear line of distinction— the binary— between Islam and Postmodernism. Background research shows that this is not the case. Rather it builds barriers to the thought which can potentially release the pressures felt on "borders and margins". They deliberately, or unconsciously, fail to see any continuities in the two contemporary thought practices of Islam, mediated via Dr Muhammad Iqbal (Sardar's and Ahmed's social, cultural and religious context), and postmodernism. This oversight by Muslim "polymaths" and scholars gives room to Political Islamism, it is contended in this paper, to rear its ugly manifestations. If the concept of *Political Islamism* (Ayubi, 1993) is based in "capitalist modernity" (Aijaz Ahmed, 1987), an ideology which had been holding sway in the Muslim world since latter's first brush with Western thought, then would tackling this aspect of Muslim political thought adequately release the pressure on "borders and margins" the world over? How do you go about tackling it politically? Is here room for Muslim political thought drawing inspiration from Critical Theory (my metaphor for a vast scholarship in Continental philosophy under the sign of postmodernism) and Dr Muhammad Iqbal, the missing "praxial dimension" (Bernstein, 1995) of Critical Theory? Contemporary western political thought needs to open its intellectual borders before any substantive gains could be achieved on the ground. Mark Duffield's (2003, 2010) seminal insights, developed in the discipline of International Relations' conflict resolution contexts, combined with Critical Theory, can provide possibilities for developing a new paradigm in the future growth of this human organism called political philosophy? Duffield's image of the division of the world into "the insured life " and "the uninsured life" suggests an uncanny link with the metaphor of "borders and margins" as well; a jealously guarded and poorly understood political problematic coaxing political science to its political action.

Keywords: Islam, Postmodernism, Critical Theory, Muhammad Iqbal, Muslim Political Philosophy

I. INTRODUCTION

Graham Fuller and Ian Lesser's book *The Sense of Siege* comprehensively captures the anxiety encapsulated in the theme/the metaphor *Borders and Margins* in the context of western Liberal and Conservative Eurocentric political philosophy's dialectical opposite: Political Islamism. The idea that "political Islam has emerged as a major ideological force in the Third World" is not without a certain intellectual genealogy. (Fuller, G. 1995). Foucault has sensitized us to one such reading. (Foucault, M. 2005) It is this genealogy that allows western political science to theoretically contest what is in actuality an extremely volatile Lyotardian concrete, practical, political situation. (Lyotard, J 1995). In Critical Theory's terms, it is missing its *praxial dimension*. (Bernstein J. 1995). The anxiety that western political scientists are feeling at their borders and margins is precisely the result of an historical mistake committed under a constructed governing ideal. Both Foucault and Derrida are illuminating on this political failure. The contention is that political Islam is also one such western construction. It has diffused from Europe in quite an interesting way.

In this genealogy, political Islamism, Islamism, or Post Islamism are but mere reflections on religion and culture conditioned by capitalist modernity (Ahmad A. 1994). The term captures in one breath the whole trajectory of their philosophical construction. They do not have an iota of the spirit of Muslim culture in them. They are best described as no different from other political opportunists operating on the same turf. This attitude to life is best described as capitalist modernity. Fuller and Lesser's assertions like "xenophobic

policies on both sides or “this mutual sense of siege” conceals the fact that the distinction made between the two seemingly adversarial political entities is untenable on the ground that both are structured by capitalist modernity. A long line of western philosophers makes us sensitive to this construction and the flawed philosophical structure of this overwhelming knowledge and power intersection.

The lens that Fuller and Lesser are using is informed by a strand of *capitalist modernism* i.e. the Realist paradigm. This is what they are applying to understand the sense of siege among the Janus faced, binary divide of Political Islamism and western political thought. Islam has been reduced by the unchecked march of western colonialism, in the garb of capitalist modernity, to a *metaphysics of presence* (Derrida J. 2001). It has been bled dry by the efforts of its scholars to make it compatible with the *a priori* given model. This construction of Islam allows Political Islamist/Islamists/Post-Islamists to smuggle in ideas that are antithetical to the very spirit of Islam. In other words, they are ideas borrowed from the west like Sam Selvon. Sam Selvon? Let me elaborate.

In his book *Beginning Postcolonialism*, John McLeod narrates the story of the West Indian scholar, Sam Selvon, born in San Fernando, then a British territory. Selvon tells how he was angry at the lame fellow West Indian, Sammy, a fisherman, who had brought a white *fugitive* as an assistant to their street one day. Sam narrates how it felt against the natural order of things: a white man was supposed to be superior and therefore the master. Sammy had violated this unconscious rule. He tells about his mixed feelings of amazement and anger that he felt at this violation. Sam Selvon particularly notes that this structure that White were superior and Black were inferior was never given to them in a direct manner but was inculcated in their subconscious through education. Sam Selvon uses the episode to highlight the psychological forces at work in a colonial setting which make the colonised people internalize certain racist ideas as the Gospel truth. (McLeod J 2018) Our fascination with Anglo-American capitalist modernity, analytic philosophy, and Ibn Rushd, the rationalist, are symptoms of a similar but deeper colonial malaise. It also tells us where we stand in relation with neo-colonialism today. Can the course be changed mid way through a certain political philosophy and action, or what Gramsci calls a *philosophy of praxis*? (Gramsci A 1971) Muslim scholars are the *Sam Selvons* of Islam who have been made to unconsciously accept the need for Islam to conform to an otherwise natural rule. In this case, capitalist modernity. In this sense, it becomes the *metaphysics of presence*. In this sense, it poses a challenge to Muslim political and philosophical thought not rooted in the self enfolding term.

In this sense, Muslim philosophical and political thought assumes a trajectory that connects it with Critical Theory’s genealogical and philosophical foundation. It becomes an avant-garde argument between Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) and Critical Theory via the *early* Frankfurt School and Derrida. The early Frankfurt School teaches our religion to us. It teaches Iqbal to us. It tells us how, in a very Foucauldian sense, Muslim scholars have been unable to locate the elephant in the room.

Both Fuller and Lesser, or RAND Corporation’s or Brookings Institute’s other hired Muslim hands for that matter, have put on their realist lens to highlight the strategic dimension of the conflict between Islam and the West that exerts pressure on borders and margins. Notice how Political Islamism is interpreted now as Islam as such. A structure of thought enables this interpretation and these inferences drawn from a binary divide. In such a construction Peace, Richmond highlights, escapes the equation entirely and what remains are scholarly suggestions, in the best Realist paradigm traditions, to keep the balance of power tipped for the *funder* of the study (Richmond O P 2008). In the case of Fuller and Lesser, it is RAND Corporation. A little bit of archaeological work would reveal the ideological basis of RAND Corporation and its association with American Imperial agendas in the Muslim world. John Mearsheimer’s *The Israel Lobby* and Anne Norton’s *Leo Strauss and the politics of American Empire* are particularly illuminating in understanding what is at the very heart of the conference’s theme *Borders and Margins*. What is at issue is not whether the friction between Islam and the West is functional or geographic, that both Fuller and Lesser dilate upon, but the kind of *epistemic violence* perpetrated by capitalist modernity in Muslim culture and civilization (Spivak G C 1988) It therefore stands fully engrossed in an ever deepening identity crisis. In this setting, Political Islamism, Islamism or Post-Islamism sell under the brand name of Islam, this latter has already been reduced to modernity’s philosophical categories and formal requirements. Anything, as postmodernism tells us, sells (Docherty T 1995).

Fuller and Lesser’s depiction of political Islam is part of enemy profiling that, given Foucault’s understanding of the evolution of different phases of the western culture, is happening at the levels of both territorial and intellectual borders and frontiers. It has necessitated the erection of walls to keep the uninsured out in the open for a fuller surveillance, subjugation, and all forms of social, political, cultural and religious exploitation. The Panopticon is now global. Do you expect peace to prevail when this is how your knowledge tells you to look at the world? The perception that hired scholars and their Muslim dialectical counterparts have been trying to create that the West and Islam are binaries is totally unfounded. The Muslim world or Islam represented in such terms is mere a financed interpretation of Islam. Political

Islamists are more capitalist than the Capitalists themselves. As well as greedy and violent like the parent thought. This allows them to paint political Islam in the following realist construction:

Political Islam will certainly seek to enhance the real power of Islamic states in order to minimize their inherent weakness in dealing with the West as well as neighboring states. (Fuller & Lesser 1995 p 167)

It is pertinent to recall Richmond's views here that Realism is all about realpolitik and not about peace. This Realist construction of Islam is enabled by an enabling structure, a structure which sacrifices Justice and Meaning as it unfolds itself. It is undoubtedly Empire that the western political thought has been unable to tame. Or break free from. This failure creates the almost palpable anxiety captured in the metaphors of *Borders and Margins*. Islam and Continental philosophy look at the situation from fundamentally different perspectives— in this case Iqbal and the early Frankfurt School and Derrida. It is in this sense that Political Islamism/Islamism/Post-Islamism becomes a challenge to Muslim political and philosophical thought. It is about time that we turn to unraveling this problematic.

The development of scientific thought is not one in which old statements are discarded as false and replaced by new and correct ones; it is rather a process of continuous reinterpretation of older statements, by which their true kernel is freed from distorting elements. The great pioneers of thought, of whom Freud is one, express ideas which determine the progress of scientific thinking for centuries. (Fromm E, 1955 p 321)

If one were to grossly oversimplify the argument for Sufi epistemology, the touchstone for Muslim political thought, made by Dr Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), in an attempt to get the feel of the different vibes animating Iqbal's thought processes, one cannot do without drawing a rough sketch of the contemporary Critical Theory, and its various offshoots like postmodernism or postcolonialism for instance, which have been dominating the western academy's social and human sciences of late, and how Iqbal prefigures all these dominant strains animating Critical Theory's contemporary trajectory. It is an important step in the process of our understanding of how Political Islamism poses many challenges for Muslim political and philosophical thought. This rough sketch, therefore, would necessarily include the abiding presence of the philosophical argument raised by Continental philosophy and reflected upon in Iqbal's concept of Sufi epistemology. If we are able to understand that gnosis and praxis are coming together in this combination, in this comparative and parallel reading, then hopefully we can realize the enormity of Iqbal's philosophical argument for Muslim philosophical and political thought when it aligns itself perfectly well with the *early* Frankfurt School and Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard, for a denunciation of what has been described by Aijaz Ahmed as *Capitalist Modernity* (Ahmad A 1994).

The argument would most definitely include Marx and Nietzsche. In his book *Recovering Ethical Life*, JM Bernstein defines Critical Theory as *a theoretical synthesis* of Marx and Nietzsche performed by the *early* Frankfurt School. How do Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Fromm, Benjamin read Marx and Nietzsche? How is it any different from Iqbal's inferences from Marx and Nietzsche? Iqbal had brought Ghazzali and Kant on the same page that we find pursued in Critical Theory today viz. along spiritual lines. This thought is lent credence by other facets or dimensions of western society: Noetic Science, which is a joining together of quantum physics and mysticism; one finds this understanding running through Dan Brown's deeply political novels; as well as can be felt running through the radical scientists like Rupert Sheldrake and Bruce Lipton; and running through the three radical Egyptologists Graham Hancock, Robert Bauval and Steven Strong who have unmasked the Modern Narrative as was the aim and purpose of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. They have done to Reason what Iqbal had said our ancestors used to do to it but which modern education, the structure of our thought, has robbed us of: pursuit of Reason to its hiding places. How do you understand Iqbal's point without understanding the arguments pursued in Michel Foucault, Derrida, and Lyotard? How can a lens conditioned by the modernist reason make sense of Iqbal's point? As an academic and researcher in a reputable Pakistani public university, I know full well how far we are from realising this connection. Iqbal would remain an enigma, a star on the far pavilions of a receding future.

The argument would also include an emphasis on praxis, a praxial dimension, because it marks a difference between critical and traditional theory. Horkheimer made this case right at the start of what were to be later called the early Frankfurt School. Derrida's, Foucault's and Lyotard's conclusions from the theoretical mix of Marx and Nietzsche yield a state conditioned and informed by Sufi epistemology, a permanent state in Iqbal otherwise. Their inferences from their reflections on the western society and the state of its knowledge, under a certain understanding of Reason/Enlightenment, are for all to see: justice and meaning are missing. Nothing else remains, otherwise. *Justice* and *Meaning* are the central concerns of Critical Theory. Bernstein writes,

Critical theory is a theoretical synthesis of 'the problem of exploitation and domination' (or the problem of Marx) and 'the problem of meaning' or 'Nihilism' or the problem of Nietzsche (Bernstein J 1995 p 117).

There is an overt emphasis on praxis, among the early Frankfurt School and their illustrious son, Derrida, who identify and arrest the structure that dominate, exploit, and render life meaningless (Derrida J 2005). What do we find in Iqbal from these same philosophical sources? Roy Jackson in his book *Nietzsche and Islam* (Jackson R 2007) singles out Iqbal as the best reader of the very essence of Nietzschean philosophy. In his Persian book, *Javednama* (Iqbal M 2010), Iqbal calls Nietzsche Mansur Hallaj, the famous iconoclast Muslim Sufi saint. The influence that Nietzsche exerts on Michel Foucault and Derrida is obvious in their works, interviews, and lectures. They are carrying forward what was started by the early Frankfurt School and in doing so come closer to, like Nietzsche in *Javednama*, to the very throne of God. Iqbal prefigures them here.

Iqbal's abiding love with Germany and Germany thought is contemporaneous with the early Frankfurt School. Both are responding to an evolving Frankenstein in the shape of *capitalist modernity*. Both are making us witness the flawed structure that underpins the thought behind this inhuman structure. Both are utilizing Marx and Nietzsche, or German/Continental philosophical foundations broadly speaking, on the one hand, and mysticism, on the other, to fashion their responses. Both are noticing ideological and philosophical fault-lines that look remarkably similar. Their interpretations match remarkably well. What does it mean, given the context in which Iqbal is viewed in Pakistani Muslim society and its scholarship, caught in *the metaphysics of presence*, for Muslim political thought and scholarship? Why has Muslim scholarship failed to notice this? The reason is obvious: its intellectual structure is based in the Modern Narrative. This failure is particularly acute in Muslim scholars and/or *polymaths* who share Iqbal's cultural background like Ziauddin Sardar, Ahmed Rashid, and Akbar S Ahmed for instance. The lessons at play in their missing the elephant in the room can be traced back to the Modern Narrative.

The decentring capabilities of modernism are well documented. This decentring, in Sardar and Ahmad, happens through capitalism and colonialism bred by their internal mechanisms of coercion, exploitation and hegemony. This kind of modernity is the fruit of Enlightenment and 'by their fruits shall you know them'. It is by its fruits that the Frankfurt School judges modernity and modernism, capitalism and the culture industry that gives them justifications for their sorry existence. They consistently hold that all this chaos emanates from Enlightenment and its legacies: "A fully enlightened world is disaster triumphant", write Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Once decentered from ones cultural roots, the grounds for cultural hegemony are laid. Modernity invades the Muslim problematic at precisely the moment when alienation from traditional cultural roots is brought about by the colonial experience. Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak have founded their careers on highlighting this cultural genocide carried out through cultural imperialism (Said E 2003). The need for identity in the face of the challenges posed by the hegemonic culture assumes patterns of mimicry and the circle around oneself, predicted both by Marx and Nietzsche, is complete. Iqbal also predicts all this and then presents an interesting political and philosophical argument.

This misunderstanding which is bred by Sardar and Ahmed i.e. completely misunderstanding the proximity between Islam and Postmodernism is depriving a Muslim society from articulating an interesting political solution to its festering problems. The seeds of this political philosophy are germinating, this research is one indication of it, in Pakistan's Movement for Justice Party who draw on Iqbal as their political ideologue but Iqbal is understood, as Sardar and Ahmed did before it, from a modernist perspective which restricts the overall agency of Iqbal's avant-garde dialogue between Islam and Critical theory, postmodernism, and postcolonialism. A glimpse of this misreading can also be critically evaluated in two recent articles on Iqbal published in *Revisioning Iqbal* by Tahir Kamran and Inayatullah Baloch. (Dharmpal & Qasmi 2010). This reconstruction of Islamic religious thought, in sync with postmodern critical thought, is to highlight the avant-garde— in the meaning of an artist being ahead of his times as used by Lyotard, a kind of prophetic consciousness— aspects of Iqbal's dialogue with the Frankfurt School and through them with Critical Theory, with the specter of Postmodernism roaming Western, especially Continental, philosophy today; and to show a common trajectory, missed by both Ziauddin Sardar and Akbar S Ahmed, emerging from this new reading of the political and philosophical in Islam; and the potential consequences of this alignment for creating the political implications of this way of reading Iqbal in the context of Pakistan's current political situation where his philosophy, as popularly and incorrectly understood, is at the threshold of acquiring political power through a popular movement. Pakistani Muslim society is the most important factor in defusing most of the tensions in the theme *Borders and Margins*. It must not be, cannot be allowed to fall to capitalist modernity's Islamic avatar: Political Islamism.

The point in this paper is that the conclusions drawn by Muslim scholars like Ziauddin Sardar, Tariq Ramadan and Akbar S Ahmed from the contemporary state of knowledge in the West betray a complete lack of philosophical understanding of this situation and thus their conclusions cannot be taken as the last word on the connections between Islam and the trajectory of the Western knowledge under the signs of Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism and Postcolonialism. They are perpetuating the crisis by giving excuses and covers to political Islamism. It can only be interpreted through the *critical* operations of 'a critical theory of society'. The best analogy to understand the degeneration of Islam under the political structures imposed on it by Muslim political thinkers is to see it in the Frankfurt School's brilliant critique of Enlightenment and its legacies. They redraw the philosophical genealogy of western academy by separating it from the wrong, mere theoretical interpretations of the Modern Narrative. The missing 'praxial dimension' that this paper intends to show from an Islamic perspective is provided by Iqbal's political philosophy. They are attempting what was suggested by Marx in his *Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach*: His philosophy must, therefore, be rescued from narrow, modernist understanding of Iqbal. Critical Theory can help us see this avant-garde argument. This, it is assumed, to be the required paradigm shift to be able to break free from the spell of Political Islamism and to be able to counter this challenge to Muslim political and philosophical thought.

Reason, for instance, is understood to be a perfect match between analytic philosophy and Islam through Ibn Rushd hence Ibn Rushd's privileged position among Muslim scholarship and the occasion for a denigration of Imam Ghazzali. But where do Ghazzali and Ibn Rushd stand in relationship with the argument pursued in the *early* Frankfurt School or Derrida or postmodernism around the problematic of Reason? Iqbal connects, in a few sentences in his *Reconstruction Lectures*, both Kant and Ghazzali as people who had brought *proud* rationalism to a "heap of ruins". What does Derrida do to the same proud rationalism in his famous lecture at Johns Hopkins University in 1966? (Derrida J 2001) He exposes the limitations of this modernist Reason and its modernist pretensions to know. What is the verdict from the world of human and social sciences? Who was right? Jacques Derrida, who deconstructed, or Claude-Lévi Strauss, who represented the structure of modernist *logo* and *ethnocentrism*? If Derrida is right, then how could Iqbal be wrong? Are they deconstructing something dissimilar? Or could our understanding be flawed and structured like Sam Selvon's?

Postmodernism is the catalyst for understanding Iqbal's political drift. For this to happen, the *a priori* intellectual privilege and *givenness* of the Modern Narrative must be unsettled to allow us to witness an avant-garde argument unfolding before the world of scholarship with philosophical lineage in Islam mediated via Iqbal's Sufi epistemological understanding of religion. Iqbal's Sufi epistemology can only be appreciated and properly understood if one were to approach it from the perspective of postmodernism and Critical Theory. It is ironically both these thought processes that Muslim scholarship has an uncanny relationship with. It clashes with a deep set colonial structure. Thus, Iqbal's concept of Sufi epistemology remains elusive. Muslim philosophical thought is stuck in an intellectual *cul-de-sac*. The need for a paradigm shift from a modern to a deeply philosophical postmodernism could not be more acute. With this shift, Iqbal makes his presence felt. It is therefore crucial that Critical Theory is allowed in Pakistani seats of higher learning, where it is either nonexistent or understood from a predetermined mindset, to be able, at a certain point in time, to see Iqbal prefiguring their inferences and conclusions. This is crucial, in the context of the increasing pressure felt at borders and margins, given the timing of Critical Theory's and Iqbal's temporal as well as spatial imminent political resurrection.

This thesis brings to light those aspects of Iqbal's philosophy in a more sharper focus that make it palpable for us to see the connections between Iqbal's inflection of Islam and the development of postmodernism from what was set in motion by the Frankfurt School of critical theorists. What Marcuse has said about Heidegger can be equally applied to the Frankfurt School:

To me and my friends, Heidegger's work appeared as a new beginning: we experienced his book [Being and Time] (and his lectures, whose transcripts we obtained) as, at long last, a concrete philosophy: here there was talk of existence [Existenz], of our existence, of fear and care and boredom, and so forth. We also experienced an 'academic' emancipation: Heidegger's interpretation of Greek philosophy and German idealism, which offered us new insights into antiquated, fossilized texts. (Marcuse H 2005 p xii)

The *early* Frankfurt School is doing that to the new reading of fossilized texts in the world of Muslim scholarship. It is helping us *defossilize* Iqbal. The historical evolution of both, Iqbal's Sufi perspective of Islam and his political philosophy based on this orientation of Islam and postmodernism, together with the subsequent development of Critical Theory and postcolonialism, show patterns of these two culturally distinct but historically contemporary thought practices that are almost indistinguishable from one another

in their critique of modernist, rationalist, scientific, analytic Reason. The best foray into understanding the proximity between Islam and postmodernism is, therefore, a perspective away from *Establishment Iqbal*, 'the antiquated, fossilised' study of Iqbal, that both Sardar and Ahmed concur with, and in understanding him via the proximity, made available by postcolonialism, between the intellectual development of 'a critical theory of society' in the works of the Frankfurt School to be able to see his political philosophy taking definite shape, which makes a strong case for combining the two currents of thought for conflict resolutions and defusing trigger points across civilisational lines. This connection between Islam and postmodernism through the early Frankfurt School of critical theorists and Iqbal's reconstructed view of Sufi Islam is further cemented as central to 'a critical theory of society' when both insist on combining theory and practice. Thomas Docherty would later articulate them as *gnosis* and *praxis* and as the first point of separation between postmodernism and modernism; (Docherty T 1995) or, in Horkheimer's words, separates critical theory from traditional theory. (Horkheimer M 1972) The lack of praxis, in other words, is the point of departure for postmodernism and the Frankfurt School of critical theorists from the 'dialectic of Enlightenment' i.e. Modernism and its attendant thought practices like capitalism, modernism, liberalism, secularism because for these thought processes *Justice* and *Meaning* were/are mere gnosis.

This trajectory of thought is Iqbal's as well and more specifically from those same philosophical foundations that animate Critical Theory and postmodernism. The very first sentence of Iqbal's book *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is: "Quran is a book which emphasizes *deed* rather than *idea*" (Iqbal 1934). And Islam, it must be reminded here, means Peace. How does it find itself equated with extremism and violence, a point so glaringly misread by both Sardar and Ahmed, forms the background of this research on Iqbal's political philosophy because *deed* (the problem of praxis) is subsumed under the prevalent discourse on Iqbal and Islam, by both Muslim and Western scholars, which is, like its fountain head i.e. modernism, smeared in *gnosis*. Praxis, something which makes a certain *Utopia* possible in space-time reference is lost in translation. Nietzsche's concept of vitality, *Übermensch*, and cultural products as the measure of a society's worth would heavily echo throughout his subsequent reconstruction of Islamic religious thought. Marx is always there as a philosopher of freedom, of human emancipation and not only as the philosopher of *Das Kapital* (Singer P 2018) as is the wont in Pakistani intelligentsia. Eric Fromm, writing an Introduction to *Marx's Concept of Man* (1966), which contained translation of Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844), goes so far as to consider Marx as a messiah. Iqbal identifies Nietzsche as Mansoor Hallaj, the great Sufi saint, and Marx is "almost a prophet with a book" for him. (Iqbal 1934) This cultural, and *religious*, Marxist strain is particularly helpful in our understanding the political philosophy of Iqbal because he later builds his case for 'spiritual democracy' with these ingredients.

Critical Theory was "a theoretical synthesis" performed by the Frankfurt School of critical theorists from two philosophical sources: Marx and Nietzsche (Bernstein 1995). In his book *Stray Reflections* Iqbal makes clear references to this German/Continental philosophical strand of Marx and Nietzsche in his thinking. Frankfurt School was synthesising Marx and Nietzsche for their subsequent argument against the modernist, rationalist, instrumentalist trajectory of the western civilization. Their reports are damning: *One-Dimensional Man* for Marcuse, *insane society* for Eric Fromm in *The Sane Society*, or "Enlightenment as totalitarian" in Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. What was left by them has been completed by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Iqbal's inferences were uncannily similar. His philosophical argument coming from the same roots. Bernstein (1995) writes that the Frankfurt School's synthesis of Marx and Nietzsche was arranged around the metaphors of *Justice* ("the problem of domination and exploitation") and *Meaning* ("Nihilism"). Edward Said, another cultural referent via Iqbal Ahmed as his "political guru" (Ahmad & Brasmian 2000), has combined them again by taking Gramsci or his concept of *hegemony* and Foucault or the concept of *Meaning* to solve the same puzzle of colonial domination and exploitation and the resultant meaninglessness it has left in its wake in colonised societies. Said's conclusions, given his comradeship with Iqbal Ahmed and Noam Chomsky, their involvement with Palestinian rights, make an interesting connection for us. But we are so structurally made by the alternative narrative that we are unable to make the connection with Said, and through him with the western philosophical traditions located in Continental philosophy. Gramsci, Derrida, and Foucault are just a few signposts. What Marx says would happen to a Capitalist society is found happening in Nietzsche's critique of his society: nihilism or meaninglessness that we all are witness to in our *Muslim* society. This "theoretical synthesis" of the Frankfurt School is found in Iqbal in toto.

But in order to fully appreciate Iqbal's argument for our contemporary problematics, we need to replace our modernist lens with a postmodern one. This would give us a handle on our identity crisis. In other words, a proper understanding of Iqbal's importance as a social and political theorist can only be appreciated when our approach to Iqbal is conditioned by the argument and philosophical roots of Critical Theory. Without this conditioning of our approach to Iqbal, we would continue to misread and misinterpret

Iqbal. hence, our inferences would always remain flawed. Thus, our Sardars and Ahmads of Islamism, Political Islamism, and Post Islamism would continue to hold the day. Here the debate veers into Derrida's concept of the metaphysics of presence. Iqbal joins him here as well. Once the two streams operating simultaneously in the western academy and Iqbal's oeuvre are combined along their philosophical foundations, the pressures on borders and margins start to ease.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Ahmad, Aijaz. *In theory: Classes, nations, literatures*. London: Verso, 1994.
- [2] Ahmad, Eqbal, Brasman, Brasman. *Eqbal Ahmad: Confronting Empire: Interviews with David Brasman*. New York: South End Press, 2000.
- [3] Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*, New York: Routledge, 2001.
- [4] Dharampal-Frick, G., Qasmi, AU., *Revisioning Iqbal as a Poet and Muslim Political Thinker*. Heidelberg: Darupadi Verlag, 2010.
- [5] Docherty, Thomas. *Postmodernism: A Reader*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- [6] Fuller, Graham, Lesser, Ian *The Sense of Siege: The Geo-politics of Islam and The West*, New York: Routledge, 1995.
- [7] Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An archaeology of human sciences*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- [8] Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *Lyotard and the Political*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- [9] Bernstein, JM. *Recovering Ethical Life: Jurgen Habermas and the future of critical theory*, London: Routledge, 1995.
- [10] Ahmad, Aijaz. *In theory: Classes, nations, literatures*. London: Verso, 1994.
- [11] Dr. Manan Khan Tareen, Nazmine, Dr. Samia Manzoor, Shafaq Manzoor, Hannan Khan Tareen. "Impact of New Media Technologies on Life Style of Youth." *Elementary Education Online* 20.1 (2021)
- [12] Hannan Khan Tareen, Dr. Samia Manzoor, Dr. Aqsa Iram Shahzadi Khan, Dr. Manan Khan Tareen, Nazmine. "Facebook use and youths' psychological states of insecurity, depression, extremism, and desensitization." *Elementary Education Online* 20.2 (2021), 1346-1356.
- [13] Gramsci, Antonio, Hoare, Qutin, and Smith, GeofferyNoell . *The Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.
- [14] Horkheimer, Max. "Traditional and Critical Theory". *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. New York: A&C Black, 1972.
- [15] Iqbal, Muhammad. *Javednama*. Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2010.
- [16] Jackson, Roy. *Nietzsche and Islam*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- [17] Marcuse, Herbert. *Heideggerian Marxism*, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.
- [18] McLeod, John. *Beginning Postcolonialism*. London: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- [19] Richmond, O.P., *Peace in International Relations*, London: Routledge, 2008.
- [20] Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage, 1994
- [21] Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. London: Penguin, 2003.
- [22] Singer, Peter. *Marx: A Very Short Introduction*. London; Oxford University Press, 2018.